

The Zambian Assessment systems

BACKGROUND

- EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL OF ZAMBIA
 - Established (ACT NO 15 of 1983)
 - Secretariat was established and became operational in 1987
 - Localised the School Certificate in 2000 from university of Cambridge local examinations syndicate

FUNCTIONS OF THE COUNCIL

- Conduct examinations;
- Award certificates or diplomas to candidates who pass examinations conducted by the Council;
- Carry out relevant research in examinations;
- Advise any public institution on development and use of any system of testing or examining when requested to do so;
- Formulate syllabuses for examinations;
- Promote international recognition of qualifications conferred by the Council;
- Approve or reject appointment of examiners;
- Organise training courses for, or arrange for training of examiners, markers, supervisors, invigilators and other persons connected with examinations; and
- Invite any person or body either in or outside Zambia to assist the Council in the conduct of examinations.

EXAMINATIONS CONDUCTED BY THE COUNCIL

- Grade 7 Composite Examination
- Junior Secondary School Leaving Examination (Grade 9)
- Joint Examination for School Certificate (SC) and General Certificate of Education (GCE)
- Teacher Training Examinations
- TEVET Examinations
- National Assessment (while SACMEQ is the MoESTVEE)

Thematic Areas of Focus

- *Test Development;*
- *Administration of Examinations;*
- *Capacity building;*
- *Certification;*
- *Advisory Services, Research, innovation and development;*
- *Support services*
- *Information, Education and Communication (IEC)*

Assessment methodologies and paradigms

- Grade 7

- Purpose:

- Selection and certification
 - **Future perspectives**
 - Placement and streaming
 - Assessment of learning achievement

- Methodological approach

- Objective type and items are pretested
 - At setting we use criterion referenced approach plus CTT
 - At Awards and standard setting we use norm referenced approach

- Future Prospects

- Electronic Item Banking
 - Use of performance Profiling and IRT
 - Criterion referenced standards and performance benchmarking

Assessment methodologies and paradigms

- Grade 9
 - Purpose:
 - Selection, placement and certification
 - Future perspectives
 - Streaming and skills placement
 - Assessment of competencies and skills (hard and soft)
 - Methodological approach
 - Objective and constructive types
 - At setting we use criterion referenced approach
 - At Awards and standard setting we use norm referenced approach
 - Future Prospects
 - Use of CTT as a support tool in test construction
 - Use of performance Profiling and IRT
 - Criterion referenced standards and performance benchmarking

Assessment methodologies and paradigms

- Grade 12
 - Purpose:
 - Selection for higher education and certification
 - Future perspectives
 - Placement and streaming
 - Assessment of competencies and skills (hard and soft)
 - Enhanced predictive validity for later life achievement
 - Methodological approach
 - At setting we use criterion referenced approach
 - At Awards and standard setting we use norm referenced approach
 - Future Prospects
 - Use of CTT as a support tool in test construction
 - Use of performance Profiling and IRT
 - Criterion referenced standards and performance benchmarking
 - Framework for inbuilt tracer study

Other programme and Projects

- National Assessment Programme (at Grade 5, plans underway for Grade 9)
- Continuous Assessment programme
 - Assessment for Learning
- EGMA, EGRA, (SSME) at (Grades 1-3)
 - Early Grade Mathematics Assessment
 - Early Grade Reading Assessment
 - Snapshot of School Management Effectiveness

Quality Assurance activities

- Ensuring that valid assessment materials are developed and administered
- Having reliable marking systems
- Having a transparent grading system
- Accurate and efficient administration of examinations
- National and international regulation
- Affiliation to international associations and benchmarking visits to other examining Boards

- Ensuring that valid assessment materials are developed and administered
 - Test specification tables
 - Training of teachers as item writers since 2000
 - Pretesting and post test analysis for MC types
 - Producing administration guidelines for all schools and centres
 - Conducting spot checks during administration
 - Involving security agencies in monitoring, transporting and guarding the examinations materials
 - Use of examination answer booklets of different colours each year
 - Use of high profile security printers

- Having reliable marking systems
 - that increase reliability of marking, ECZ has, since the 2010/2011 Marking Session, adopted the Conveyor Belt Marking System (CBMS)
 - Training of markers/examiners
- Accurate and efficient administration of examinations
 - Electronic Candidate Registration System: registration decentralized at school level (2008)
 - Electronic Marks Capturing System (EMCS) which was first used during the 2009/2010 Marking Session.
 - The salient features of the software relating to quality assurance are data entry and transcription checking. The EMCS has validation safeguards such as predefined users and maximum mark per subject paper.

- Having a transparent grading system
 - Raw scores are subjected to a standard fixing exercise and computer generation of grades is employed
 - The right to appeal for remarking
- National and international regulation
 - SADC Protocol on Education and Training mandates members to establish National Qualifications Frameworks (NQF's) to assist in regulating the awarding and harmonisation of qualifications in the period 2006 to 2010.

- Affiliation to international associations and benchmarking visits to other examining Boards
 - ECZ is a primary member of the AEAA and the IAEA
 - ECZ also sends its staff to other examining boards for purposes of knowledge sharing/benchmarking.

Recent Major Reforms

- System reengineering: strategic plan 2009-2015 and realignment of departments, Performance management systems

Reason: To become current to the demands of the assessing Stakeholder : Internal

Challenges to do with organizational change, Useful strategy has been training and sensitizing staff

- Piloting of CA 2004 to 2006
 - *To create guidelines for implementing school based assessment*
 - *Stakeholders: MOE, schools, teachers, pupils*
 - *Challenges: scale-up challenges still under discussion, issues of teacher training, material production, teacher resistance, more testing as opposed to AFL etc*

- Information, education communication system

Reason: to enhance stakeholder relations by providing information and the need to be proactive to the information needs of the public with regard to examinations

Stakeholder : Internal , clients, public.

Challenges: Resources, currently only one staff and unit very new

- Conveyor Belt Marking systems-

Reason: to enhance, fairness, reliability and efficiency of marking.

Stakeholder : markers, examiners

Challenges: apathy, strikes, low marker turnout, low pay


Useful strategy has been training and sensitization examiners

- **Introduction of Electronic Marks captures and electronic candidate registration**

- *To be efficient in capturing data and be cost effective than the use of Optimal mark Read Forms. A lot of errors were experienced with use of OMR and lack of an opportunity to effect corrections immediately because the forms would be sent to ECZ from schools and then ECZ would send the registers back to schools for amendments . The back and forth was costly and caused more errors. Teachers and pupils also had very low levels of appreciation of OMR forms in use and handling*
- *Stakeholders: schools, examiners etc*
- *Challenges : low computer skills among teachers, education administrators which meant high costs in training assigned teachers in Computers skills first*

Future Prospects

- Quality Policy (ie ISO standards)
- Exam development
 - Electronic Item banking system
 - IRT based analysis (i.e training staff)
 - Performance profiling
 - Development of assessment schemes
 - Comprehensive performance feedback system
- Exam administration
 - E-marking
 - Online (realtime) systems i.e registration, marks capture
 - SMS release of results



**The end
and
thank you**