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The information in this brief comes from research carried out by ZAMISE, UNZA faculty and graduate students in partnership with the Ministry of General Education (MOGE) and Strengthening Educational Performance Up (STEP-Up) Zambia, a USAID-funded project designed to improve education management and raise academic achievement at the primary level. It is based on questionnaires administered in early 2015 with 135 District Education Board Secretary (DEBS) officers from 30 districts (3 per province), 44 Provincial Education Office (PEO) officers from all 10 provinces, and 11 officers from national level. Questionnaires were also administered to 68 lecturers in 8 Teacher Training Colleges across seven provinces.

## Teacher Preparation and Placement: Ensuring Teachers are Empowered to Teach in Zambian Languages

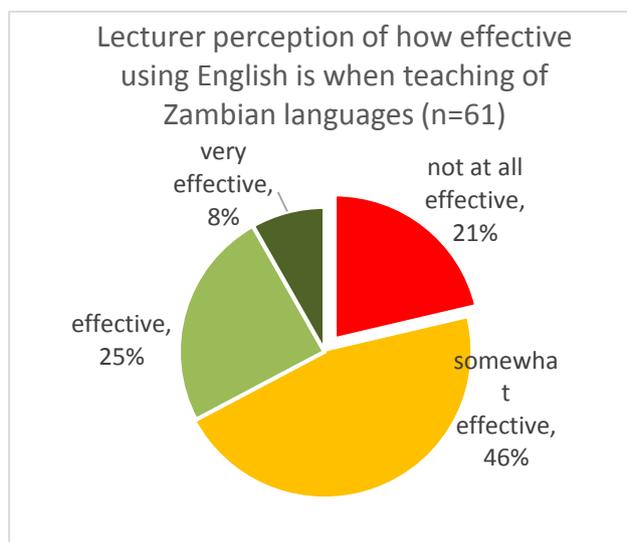
Placement of teachers is vital for effective teaching and learning. According to the findings of this 2015 study, pre-service teacher training and teacher placement has limited attention on local languages.

### Finding 1: Teaching of Zambian Languages during Teacher Preparation

The recent revision to the national curriculum mandates that pupils in grades 1-4 learn in a local language. Student teachers must therefore develop competency in local languages during their training in order to effectively teach literacy and other subjects to early grade learners.

#### Student teachers learn how to teach Zambian Languages using English:

- Only 29% of lecturers indicating use of English to teach Zambian languages is very effective or effective, 46% somewhat effective, and 21% stated that it was not at all effective (see pie chart). Lecturers who questioned using English to instruct how to teach Zambian languages, most often cited incompatibility of the two languages and how using English limits exposure to local languages during teacher training. Lecturers who preferred using English most often said that all the students understand English, so students can understand concepts.



- Most lecturers (92%) agreed or strongly agreed with the practice of allowing student teachers to give examples in a familiar language. Only 8% did not agree with the practice.



**Lecturers often, though not always, know the language of the region where they teach:**

- 84% of lecturers (n=64) indicated that they are comfortable (and 16% not comfortable) in using the local language of the region where they serve as a lecturer.

**Zambian language as a subject in teacher training:**

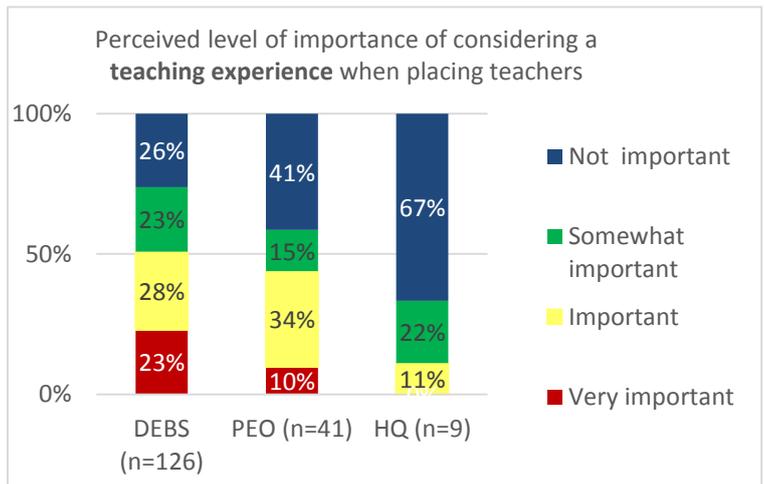
- 65% of lecturers (n=43) supported the creation of a compulsory subject in one or two Zambian Languages for pre-service teachers. Many lecturers elaborated in their comments that their colleges serve the entire country or that teacher deployment is country wide, so they would need to consider all seven official languages. However, some lecturers believed offering one or two of the regional languages would suffice in their particular college.
- Many comments from lecturers suggested the use of local language helps student teachers and pupils learn. Developing the competencies of teachers’ local language abilities has the potential to significantly improve their confidence and competence when teaching in one of these languages.

*“Local language would help learners develop concepts that are of foundation in their process of learning” – a lecturer*

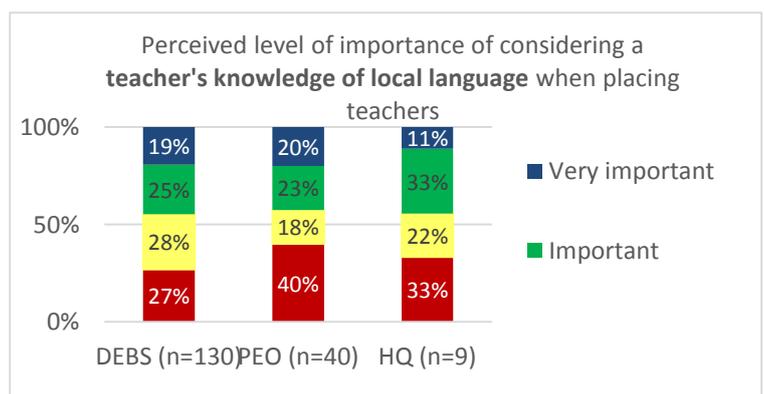
Lecturers tend to have mixed views about the use of English to teach Zambian languages in teacher training, though most tend to agree with the practice of allowing student teachers to give examples in a familiar language. The majority of lecturers want further use of local languages in teacher training, covering all local languages across institutions, though some believe specializing in a particular language of the region where the college is located is appropriate.

**Finding 2: Developing and Using Guidelines for Teacher Placement**

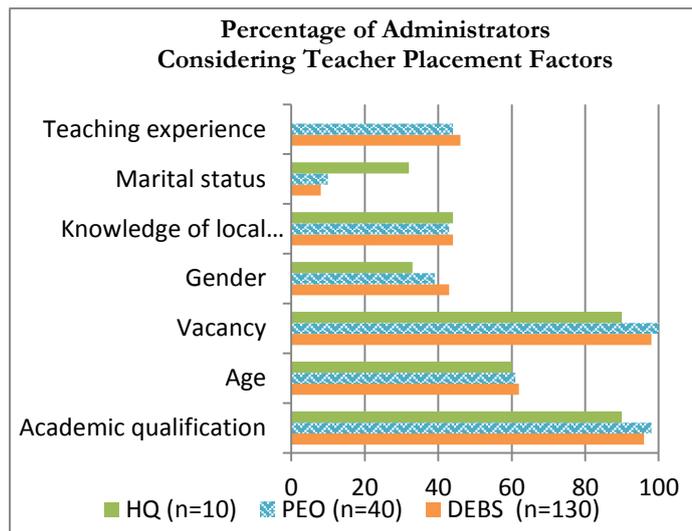
The *National Implementation Framework II (2008-2010)* noted a “mismatch between the supply of teachers and the demand for teachers especially in mathematics and science at upper basic level as well as rural/urban mismatch in teacher deployment and utilization (p16)”. According to this study, teacher placement and deployment appears to still be a concern. Data shows that there remains a variety of opinions and ideas about teacher placement among DEBS, PEO and HQ officials.



- 67% of headquarters, 41% of PEO, and 26% of DEBS officers indicated teacher experience is not an important placement consideration. The reason for this difference in opinion is not clear, though it appears that the closer one is from the school where teachers are being placed, the more important the administrators believe experience is important.



- A teachers' knowledge of local language was seen as having no or minimal (somewhat) importance by over half of all government officers (see chart to the right).
- When comparing all factors for placement, 79-100% of DEBS, PEO and HQ indicated that the most important factor considered in placing teachers is the availability of the vacancy (some even indicated the Payroll Management and Establishment Control, PMEC system), followed by academic qualifications. As evident in the graph to the right. Less than half of all administrators considered teaching experience, marital status, and knowledge of a local language.
- A large percentage of officers at DEBS (41%), PEO (44%) and HQ (50%) indicated that guidelines for teacher placement were not available. Teacher placement is a headquarters role, which is often based on the need and vacancies available in the schools, with some consideration of teacher qualifications, performance and experience. Teachers may therefore be sent to regions where they do not know the local language. Given the shift towards local language instruction for all subjects in grades 1-4, there is a greater need to consider the languages teachers know when placing them across the country. If literacy levels are to improve, teacher placement guidelines should include assessment of teacher language competencies during placement.



| Policy Action Points  |
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| <p><b>Guidelines For Teacher Placement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher placement guidelines must be availed to all departments and levels in MOGE.</li> <li>• Ongoing orientations and sensitization should be done for officers across all the three levels of MOGE so that officers are aware of these guidelines.</li> <li>• Develop and improve the monitoring of teachers with greater focus on local language.</li> <li>• Include local language skills in the guidelines for teacher placement.</li> <li>• Introduce regular assessment of local language skills during and after teacher placement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Support local language use and knowledge in pre-service training</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss and consider more attention on Zambian languages in primary teacher training. If compulsory subjects in Zambian language are introduced, then also sensitize lecturers on the importance of introducing compulsory subjects in one or two Zambian languages. Include a variety of stakeholders, including colleges of education in consultations, including an audit of the local languages lecturers can teach by college.</li> <li>• The policy on training of teachers must align with the National Literacy Framework and other policies to accommodate the use of familiar languages as a medium of instruction.</li> <li>• In practice, lecturers can continue to encourage student teachers to respond and ask questions in the language they are most comfortable even prior to any policy revision.</li> </ul> |