Data Must Speak:
The Zambian Experience with School Profiles

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Zambia - context

- Sub-Saharan African country
- 4,000,000 students
- Largely achieved MDG2 around primary school enrolment
- Over 8,800 primary schools, around 850 secondary schools
- Two ministries in charge of Education – General and Higher
- Education Management Information System (EMIS) within MoGE Directorate of Planning
  - Comprehensive database
  - Data collected annually from schools
Background and rationale for the profiles

• Prior to the *Data Must Speak* initiative the Directorate used to produce profiles as a feedback mechanism but the process was discontinued in 2005, original profiles were completely text based and provided no examination or comparative data.

Ministry of General Education had identified the need to:
• Promote and improve the usage of data at all levels of education
• Improve evidence-based decision-making, planning & priority setting
• Improve data feedback loops (at School, Community, District & Province levels)
• Enhance community engagement in school management and decision-making
Successes to date

• In 2015 the Ministry in collaboration with UNICEF embarked on the *Data Must Speak* Initiative

• In 2015 school profiles were designed collaboratively with teachers, PTA members, district, provincial, central level Ministry staff

• In 2016 school profiles were printed and distributed to over 8,900 schools

• In 2016-17, province, district and community (simplified) level profiles were developed and produced in addition to updated school profiles
School Profile

• Two page document, A3 in color
• Provides schools with key selected indicators
• Provides feedback from the Annual School Census
• Allows SELF-monitoring for schools
• Allows school management to identify need and priority areas
• Assists schools in the development of School Improvement Plans (SIPs)
Community Profile

• One page document, A4, multiple copies
• Provides school communities with simplified information
• Provides feedback from the Annual School Census and school examinations
• Allows SELF-monitoring for schools
• Allows low-literacy communities to understand their school in comparison to district averages and over time
Provincial and District Profiles

- Same idea as with the school and community profiles
- Contain selected key Provincial and District Indicators
- At a glance one can have a picture on how the province or District is performing in education delivery
- Shows how well resourced a province or district is e.g. PTR can guide in the allocation and distribution of teachers
- Education staff in 3 out of 10 provinces trained in the interpretation and usage of profile, remaining planned for Q3 2017.

Extracts from a district profile
Challenges

• Profile printing is expensive
• Distribution to all schools is logistically difficult
• Delayed printing and distribution – data reliability and usability is reduced
• Matching of ECZ and EMIS – not all schools have examination results
• Limited understanding of how the profiles are being used at school level
Next steps and future plans

- Alignment of ECZ and EMIS codes to improve school matching
- Follow-up studies on comprehension and use of profiles
- Community training on profile usage
- Impact evaluation of the DMS community profiles
- Development of profiles for secondary schools
- Further training and capacity-building at all levels
Thank you!