



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION COUNTRY PROFILE

Zambia

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ABBREVIATIONS

CPD	Continuous Professional Development	NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
ECE	Early Childhood Education	NLF	National Literacy Framework
EGIDS	Expanded Intergenerational Disruption Scale	PCSC	Parent Community School Committees
EGMA	Early Grade Math Assessment	PLP	Primary Literacy Program
EGR	Early Grade Reading	PTA	Parent Teacher Associations
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment	REEP-A	Research for Effective Education Programming–Africa
EMIS	Education Management Information System	SPRINT	School Programme of In-service for the Term
ESSP	Education and Skills Sector Plan	STEEL	Supporting Teacher Education for Early Learning
FSU	Florida State University	TaRL	Teaching at the Right Level
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency	TESS	Teacher Education and Specialized Services
L1	First Language	TESSA	Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa
L2	Second (or additional) Language	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
LOI	Language of Instruction	USAID	United States Agency for International Development
MESVTEE	Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education	ZREAD	Zambia Reading Education and Development
MoGE	Ministry of General Education		
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education		

INTRODUCTION

Enhancing reading skills in the early grades is a key education priority for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). Despite some improvements in access and learning in sub-Saharan Africa, literacy levels in the early grades remain low, and progress has been slow. Efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in the early grades have led to an increased focus on the role of the language of instruction (LOI). Recent research has demonstrated that mismatches between the LOI and the language that students and teachers speak and understand best, can hamper effective teaching and learning (University Research Co., 2019). Thus, it is critical to understand the LOI policy and linguistic context of a country when trying to design programs to improve literacy and learning outcomes.

Currently, USAID supports **Early Grade Reading (EGR) initiatives in 19 countries across sub-Saharan Africa**. Many policies in these countries have recently shifted toward adopting the mother tongue as the language for initial literacy acquisition, and then transitioning to a second or additional language, such as a regional, national, or international language, as the subsequent LOI.

Government policies and strategies related to teachers and LOI reflect country priorities, approaches, and objectives for early grade literacy. During the design-phase of donor-funded reading programs, decisions are made regarding the manner and extent to which national policies are incorporated into project design, and when alternative approaches or additional elements need to be considered. However, government policies on LOI, and other information relevant for informing design, are often difficult to find and are not easily accessible.

The LOI country profiles aim to address this need. The profiles will allow the USAID Africa Bureau, USAID Missions, and partner organizations to quickly understand the country's linguistic and policy context in order to design an approach that most effectively helps improve EGR outcomes. These profiles, designed for 18 of the countries with current or upcoming USAID EGR initiatives, aim to clearly and succinctly describe and illustrate the country's linguistic landscape and official LOI policy. This country profile in particular provides information on language policy and practice in Zambia.



LINGUISTIC CONTEXT

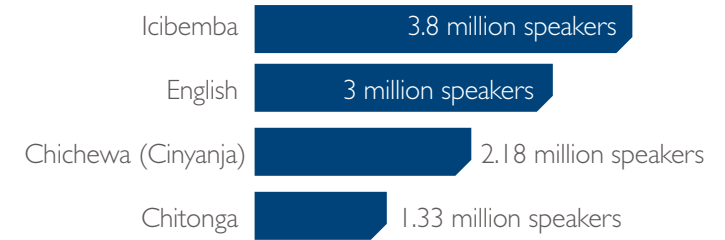
According to *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*, published by SIL International, there are 46 languages spoken in Zambia, 37 of which are indigenous and 9 are non-indigenous. The official national language is English, with just over three million speakers out of a total population of 17 million people. Almost all speak it as their second language (L2), with only a small minority of Zambians (15,300) speaking it as their first language (L1) (Eberhard, Simons, & Fennig, 2020).

The three most predominant languages spoken in Zambia are Bemba (Icibemba), Tonga (Chitonga), and Chichewa (Cinyanja)¹. Icibemba is the de facto provincial language in Northern, Copperbelt, and Luapula provinces with over 3.8 million speakers. In addition, it is regarded as a language of higher status and thus is more often used in urban areas and to conduct business. Chichewa or Cinyanja, as it is referred to in Zambia, is the second most spoken language, with approximately 2.18 million speakers, most of which reside in Eastern and Central provinces. Chitonga, which is predominantly spoken in Southern province, has approximately 1.33 million speakers (Eberhard et al., 2020).

In Western and parts of Southern province, Lozi (Silozi) is also widely spoken with approximately 612,000 speakers. Other languages which are primarily spoken in Northwestern province as well as some surrounding districts include Luvale (117,000 speakers), Lunda (225,000 speakers) and Kaonde (Kiikaonde) (206,000 speakers) (Eberhard et al., 2020). For more detailed information on the geographic dispersion of indigenous languages across Zambia, see Figure 2.

¹ SIL International's *Ethnologue: Languages of the World* uses Bemba, Tonga and Chichewa, however the official language names used by Ministry of General Education are included in parenthesis for reference.

Most widely-spoken languages in Zambia

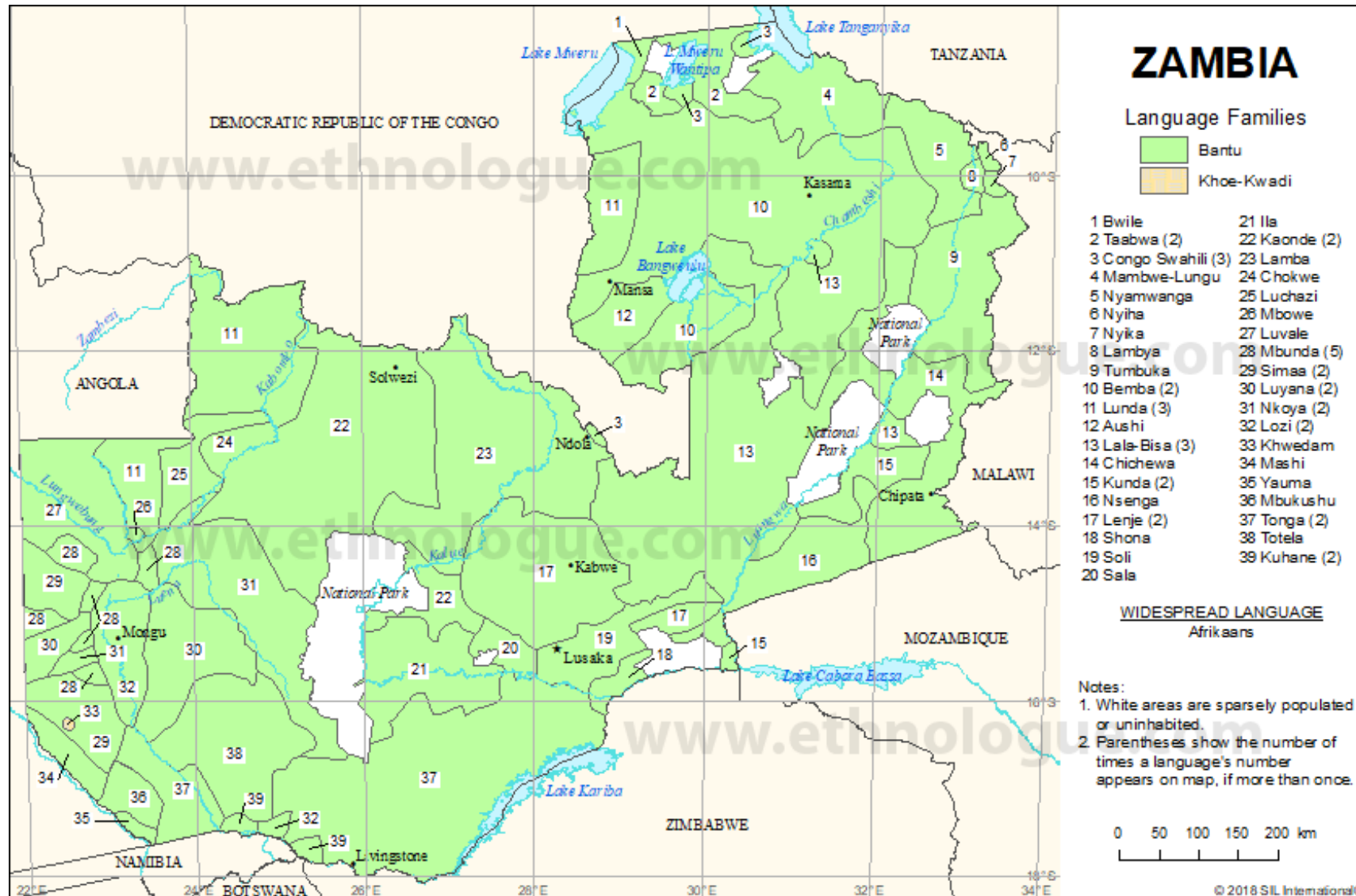


Source: Eberhard et al., 2020

Figure 1. Map of Zambia



Figure 2. Mapping of Indigenous Languages in Zambia



Source: Eberhard, David M., Gary F. Simons, and Charles D. Fennig (eds.). (2020). *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Twenty-third edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com>.

OFFICIAL LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION POLICY

Prior to independence, Zambia's education system emphasized local language instruction. However, after gaining independence from Great Britain in 1964, Zambia declared English to be the only official language. At the same time, seven Zambian languages were allowed to be taught as school subjects, including: Cinyanja, Chitonga, Icibemba, Kiikaonde, Lunda, Luvale and Silozi. (UNICEF, 2017). There were several major reviews of educational policy conducted in 1977 and 1991, which advocated for local language instruction. In addition, in 1995, the Zambian government decided that local languages were to serve as the language of initial literacy instruction, with English serving as the language of overall instruction for all other subject areas (UNICEF, 2017).

The Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational and Early Education (MESVTEE) policy shifted again under the Education Act of 2011 and the subsequent Primary Literacy Program (PLP), which further promoted the importance of local languages for initial literacy instruction. Furthermore, under the 2013 Zambia Education Curriculum Framework, the MESVTEE outlined seven local languages, namely Chitonga, Cinyanja, Icibemba, Kiikaonde, Lunda, Luvale, and Silozi as the official LOI for early childhood education (ECE) and Grades 1 – 4 across all subject areas. English is introduced as a subject beginning in Grade 2, with a focus on developing oral language skills first (MESVTEE, 2013c). In addition, the 2013 Zambia Education Curriculum introduced for the first time that learners with Special Education Needs should also be taught in a language that is familiar to them, and as such Sign Language and Braille were established as alternative options for languages to be taught under the Literacy and Language subjects (MESVTEE, 2013c). Under this LOI policy, the Ministry of General Education (MoGE)² implements an early-exit bilingual model, whereby students fully transition to a second LOI, English, beginning in Grade 5 through tertiary education, but local languages continue to be taught as a mandatory subject through the end of lower secondary school or Grade 9.

To support the implementation of this policy shift, the MoGE working in collaboration with the USAID/Read to Succeed and USAID/Time to Learn projects developed the National Literacy Framework (NLF). The NLF aims to provide teachers with an evidenced-based strategy for teaching literacy, including language-specific scope and sequences to support initial phonics instruction in each of the seven LOI (MESVTEE, 2013a). In explaining the rationale for this policy shift towards local language instruction, the NLF states that it enables

2. Recently the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education was renamed the Ministry of General Education

learners from the first day of school to leverage their prior knowledge of the phonics and vocabulary of their LI to support the subsequent development of their literacy skills, whereas learning to read in an unfamiliar language is much more difficult, especially in under-resourced schools (MESVTEE, 2013a).

Despite awareness of the importance of teaching in a language that children know and understand, Zambia's linguistic diversity has presented challenges for the implementation of mother tongue instruction policies. According to the Language Mapping Exercise³, conducted under the USAID Education Data activity in 2018, the redrawing of existing districts in some areas has resulted in mismatches between the LOI schools use and the language spoken most frequently by learners. In addition, teachers are not always fluent in the LOI, and schools lack sufficient teaching and learning materials in the LOI (DevTech Systems, 2019a). However, the USAID Education Data activity Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) in five target provinces in Zambia found that across the 816 sampled schools, between 92 – 99% of Grade 2 teachers reported using their province's designated LOI to teach reading (DevTech Systems, 2019b).

CLASS TIME

The structure of the Zambian education systems includes: two years of pre-primary education (nursery for learners aged 3 – 4 years old and reception for learners aged 5 - 6 years old), seven years of primary school, two years of lower secondary and then three years of senior secondary school. After which, learners may enroll in tertiary education (MESVTEE, 2013c).

The MESVTEE released the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework in 2013, which describes the primary school curriculum, including five learning areas and the allocation of instructional time for each. The framework indicates that in Grades 1 and 2, more instructional time is devoted to teaching initial literacy and numeracy skills than other subject areas to ensure learners acquire the prerequisite skills to support subsequent learning (MESVTEE, 2013c). Furthermore, it outlines that there should be a minimum of 21 hours of contact time between teachers and learners per week divided among 30-minute periods (MESVTEE, 2013c). Table 1 provides detailed information on the required breakdown of instructional time by subject areas.

³ For more detailed information on LOI implementation in schools, please see the Language Mapping Exercise Report at: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00THW7.pdf

Table 1. Allocation of instructional time per week in lower primary (Grades 1 – 4)

Learning Area	Time	Periods
Literacy and Languages	6 hours 30 minutes	13
Mathematics	5 hours	10
Social Studies	2 hours 30 minutes	5
Integrated Science	2 hours 30 minutes	5
Creative and Technology Studies	4 hours 30 minutes	9
Total	21 hours	42

Source: MESVTEE, 2013c

The USAID Education Data activity EGRA conducted in 2018 found that 75% of sampled teachers reported teaching reading four or five days a week, and 71% reported that instructional time dedicated to reading exceeds 40 minutes (DevTech Systems, 2019b). However, according to the MoGE and Ministry of Higher Education's (MoHE) Education and Skills Sector Plan (ESSP) (2017-2021), the average instructional time at the lower primary level is 4.2 hours per day or 668 hours per year; while the regional average among sub-Saharan African countries is 5 hours per day (MoGE and MoHE, n.d.). In addition, other contextual factors such as high rates of teacher absenteeism and school closures during the rainy season suggest that children may actually receive less literacy instruction than mandated, which contributes to poor learning outcomes (MoGE and MoHE, n.d.).

With the introduction of both the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework and the NLF in 2013, lower primary teachers were expected to shift away from the whole-language approach to literacy instruction to a phonics-based approach. This approach, as outlined in the NLF, emphasizes the explicit teaching of foundational literacy skills in local languages, which include: (1) phonemic awareness; (2) phonics; (3) fluency; (4) comprehension; and (5) vocabulary (MESVTEE, 2013a)⁴. In addition to the NLF, the MESVTEE developed the Primary School Zambian Languages Syllabus for Grades 1 – 7, which also provides guidance on the teaching of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in lower primary (MESVTEE, 2013b).

PRE-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM FOR LITERACY

The 2018 ESSP states that the MoGE has implemented several reforms in recent years which aim to improve the quality of teachers. These include establishing the Teaching Council of Zambia to regulate all pre-service and in-service teacher training programming, upgrading the two-year certificate pre-service teaching programs conducted by Colleges of Education to three-year diplomas, and also introducing degree programs in primary teacher education in selected universities (MoGE and MoHE, n.d.). Currently, two types of pre-service programs are offered:

1. A three-year Diploma program at accredited Colleges of Education; currently, there are 12 located throughout Zambia (MoGE and MoHE, n.d.)

⁴ More information on the National Literacy Framework and instructional guidance on its implementation can be found at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00MWT7.pdf and https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00M47B.pdf

2. A four-year concurrent University or first-degree program; in which College of Education lecturers, provincial and district-level Standards Officers, prospective teachers, and current teachers can take selected courses to upgrade their qualifications towards a University Degree (University of Zambia, 2017).

According to the ESSP, 5% of primary school teachers hold a university or first degree or above and an additional 34% hold a Diploma from an accredited College of Education. However, almost half of all primary school teachers (45%) still hold the outdated Primary Teacher's Certificates and many teachers, especially in community schools, lack any standardized training or teaching qualifications (MoGE and MoHE, n.d).

The Zambia Education Curriculum Framework outlines that all pre-service teacher education programs are expected to ensure that prospective teachers develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to effectively implement the MoGE-approved curriculum (MESVTEE, 2013c). Further, teachers are expected to develop key competencies in: (1) the materials that they are expected to teach; (2) diverse teaching methodologies; (3) foundational knowledge in education; (4) creativity, constructiveness and innovation; and (5) competent leadership (MESVTEE, 2013c). These competencies are taught through the primary teacher curriculum, which includes both courses on educational theory, methods, as well as courses focused on the academic content covered in the primary school curriculum. Table 2 includes a full list of the courses taught during pre-service teacher training (MESVTEE, 2013c).

In addition to the courses outlined above, all prospective teachers are expected to complete a school experience placement at a local primary school for at least one full school term as part of their pre-service teacher education program (MESVTEE, 2013c).

Table 2. Primary Teacher Curriculum, Colleges of Education, Diploma

Education Foundations	Teaching Courses
Education Administration, History and Philosophy of Education	Mathematics
Psychology and Sociology of Education	Integrated Science
Special Education	Literacy and Language
Guidance and Counseling	Expressive Arts
Curriculum Studies	Technology Studies
Teaching Methods	Social Studies
Entrepreneurship Education	
Information and Communications Technology Education	
Research Methods	

Source: MESVTEE, 2013c

TEACHER LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY/LANGUAGE SPECIFIC TRAINING

In alignment with the official LOI policy and the Zambia Education Curriculum Framework, Colleges of Education and Universities use English as the LOI rather than local languages. The primary teacher curriculum does include a course dedicated to the content of the primary language and literacy curriculum (MESVTEE, 2013c). However, there are no dedicated language courses to support teachers to develop proficiency in the LOI.

The ESSP indicates that Zambia's teacher recruitment system uses the Education Management Information System (EMIS) alongside a computer-generated model to determine how teachers are allocated to districts (MoGE and MoHE, n.d). It is unknown whether language-specific needs at the district or school level are considered. However, the MoGE uses a decentralized, location-specific recruitment and deployment system, allowing teachers to apply directly to districts with vacant positions. Teaching posts are advertised widely in newspapers, radios, and television (MoGE and MoHE, n.d.). It is unknown what factors are considered in the hiring process at the district level, but given that languages are largely distributed geographically in Zambia, teachers may be more likely to apply to districts who use their LI as the LOI. However, some teachers have been deployed to areas where they are not familiar with the LOI (MoGE and MoHE, n.d.).

Several research studies have found that most sampled primary school teachers' self-report or are directly observed using the government's designated LOI to teach learners (DevTech Systems Inc., 2019b; Rhodewell, 2017). However, headteachers interviewed as part of the USAID Time to Learn 2017 Endline Evaluation identified common factors that prevent teachers from using the official LOI to teach literacy, which included: 1) not knowing how to teach reading in the language (64%), 2) the school does not have local language materials (43%); and 3) teachers think English is more important (41%) (Falconer-Stout, Frischkorn & Franco, 2017).

TEACHER IN-SERVICE

Since 2003, the Teacher Education and Specialized Services (TESS) Directorate within the MoGE has overseen implementation of in-service teacher programming. Prior to the establishment of TESS, the Zambian government developed an in-service teacher training program called the School Program of In-Service for the Term (SPRINT), with the aim to increase teachers' access to Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activities at the local level. While its programming has evolved over time, under SPRINT, teacher resource centers at the zonal, district and provincial levels have been established and staffed with in-service coordinators to facilitate CPD activities (MoGE and Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2015). In-service coordinators' primary role is to provide on-going coaching and mentoring support to teachers (DevTech Systems Inc., 2019b). In addition to school-based in-service training activities, some long-term professional development courses are available at select Colleges of Education and Universities (MESVTEE, 2013c).

Results from the 2018 Baseline EGRA conducted in five provinces in Zambia indicated that many teachers are unable to access regular in-service training opportunities. Among sampled Grade 2 teachers, more than half (55%) reported that they had not participated in any in-service training related to EGR in the last year. Furthermore, 74% had not received a coaching visit from a district education official (DevTech Systems Inc., 2019b). However, according to the ESSP, TESS intends to strengthen the financial, human capital, and leadership capacity of teacher resource centers to be able to provide high quality in-service training and CPD support to teachers (MoGE and MoHE, n.d).

Various donor-funded initiatives have also drawn on the existing government structures for in-service training to implement CPD activities. For example, the USAID/Zambia Read to Succeed project, implemented by Creative Associates (2012 - 2017) worked to encourage a strong culture of CPD in schools by supporting regular Teacher Group Meetings and Head Teacher In-service Meetings in addition to district-level supervision and monitoring of activities (Rhodewell, 2017). Currently, the USAID-funded Let's Read project is working with in-service coordinators to strengthen their capacity and equip them with tools to provide high-quality coaching and mentoring support focused on EGR across government and community schools in its five target provinces (Education Development Center, Inc. 2021).

USAID READING PROGRAM APPROACH AND ONGOING PROGRAMS

In alignment with the U.S. Government Strategy on International Basic Education, USAID's programming in Zambia aims to support the needs and priorities of the partner country in order to ensure that gains from the programming are sustained.

As such, USAID launched the **Let's Read project** a 5-year (2019 – 2024), \$48.9 million project targeting approximately 4,500 government and community schools in Eastern, Muchinga, Southern, Northwestern, and Western provinces (USAID/Zambia, 2021b). Working in close collaboration with the MoGE, the USAID Let's Read project aims to improve reading outcomes for approximately 1.4 million children attending ECE through Grade 3. It has four principal components, including: 1) a reading intervention package that includes the development of teaching and learning materials, in-service teacher training, and increased coaching and mentoring support; 2) development and implementation of standardized student assessments that align to the curriculum and are conducted nine times per year; 3) a school-based performance tracking system⁵ that supports evidenced-based instruction; and 4) both community and private sector engagement to support literacy (USAID/Zambia, 2021b).

One year prior to the launch of the USAID Let's Read project, USAID launched the **Education Data activity**, implemented by DevTech Systems Inc., to provide distinct assessment, evaluation, and research services to track the progress of the Let's Read project. The three and a half year (2018 – 2021), \$6.8 million dollar activity, has the following primary activities: 1) two large-scale EGRAs – a baseline conducted in 2018, and a midline to be conducted in 2021; 2) capacity-building activities with the Examinations Council of Zambia to strengthen their skills to collect data to support reading outcomes and; 3) additional research studies and activities in alignment with USAID and MoGE priorities to support data-driven decision making (USAID/Zambia, 2021a).

5 For more information on the please see: <https://usaidzambia-letsread-project.edc.org/>

To support Zambian learners in Grades 3 – 5 in Eastern and Southern provinces, USAID launched the **Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL)** project in 2017 in collaboration with the University of Cape Town, J-PAL Africa, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the MoGE. The four-year (2017 – 2021), \$5 million project, enabled the TaRL methodology, which was first established by the Indian nongovernmental organization Pratham and had previously been adapted and pilot tested in Zambia, to be expanded to over 1,700 schools. To date, TaRL, which is locally called, "Catch-up," has supported foundational reading and math skills development among approximately 200,000 learners. In addition, it has trained 6,840 teachers and mentors drawn from both government and community schools (USAID/Zambia, 2021c). TaRL's methodology for reading focuses on differentiated and scaffolded instruction that fosters a love for reading, builds students' self-confidence and is highly collaborative. Based on students' initial reading skills, they are grouped into four different levels (word, sentence, paragraph, and story levels), to enable teachers to target them more effectively. Both whole-word and phonics-based approaches are used in tandem.⁶ Working in close collaboration with schools, zones, and districts, TaRL also helps to establish and implement monitoring systems that provide teachers with on-going coaching and mentoring support (Teaching at the Right Level, 2021).

To support pre-service teacher training systems in Zambia, USAID awarded Florida State University's (FSU) Learning Systems Institute in partnership with School-to-School international the five-year, \$15 million dollar **USAID Transforming Teacher Education** project in late 2020. According to FSU, the program will work to strengthen capacities within Colleges of Education and the University of Zambia to deliver evidenced-based training for prospective teachers to improve reading instruction and support safe learning environments. The Transforming Teacher Education team will support improvements to existing pre-service teacher training courses, develop new textbooks, create centers of excellence dedicated to training new teachers and support linkages between Colleges of Education and primary schools to facilitate hands-on

6 For more information, please see: <https://www.teachingattherightlevel.org/the-tarl-approach/classroom-methodology/reading/>

learning opportunities. Primarily, FSU and School-to-School International will deliver: 1) graduate-level courses on reading instruction in Zambia; 2) six-month residencies for six Zambian teacher education faculty at FSU's College of Education; and 3) scholarships to support Zambian faculty to obtain master's degrees at FSU (Wellock, 2020).

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH REGARD TO LOI

One of the primary objectives of the USAID Let's Read project is to increase both community and private sector engagement to support literacy interventions. According to the Let's Read project's Parent, Community, and Private Sector Engagement Plan, this objective will be achieved through five strategies:

1. Employing social and behavioral change communications via community radio to foster greater parental involvement in children's education and also to promote the importance of learning to read in local languages.
2. Engaging Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) and Parent Community School Committees (PCSCs) through outreach and training to strengthen local capacities, disseminate student performance data and to motivate support to improve reading outcomes.
3. Using youth volunteers who are selected and monitored by PTAs and PCSCs, to support the development of reading teaching aides, identify and work with struggling students and to coordinate with PTAs, PCSCs, and the schools to carry out community-based literacy activities.
4. Working with teachers, PTAs, and PCSCs to increase awareness on the importance of early childhood stimulation and play, reading and storytelling, nutrition and other health topics as well as to encourage enrollment in ECE programming
5. Engaging with the private sector such as mobile phone carriers including Zamtel, MTN, and Airtel, community radio stations, local publishing companies etc. to support the project's literacy interventions (Education Development Center, Inc., 2019).

OTHER DONOR FUNDED READING PROGRAMS

Alongside USAID, other organizations are involved in implementing projects to address literacy and language issues across Zambia, which are described below.

Impact Network's eSchool 360 Program⁷

Since 2009, Impact Network has supported increased access to education for out of school children in rural areas in Eastern Province. Working in collaboration with Mwabu, a Zambian technology firm that develops educational content that aligns to the MoGE curriculum, Impact Network's eSchool 360 Program supports schools by: 1) providing teachers with tablets that contain local language lessons and a projector to effectively deliver lessons to learners; 2) hiring local teachers and providing on-going coaching and mentoring support as well as monthly training workshops; 3) providing wages and benefits to its community school teachers to reduce attrition and absenteeism; and 4) encouraging local ownership through the provision of school supplies, solar power, and other investments to improve the quality of the school environment. The program initially began as a pilot with eight schools, however, with funding from the American Institutes for Research, the program expanded to 35 schools. Its methodology is being rigorously evaluated under a randomized control trial to understand its impact on children's literacy and numeracy skills. The Midline Report conducted in 2018 found that children in the eSchool 360 program on average scored 3.5 percentage points higher on the EGRA than children in the control group⁸ (Hoop et al., 2020).

UNICEF's Zambia COVID-19 Education Sector Response⁹

With funding from the Global Partnership for Education, UNICEF and the MoGE are currently implementing the 18-month (2020 – 2021), \$10 million, Zambia COVID-19 Education Sector Response project. The project will be implemented in two phases, with the first focusing on ensuring children have access to remote learning opportunities

⁷ For more information, please see: <https://www.impactnetwork.org/impact-education>

⁸ For more information on this study, please see: <https://www.air.org/sites/default/files/Midline-Report-Mixed-Methods-Cluster-RCT-of-eSchool-360-Model-in-Rural-Zambia-February-2020-rev.pdf>

⁹ For more information, please see: <https://www.globalpartnership.org/where-we-work/zambia>

and the second, supporting schools to re-open safely. Specifically, the project aims to: 1) support distance learning through the development of radio learning programs in local languages for children in ECE – Grade 4 and in English for Grades 5 – 9; 2) distribute solar radios to girls and children from low-income households to increase access; 3) provide teacher training on methods to continue student engagement and monitoring of learner performance that are compatible with distance learning; 4) incentivize at-risk students to return to school once they re-open through the provision of free learning materials; 5) investment in boreholes to provide clean water to rural schools to reduce germ transmission; and 6) the development of remedial learning modules to support children who are struggling to catch up (Global Partnership for Education, 2020).

VVOB Education for Development's Supporting Teacher Education for Early Learning (STEEL)¹⁰

With support from the Government of Belgium, VVOB Education for Development is implementing the four-year (2017-2021), €4.5 million, STEEL project. It aims to strengthen both pre-service and in-service teacher training opportunities for ECE teachers. Under this project, VVOB works in collaboration with the MoGE's ECE Directorate, two Colleges of Education, and Chalimbana University to train current and prospective teachers and lecturers on the use of gender-responsive and learning through play methods as well as the application of the MoGE's Early Learning to support early learning outcomes (VVOB Education for Development, n.d).

World Vision's Zambia Reading Education and Development (ZREAD)

Under the ZREAD project, World Vision staff have created community reading spaces in 23 districts, which are staffed by community volunteers and parents, to encourage children to regularly practice their reading skills (World Vision, n.d.). In addition, the program has organized over 521 reading camps, distributed over 180,000 books, and trained approximately 2,000 teachers in effective methods for teaching the core reading skills. To support the development of contextually relevant reading materials for children, World Vision also supports the creation of local stories (World Vision – Zambia, 2019).

¹⁰ For more information, please see: <https://www.vob.org/en/programmes/zambia-steel>

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