USAID|ZAMBIA
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID Education Data Activity Annual Performance Report
Fiscal Year 2020: October 1, 2019, to September 30, 2020

Submission Date: October 30, 2020

Contract Number: 72061118C00005 under IDIQ AID-OAA-I-14-00057-ABE ACR

Contract/Agreement Period: April 9, 2018, to October 8, 2021
TOCOR Name: Ms. Yvonne Chomba

Submitted by: **DevTech Systems, Inc.**
                1700 North Moore Street,
                Suite 1720
                Arlington, Virginia 22209

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

Program Name	USAID Education Data activity
Activity Start Date and End Date	April 9, 2018–October 8, 2021
Name of Prime Implementing Partner	DevTech Systems, Inc.
Contract/Agreement Number	72061118C00005
Name of Subcontractors/Sub-awardees	Management Systems International (MSI) Khulisa Management Services (Pty) Ltd
Major Counterpart Organizations	Ministry of General Education (MoGE) Examinations Council of Zambia (ECZ)
Activity Goal	Provide distinct assessment, data management and research and evaluation services to monitor and track the progress of USAID's *Let's Read Project* bilateral activity.
Activity Objectives	• Complete two large-scale early grade reading assessments (EGRAs; baseline in 2018 and midline in 2020) • Strengthen the capacity of ECZ to independently conduct EGRAs in the future to inform policy-level decisions aimed at improving learning outcomes • Conduct research on topics agreed upon with USAID and in collaboration with MoGE
Geographic Coverage	The target population comprises 4,250 schools in 425 zones and 56 districts in the five target provinces; North Western, Western, Eastern, Muchinga and Southern.
Target Beneficiaries	Grade 2 learners and ECZ staff
Reporting Period	October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020

2. ACTIVITY IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

This report presents the USAID Education Data activity's performance progress from October 1, 2019, to September 30, 2020. The annual performance report covers major project accomplishments in collaboration with MoGE and ECZ. The report is organized according to the contractual tasks, reports and deliverables.

2.1 Key Highlights Summary

During the performance period, Education Data activity deliverables related to contracted tasks included:

Task 1: Language Mapping Exercise

Language Mapping Exercise. During Q1 FY20, USAID, ECZ and Education Data activity considered expanding the geographical scope of the Midline 2020 EGRA to all 10 provinces for national representation. Based on the need to have nationally representative learner data on literacy levels to inform future MoGE and ECZ policy, USAID expanded the geographical scope to include Northern, Luapula, Copperbelt, Central and Lusaka provinces. During Q3, Education Data activity presented language mapping plans to USAID and ECZ based on changes due to COVID-19 in Zambia. The plan outlines a mixed in-person and virtual approach to collecting school data from the five additional provinces not assessed at Baseline. While a finalized contract modification to expand the EGRA's geographical scope

occurred in Q4, USAID and Education Data activity recommended postponing the 2020 Midline EGRA because of risks caused by COVID-19. Following contingency planning and daily monitoring of health risks, Education Data activity shared a draft letter with USAID requesting permission from the MoGE Permanent Secretary to conduct language mapping activities. Education Data activity shared the letter on August 10, 2020, and USAID provided feedback on September 9, 2020. The Permanent Secretary of MoGE granted permission to conduct language mapping on September 21, 2020. Subsequently, Education Data activity and ECZ plan to conduct language mapping during the next performance period.

Task 2: Complete Preparations for the Upcoming EGRA

Competitive Procurement of a Local Survey Firm for the Midline EGRA. On April 24, 2020, Education Data activity published a revised Terms of Reference (ToR) to contract a local survey firm responsible for providing logistical and administrative EGRA support. Education Data activity advertised the TOR on DevTech's procurement webpage and contacted four Zambian survey firms: Policy and Monitoring and Research Centre (PMRC), Institute of Economic and Social Research (INESOR), Zambia Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (ZIPAR) and CAPOLSA. Firms had the opportunity to seek clarification and pose questions before the May 18, 2020, submission deadline. On May 27, 2020, the technical review committee met to review and rate the proposals based on ToR criteria and selected INESOR to support the EGRA. Education Data activity and INESOR staff frequently discussed the technical and budget proposals during Q3 with a focus on safeguarding EGRA participants from COVID-19, cost savings and Quality Control Officer (QCO) and assessor recruitment models. On August 4, 2020, Education Data activity submitted a request to subcontract INESOR to USAID. Following the August 20, 2020, meeting to postpone EGRA due to COVID-19, USAID has temporarily put the request to subcontract on hold. Efforts to advertise the local survey firm opportunity, analyze proposals, negotiate technical and budgetary factors and finalize the request to subcontract will help ensure high-quality completion of the EGRA once data collection can be rescheduled.

Midline Sampling Methodology. During the performance period, Education Data activity and USAID discussed two sampling methodologies for the Midline EGRA. The first, a longitudinal design, outlined returning to the 816 schools assessed during the 2018 EGRA Baseline. The second, a cross-sectional design, outlined a smaller sample to be drawn through matching similar performance, school and community characteristics with the 2018 Baseline sample. Following deliberations on the merits and challenges of both options during Q2 and Q3, USAID and Education Data activity agreed to return to the 816 schools recommended in the longitudinal sampling design. This change was reflected in the finalized, executed contract modification approved on August 12, 2020.

School Verification: Let's Read *Target Provinces.* As part of Midline 2020 EGRA preparations, Education Data activity verified that the Baseline 2018 EGRA sampled schools from the five target provinces of Let's Read were still open. The exercise aimed to finalize the Midline 2020 EGRA sample and support logistical planning for data collection. Education Data activity verified the 816 Baseline sampled schools using *Let's Read* school databases verified in April and May 2020 and MoGE headquarters databases. Following administrative district changes in Eastern province, Education Data activity conducted a field visit in Q4 to verify current schools. Eastern province provincial, district and school staff informed Education Data activity that new districts were created and some sampled EGRA schools have since been consolidated to new districts, including but not limited to Chipangali, Chasefu, Kasenengwa, Lusangazi and Lumezi districts. Out of the 816 schools assessed at baseline, 96 percent of sampled schools (786 schools) are verified as open, with 30 closed or requiring additional follow-up to support verification. See section 2.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan Update for more information.

Task 3: Finalize EGRA Instruments

EGRA Instruments. During the performance period, Education Data activity drafted, assembled and validated the Midline EGRA tools collaboratively with ECZ and the Centre for Curriculum Development (CDC),

MoGE. Following the Tools Assembly and Validation Workshop—explained in greater detail under *Task 5: ECZ Capacity Building*—Education Data activity, ECZ and CDC validated the Midline EGRA tools in all seven Zambian languages of instruction (LoIs) on June 12, 2020. Education Data submitted the finalized Midline EGRA tools to USAID on July 8, 2020, for review and approval

Snapshot for School Management Effectiveness (SSME) Instruments. In preparation for the Midline EGRA, Education Data activity shared the Snapshot for School Management Effectiveness (SSME) tools—the learner, teacher and head teacher questionnaires and the school inventory checklist—with ECZ, the Research Coordinating Committee (RCC), MoGE and *Let's Read* to coordinate areas of interest, align the tools to MoGE initiatives and policies and avoid duplicate survey collection. During Q4, Education Data activity finalized the SSME draft tools. Given the recommendation to postpone the EGRA due to the prevailing COVID-19 situation, Education Data activity anticipates needing to revisit the tools before rescheduled EGRA Midline data collection with ECZ, MoGE, *Let's Read* and other partners as needed.

Task 4: Conduct the EGRA

EGRA Postponement. During Q2 and Q3, Education Data activity and USAID engaged in discussions to expand the geographical scope of EGRA and finalized plans on August 12, 2020. On August 20, 2020, Education Data activity and USAID recommended postponing the Midline 2020 EGRA based on safety and health concerns, compromised validity and reliability of the 2020 EGRA data and decreased feasibility of data collection in 2020. Due to school closures from March 20 to September 21, 2020, learners would not have received an equal amount of schooling in comparison to Baseline nor a full academic year of school, which are recommended best practices for conducting EGRAs, according to *Guidance for USAID Education Sector Implementing Partners: Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic* (MEL Guidance). As a result of the recommendation to postpone the EGRA, Education Data activity submitted a formal request to USAID to postpone the Midline 2020 EGRA on September 9, 2020, plus a request for extension for all deliverables affected by this decision, submitted to USAID on September 15, 2020. Education Data activity and USAID frequently discuss planning for the Midline EGRA based on the COVID-19 situation in Zambia and best practices for generating reliable data. The EGRA postponement presents an opportunity for USAID, ECZ, MoGE and Education Data activity to conduct contingency planning and examine potential learning loss and backsliding, as discussed under Task 7 below.

Task 5: ECZ Capacity Building

Midline EGRA Tools Assembly and Validation Workshop. Education Data activity staff conducted the Midline EGRA Tools Assembly and Validation workshop on June 8, 9, 10 and 12, 2020, with five ECZ Research Unit and eight CDC participants. On the first day, Dr. Abdullah Ferdous of MSI outlined the process to choose the Midline EGRA piloted subtask items using classical test item theory properties and assisted ECZ and CDC in choosing the Chitonga subtasks. Because three versions of EGRA were piloted in 2018, Education Data activity used statistical analysis from the piloted versions to inform the assembly of the Midline EGRA tools. Next, the CDC Language Specialists presented recommended revisions to the tools, and workshop participants adopted revisions on a case-by-case basis. In alignment with the Transition Strategy, ECZ staff led the assembly and validation process for the remaining six LoIs. As a result of the workshop, participants assembled and validated the Midline EGRA tools for all seven LoIs. To minimize physical contact, Education Data activity limited the amount of physically present individuals by revising two EGRA tools a day, resulting in fewer participants present per day. During the workshop, Education Data activity provided face masks and ensured participants were seated at least one meter apart, consistent with Ministry of Health (MoH) guidelines. Additional information on adaptations due to COVID-19 is included in 2.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan Update.

EGRA Budgeting Workshop. On June 23–24, 2020, Education Data activity conducted the EGRA Budgeting Workshop with four ECZ Research Unit and Accounting staff. Like the EGRA Tools Assembly and Validation workshop, Education Data activity used a mixed in-person and virtual approach to conduct the

workshop. On the first day, Education Data activity staff provided an overview of the RTI International EGRA Calculator and used the ECZ National Estimates Research Study (NERS) Concept Note (see Task 7 for additional information) to estimate the number of days in the field and associated costs to produce a budget for data collection. Education Data activity also provided ECZ with ECZ- and Zambia-specific budget estimation templates to support future efforts to estimate large-scale assessment costs. The second day focused on budgeting for contingencies such as school inaccessibility due to extreme rains that could increase costs during data collection. Participants also learned how to budget for dissemination events for provincial, district and school stakeholders. ECZ participants prepared, presented and discussed the advantages and disadvantages of two results dissemination models and the estimated budgets for each.

EGRA Technical Working Group with ECZ. On April 1, 2020, Education Data activity requested that ECZ leadership grant permission to form a Technical Working Group for Midline EGRA preparations and implementation. The request built on previously collaborative meetings with ECZ to discuss availability and seek input for planning and timelines. The group comprises members of the ECZ Research Unit, Education Data activity and the USAID Education Office. The group first met on April 23, 2020, to advance discussions on expanding the geographical scope of EGRA and has continued ongoing, frequent meetings. Meetings have helped group members clarify roles and responsibilities for a national EGRA, agree on tentative timelines, plan language mapping activities and agree on skills-building workshop priority areas.

Capacity Index Survey with ECZ. In November 2018, Education Data activity administered an online survey for ECZ officials to assess ECZ's baseline capacity to conduct large-scale EGRAs consistent with performance indicator SIR 3.1.1. MoGE Systems Strengthened, Indicator 3: Institutional capacity at ECZ to implement EGRA. The baseline survey was intended to identify human, equipment, infrastructure and financial gaps and current skill levels to inform targeted needs-based training. Education Data activity conducted the same 2018 capacity index survey with ECZ staff during the performance period to understand how skills may have changed over the course of the activity. The Midline survey conducted in June 2020 found that ECZ staff reported a moderate to high capacity to conduct 50 percent of the 11 subtasks. This represents a 14 percent increase from Baseline. Overall, ECZ staff report increased capacity including increased knowledge and skills in 80 percent of the EGRA subtasks, despite not conducting the 2020 Midline EGRA because of the recommendation to postpone. The reported increase in capacity demonstrates the promise of ECZ's commitment to lead 50 percent of Midline EGRA and NERS tasks, consistent with the *Transition Strategy*.

Task 7: Research Studies

Early Childhood Education (ECE) Baseline Research Study: Preparations and Data Collection. Education Data activity consulted the Directorate of ECE, UNICEF, Save the Children, *Let's Read* and USAID to finalize the ECE research study design, consisting of a 52-school purposeful sample in Eastern and Western provinces. Education Data activity held three workshops in December 2019 to adapt, translate and validate the Save the Children International Development and Early Learning Assessment (IDELA) and MELQO Measure Early Learning Environment (MELE) tool for Zambian use. In total, 13 MoGE, ECZ and UNZA staff attended the workshops. After MoGE and ECZ validated the research tools, the UNZA Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the ECE Baseline Research Study on January 9, 2020. In addition to pursuing IRB approval, Education Data activity sought to procure local survey firm administrative and logistical support and engaged the Centre for the Promotion of Literacy in Sub-Saharan Africa (CAPOLSA), UNZA. Prior to QCO and Assessor Training, Education Data activity trained CAPOLSA staff on the research tools and conducted pre-tests at two Lusaka-based primary schools. The MoGE Directorates of ECE and Planning & Information, ECZ, Education Data activity and CAPOLSA trained 19 female and 15 male participants during the QCO and Assessor training, which took place February 3–7, 2020. As part of the training, Education Data activity conducted Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) tests to ensure participants understood test administration procedures against the gold standard. From all attendees, 24 participants

were selected to support Baseline data collection based on their IRR scores and participation during training. Prior to data collection, QCOs and assessors conducted dry runs in Chipata, Katete and Nyimba districts to further practice administering the instruments with ECE and Grade 1 learners and ECE teachers. Baseline data collection took place February 12–March 13, 2020. During this period, data collection teams assessed 1,093 ECE and Grade 1 learners and observed 50 ECE classrooms.

ECE Baseline Research Study Data Cleaning & Analysis. During Q3 and Q4, Education Data activity cleaned and analyzed the learner and school observation data, consistent with guidance provided by Save the Children and ECD Measure. For the IDELA and MELE tools, Education Data activity used Cronbach's alpha and correlation statistics to measure the internal reliability of the tools. Education Data activity also calculated frequencies, averages, cross-tabulations and other descriptive statistics to discern sample demographics and produce detailed summary statistics on learners' performance in various early childhood development domains. Results are disaggregated by sex, participation in ECE and LoI for all learner performance data when possible. Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression models applied to ECE learner and MELE data examined the isolated effects of various factors on predicted values of school readiness scores among ECE learners while controlling for other factors. Various OLS regression models allowed Education Data activity staff to identify consistent, stable relationships between factors and outcomes. Using Cronbach's alpha statistics, correlations, regressions and descriptive statistical computations, Education data drew key findings with a high degree of confidence.

ECE Baseline Research Study Report. Education Data activity submitted the ECE Research Study 2020 Baseline Report to USAID/Zambia on September 30, 2020. The report outlines the sampling methodology; tools and limitations; results on learner, teacher and school characteristics; ECE learner performance results in Eastern and Western province; MELE results and factors associated with ECE learners' school readiness. The report concludes that ECE in the sampled schools positively contributes to learners' skill development with statistically significant differences in performance among ECE learners and Grade 1 learners who did and did not attend ECE. Regardless of statistically significant differences, Grade 1 learners who participated in ECE still exhibit low skills in letter identification, phonemic awareness and oral comprehension, with second language learners performing worse off than those who learn in the language they speak at home. The findings indicate that ECE classrooms are significantly overenrolled, most ECE teachers use repetitive or rote instruction and few teachers provide opportunities for learners to develop expressive language and listening skills.

Recommendations for MoGE include but are not limited to:

1. gradually expanding ECE programming;
2. developing localized benchmarks and assessments to measure learners' skills throughout the year;
3. collaborating with *Let's Read* to institutionalize play-based ECE;
4. aligning language and literacy components of the ECE Syllabi with the National Literacy Framework and
5. encouraging age-appropriate enrollment of ECE learners.

Recommendations for Let's Read include but are not limited to:

1. providing training and support for ECE teachers to implement play-based methods;
2. focusing on improving expressive language, oral comprehension and vocabulary skills for second language learners;
3. improving access to adequate reading and play materials;
4. collaborating with MoGE to strengthen the ECE Syllabi, especially for emergent literacy and
5. planning for ECE teacher turnover.

See section 2.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan Update for more on ECE Baseline Research Study results.

National Estimates Research Study. Following Q2 discussions with ECZ and USAID to expand the geographical scope of EGRA, ECZ agreed to lead the National Estimates Research Study (NERS) to generate national EGRA estimates by applying EGRA and SSME tools in approximately 500 schools nationwide. The purpose of the research study will be to examine nation-wide trends in reading skills across the entire country at the provincial- and language-levels to inform policy, curriculum development and instruction in all 10 Zambian provinces. Further, NERS provides an opportunity to build ECZ capacity and sustainably transition EGRA tasks to ECZ in preparation for future EGRAs and large-scale assessments. The NERS will be a national ECZ-led study to assess literacy performance levels in all 10 Zambian provinces and 7 LoI. ECZ drafted the NERS Concept Note and first submitted it to Education Data activity on April 4, 2020. The Concept Note outlines the proposed research design and methodology, including objectives, research questions, sample size, training, analysis and report writing. ECZ and Education Data activity sought clarification and consensus during the EGRA Technical Working Group in Q3 and Q4. As part of ongoing discussions, ECZ submitted revised Concept Notes on April 27 and May 11, 2020, to the EGRA Technical Working Group. Because the NERS and Midline EGRA will generate data to create national estimates, ECZ and Education Data activity frequently collaborate on design and timelines.

Learning Loss Research Study. During Q4, USAID and Education Data activity discussed using the Baseline 2018 EGRA data to examine learning loss during COVID-19. The USAID MEL Guidance issued in June 2020[1] outlines that EGRAs conducted before school closures can serve as pre-COVID data with which current data can be compared to assess learning loss due to disruptions to learning. During the period of performance, Education Data activity began developing a research proposal to examine learning loss and the psychosocial well-being of learners to inform remediation planning. Education Data activity consulted ECZ on August 28, 2020, to solicit their input on the proposal. During the subsequent period of performance, Education Data activity will submit the research proposal to USAID/Zambia for their consideration and approval. Additionally, Education Data activity is conducting stakeholder engagement to increase MoGE and ECZ coordination, respond to questions of MoGE interest and avoid duplication of research efforts. For instance, the USAID/Zambia Teaching at the Right Level, or "Catch Up" Learning Loss Study utilized pre and post COVID reading and numeracy data from teacher-led assessments of learners from the upper primary grades 3 – 5. In contrast, the proposed Learning Loss Research Study to be conducted under Education Data activity aims to quantify learning loss specifically in relation to reading skills by assessing learners who just completed Grade 2 in the syllable sound knowledge, non-word word reading, oral reading fluency passage and reading comprehension in local languages. In addition, through the learner questionnaire, the research study will further examine how COVID-19 school closures affected learners' psycho-social well-being and through focus group discussions with teachers and headteachers collect, it will collect important school-level data to inform the design of remedial activities in the upcoming school year.

Reports and Deliverables

Periodic Progress Reports. Education Data activity submitted the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 Quarter (Q) 1 progress report on January 15, 2020. Based on USAID feedback, Education Data activity revised the report, and USAID approved the final report on March 3, 2020. Education Data activity submitted the FY20Q2 progress report on April 15, 2020. Based on USAID feedback, Education Data activity revised the report, and USAID approved it on July 14, 2020. Education Data activity submitted the FY20Q3 progress report on July 15, 2020. Based on USAID feedback, Education Data activity revised the report, and USAID approved it on September 10, 2020.

---

[1] https://www.edu-links.org/resources/guidance-usaid-education-sector-implementing-partners-monitoring-evaluation-and-learning.

2.2 Implementation Status Table

The table below provides a summary and status of activities for each contracted task between October 1, 2019, and September 30, 2020.

Planned Annual Work Plan Activities	Achievement Status	Implementation Issues	Actions for Next Quarter
Task 1: Complete a Language Mapping			
1.1 Baseline Language Mapping Report	**Complete:** On Jan 9, 2019, USAID approved the Language Mapping report, which can be accessed at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00THW7.pdf.		
1.2 Midline Language Mapping preparations	**Incomplete:** Based on the Aug 12, 2020-approved contract modification permitting language mapping in the five additional provinces where *Let's Read* is not implemented, Education Data activity sent a draft language mapping plan for ECZ and USAID review in April 2020. Based on ECZ and USAID feedback and the COVID-19 situation in Zambia, Education Data activity revised the language mapping plan and resubmitted it to USAID on July 23, 2020.	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and in-person nature of language mapping, Education Data activity revised its plan and accordingly submitted a request to redirect activities to USAID.	Visit provinces based on the FY21Q1 language mapping plan and preparations
1.3 Seek MoGE permission	**Complete:** During Q4, Education Data activity submitted a request to the MoGE Permanent Secretary, Mr. Kalumba Jobbicks, to conduct the Language Mapping Exercise in the additional five provinces. On September 10, 2020, the Permanent Secretary granted Education Data activity permission to move forward with the exercise. Then, the Director of Planning and Information, Mr. Mwansa, sent letters to each of the five provincial education offices informing them of the forthcoming exercise.		
1.3 Midline Language Mapping Report (Deliverable)	**Incomplete:** Based on the request to postpone the EGRA sent on September 9, 2020, Education Data activity sent a request to USAID to extend contractual deliverables affected by the EGRA postponement on Sep 15, 2020. Education Data activity requested an extension to the Midline Language Mapping Report due date from October 9, 2020, to February 15, 2021, to prepare and finalize a contract modification to postpone the EGRA.	The COVID-19 pandemic and school closures affected EGRA implementation timelines and led to the recommendation to postpone the Midline 2020 EGRA.	Follow up as needed with USAID/Zambia regarding this request to ensure agreement on revised timelines and due dates for this deliverable

Planned Annual Work Plan Activities	Achievement Status	Implementation Issues	Actions for Next Quarter
Task 2: Complete preparation for the EGRA and EGRA pilot assessment			
2.1 School Verification of Baseline EGRA schools	**Incomplete:** As part of the Midline 2020 EGRA preparations, Education Data activity verified that the Baseline 2018 EGRA sampled schools were still open to support the development of the Sampling Methodology Plan and logistical planning for data collection. Out of the 816 schools assessed at baseline, Education Data activity verified that 96 percent, or 786, of sampled schools as open, with 30 closed or requiring additional follow-up.	None	Once a new Midline EGRA timeline is finalized, Education Data activity will reassess the most appropriate time during EGRA preparation to verify the status of the Baseline schools
2.2 Sampling Methodology Plan (Deliverable)	**Incomplete:** Based on the request to postpone the EGRA sent September 9, 2020, Education Data activity sent a request to extend contractual deliverables affected by the EGRA postponement on September 15, 2020. Education Data activity requests to extend the Midline Sampling Methodology Plan to May 30, 2021.

Drawing a representative sample for the NERS is dependent on updated language mapping results. Education Data activity plans to select a nationally representative sample with ECZ in the Sampling Workshop, including up to 500 schools in all 10 provinces for the NERS. | The COVID-19 pandemic and school closures affected EGRA implementation timelines and led to the recommendation to postpone 2020 Midline EGRA.

To adapt to mixed in-person and virtual workshops, Education Data activity submitted a request to redirect implementation for the sampling workshop in July 2020. | Liaise with USAID and ECZ to plan for and conduct the Sampling Workshop |
| Task 3: Finalize EGRA instruments and Complete Training | | | |
| 3.1 Finalize the Midline EGRA instruments | **Complete:** From June 8 to 12, 2020, Education Data activity worked with the ECZ Research Unit and CDC Language Specialists to assemble and validate the Midline EGRA tools in seven local languages. Education Data activity shared the EGRA tools with USAID for review on July 8, 2020. | None | Revise the EGRA tools based on USAID comments and program the Midline EGRA tools within Myna |

Planned Annual Work Plan Activities	Achievement Status	Implementation Issues	Actions for Next Quarter
3.2 Finalize the Midline SSME instruments	**Incomplete:** Education Data activity consulted USAID, *Let's Read*, MSI, ECZ, and the Directorate of Planning and Information, MoGE, to solicit feedback and collaboration on the school profile and learner, teacher and head teacher questionnaires and finished English SSME tools. Education Data activity advertised for translation services for the learner questionnaire. Following the recommendation to postpone EGRA, Education Data activity anticipates needing to revise and translate the tools during the next performance period prior to Midline EGRA.	The COVID-19 pandemic and school closures affected EGRA implementation timelines and led to the recommendation to postpone 2020 Midline EGRA.	Once the Midline EGRA timeline is finalized, work with *Let's Read* and ECZ to review and, as necessary, revise the SSME tools
Task 4: Conduct EGRAs and Complete reports			
4.1 Baseline EGRA Report	**Complete:** Education Data activity completed the Baseline EGRA report in August 2019; it can be accessed here: https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00TZM9.pdf.		
4.2 Conduct Midline EGRA	**Incomplete:** On September 9, 2020, Education Data activity submitted a request to postpone the Midline EGRA following a discussion with USAID on August 20, 2020.	None	Continue to assess COVID-19 situation in Zambia and MoGE revised schedules to recommend a new timeline for EGRA implementation
Task 5: ECZ Capacity Building			
5.1 Skills Workshop 2: Data Cleaning and Analysis	**Incomplete:** In FY2020, Education Data activity identified a Data Analyst from MSI to lead the workshop in December 2019 on EGRA data cleaning and analysis. However, in November 2019, USAID and Education Data activity discussed expanding the geographical scope of EGRA, resulting in the postponement of the workshop.	None	Once the Midline EGRA timeline has been finalized, work with ECZ and USAID to reschedule Workshop 2
5.2 Skills Workshop 3: EGRA Sampling	**Incomplete:** In November 2019, USAID and Education Data activity discussed expanding the geographical scope of EGRA, resulting in pending changes to the Midline sample. As a result, Education Data activity proposed the sampling workshop to be rescheduled after the contract modification.	The COVID-19 pandemic and school closures affected EGRA implementation timelines and led to the recommendation to postpone 2020 Midline EGRA.	Education Data activity will work with ECZ to reschedule the workshop once Midline EGRA timeline has been agreed with USAID.

Planned Annual Work Plan Activities	Achievement Status	Implementation Issues	Actions for Next Quarter
5.3 Skills Workshop 3: EGRA Tools Assembly and Validation	**Complete:** Education Data activity conducted the Midline EGRA Tools Validation and Assembly workshop on June 8, 9, 10 and 12, 2020, with CDC Language Specialists and ECZ Research Unit officials. The ECZ Research Unit, Education Data activity staff, and Dr. Abdullah Ferdous of MSI facilitated the workshop to choose the piloted EGRA subtasks according to their psychometric properties. CDC Language Experts then recommended and incorporated revisions to increase the clarity and accuracy of the content for Grade 2 learners. The workshop produced the Midline EGRA assessment protocols in all seven Zambian LoIs.	None	None
5.4 Workshop 3: Budgeting for Large-Scale Assessments and EGRA	**Complete:** Education Data activity held the Budgeting for Large-Scale Assessments workshop on June 23 and 24, 2020. The Deputy Program Manager and Program Manager/Team Lead facilitated the workshop for officials from the ECZ Research and Accounting units. Participants increased their understanding of the RTI EGRA Calculator and used the ECZ draft NERS concept note to develop an aligned data collection budget, plan for contingency costs and budget for two results dissemination workshop models. The workshop produced three budgets—one for data collection and two for the results dissemination workshops.	None	None
5.4 Skills Workshop 4: Myna and Electronic data collection	**Incomplete:** Due to the hands-on nature of the Myna workshop, Education Data activity recommended postponing this workshop until short-term technical support can travel to Zambia. Currently, because of COVID-19, international travel is not possible. On August 20, 2020, USAID advised Education Data activity to request postponing EGRA. Education Data activity proposes that Workshop 4 be rescheduled prior to the Midline EGRA.	The COVID-19 pandemic and school closures affected EGRA implementation timelines and led to the recommendation to postpone the Midline 2020 EGRA.	Liaise with USAID and ECZ on Midline EGRA implementation timelines to reschedule Workshop 4
5.5 Submission of training data to TEAMS (Deliverable)	**Complete**: On September 16, 2020, Education Data activity updated training data for the EGRA Tools Assembly & Validation and Budgeting workshops and ECE QCO and Assessor Training, resulting in the successful submission of all FY20 data to USAID's new TEAMS database.	None	None

Planned Annual Work Plan Activities	Achievement Status	Implementation Issues	Actions for Next Quarter
5.6 Formation of EGRA planning Working Group with ECZ	**Complete:** In 2019, Education Data activity proposed forming the Midline 2020 EGRA Technical Working Group with ECZ to coordinate all EGRA activities. Following discussions to engage ECZ in EGRA planning alongside a pending contract modification, Education Data activity sought permission to establish the Technical Working Group in April 2020. The group comprises staff from the ECZ Research Unit, USAID and Education Data activity. The team held multiple collaborative and planning meetings throughout the performance period.		Hold additional meetings periodically throughout the remainder of the activity's period of performance

Task 6: Disseminate EGRA results to key stakeholders			
Complete: Education Data activity completed all baseline dissemination activities of the EGRA results to stakeholders in June 2019.			
6.1 Dissemination Materials uploaded to *Let's Read* tablets	**Incomplete:** In June 2020, *Let's Read* informed Education Data activity that tablets would be distributed to *Let's Read* provincial stakeholders. Education Data activity sent Baseline EGRA dissemination materials to *Let's Read* to reinforce school-level stakeholders' access to the results and recommendations to support local policy and implementation decisions.		Once *Let's Read* installs the software, upload the materials

Task 7: Conduct Research Studies			
7.1 ECE Research Study Design	**Complete:** On Dec 11, 2019, Education Data activity and USAID agreed to assess Let's Read ECE implementation with two data collections, a baseline in February 2020 and an end line in January/February 2021. Based on Let's Read ECE intervention timeline changes, Education Data activity revised the ECE Research study proposal. IRB approval was granted by the Directorate of Research Studies, UNZA granted IRB approval on Jan 9, 2020.	None	None
7.2 Tools Adaptation, Translation and Validation Workshops	**Complete:** Education Data activity held Adaptation, Translation and Validation workshops December 12–13, 16–17 and 19–20, respectively, at the Lusaka Provincial Resource Center. A total of 13 MoGE and UNZA staff (six females and seven males) attended the three workshops. MoGE participants included staff from ECZ, CDC and the Directorate of ECE.	None	None

Planned Annual Work Plan Activities	Achievement Status	Implementation Issues	Actions for Next Quarter
7.3 Procurement of local survey firm	**Complete:** UNZA, CAPOLSA signed a professional service contract on January 14, 2020, to provide logistical and administrative support for the ECE Baseline and Endline Research Study data collection.	None	None
7.4 QCO and assessor training and dry runs	**Complete:** QCO and Assessor training occurred February 3–7, 2020. Education Data activity and CAPOLSA master trainers trained 34 assessors (15 male and 19 female), with 48 attendees overall. 30 assessors were selected based on IRR scores, training participation and comprehension of the training material. Dry runs occurred in Eastern province and Western province February 11–14.	None	None
7.5 Baseline data collection	**Complete:** Following approval from Dr. Mulwanda, Permanent Secretary, Administration, MoGE, to conduct the research study, data collection occurred February 12–March 13, 2020. Six data collection teams, three in Eastern province and three in Western province, assessed 1,093 ECE and Grade 1 learners from 52 government-run primary schools and conducted 50 ECE teacher observations.	None	None
7.6 Data Cleaning of the Baseline IDELA and MELE datasets	**Complete:** Education Data activity received Mission Director approval on June 18, 2020, to engage a short-term technical assistance consultant to support the data cleaning, analysis and report writing of the ECE Baseline Research Study. During the period of performance, the consultant worked alongside Education Data activity home office staff to clean and analyze data in Stata and Microsoft Excel.	None	None
7.7 ECE Baseline Research Study Report	**Complete:** Education Data activity developed and submitted the ECE Baseline Research Study Report outline to USAID on June 4, 2020, for feedback and suggestions. Education Data activity submitted the ECE Baseline Research Study Report to USAID on September 30, 2020.	None	Based on USAID feedback, revise and resubmit the ECE Baseline report for approval

Planned Annual Work Plan Activities	Achievement Status	Implementation Issues	Actions for Next Quarter
7.8 National Estimates Research Study Concept Note	**Complete:** Following previous consultations with ECZ to lead the development of the NERS concept note, Education Data activity provided feedback on initial drafts during Technical Working Group meetings, after which ECZ revised the concept note and submitted it to Education Data activity on April 4, April 27 and May 11.	The COVID-19 pandemic and school closures affected the NERS implementation timelines and led to the recommendation to postpone 2020 data collection.	Liaise with ECZ and USAID on EGRA and NERS implementation timelines
7.9 Learning Loss Study Concept Note	**Incomplete:** On August 20, 2020, Education Data activity proposed to conduct a research study on learning loss due to COVID-19 and to explain how COVID-19 and/or school closures affected student learning and psychosocial wellbeing.	None	Conduct stakeholder engagement to coordinate research activities; Submit the research proposal to USAID for their feedback and approval
Other Accomplishments			
8.1 Year 2 Annual Work Plan (Deliverable)	**Complete:** On October 1, 2019, Education Data activity met with ECZ to discuss the proposed capacity building and EGRA preparation activities and timelines for Year 2. On October 4, 2019, ECZ expressed approval of the activities and timelines included in the Year 2 Annual Work Plan with minor adjustments as needed to align with ECZ schedules. Following ECZ's approval, Education Data activity submitted the revised Year 2 Annual Work Plan to USAID/Zambia on October 8, 2019. USAID/Zambia approved the Work Plan on October 15, 2019, and it can be accessed at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00W5HR.pdf.		
8.2 Annual Performance Report (Deliverable)	**Complete:** Education Data activity submitted the FY2019 Annual Performance Report to USAID on October 30, 2019. Based on USAID/Zambia feedback received on November 21, 2019, Education Data activity submitted a revised report incorporating USAID feedback on November 25, 2019. USAID/Zambia approved the report on December 18, 2019, and it can be accessed at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00W9CR.pdf.		

Planned Annual Work Plan Activities	Achievement Status	Implementation Issues	Actions for Next Quarter
8.3 FY2019 Q4 Financial Report (Deliverable)	**Complete:** Education Data activity submitted the FY2019 Quarter 4 Financial Report to USAID on October 30, 2019.		
8.4 FY2020 Q1 Quarterly Performance Report (Deliverable)	**Complete:** Education Data activity submitted the FY2020 Q1 Quarterly Performance Report to USAID on January 15, 2020. Based on USAID feedback, Education Data activity revised the report, and USAID approved it on March 3, 2020. It can be accessed on the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WGSQ.pdf.		
8.5 FY2020 Q1 Financial Report (Deliverable)	**Complete:** Education Data activity submitted an extension request for the FY2020 Q1 Financial Report on January 28, 2020, due to the unfortunate passing of Ms. Dorothy Daka, Education Data activity's Finance and Operations Manager. USAID/Zambia granted the extension request on February 13, 2020. Education Data activity submitted the FY2020 Q1 Financial Report to USAID on February 14, 2020.		
8.6 FY2020 Q2 Quarterly Performance Report (Deliverable)	**Complete:** Education Data activity submitted the FY2020 Q2 Performance Report to USAID on April 15, 2020. Education Data activity revised the report based on USAID feedback, and USAID approved it on July 17, 2020. The report can be accessed on the DEC at https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00WQMC.pdf.		
8.7 FY2020 Q2 Financial Report (Deliverable)	**Complete:** Education Data activity submitted the FY2020 Q2 Financial Report to USAID on April 29, 2020.		
8.8 FY2020 Q3 Quarterly Performance Report (Deliverable)	**Complete:** Education Data activity submitted the FY20 Q3 Performance Report to USAID on July 15, 2020. USAID provided feedback on September 10, 2020, and Education Data activity uploaded the approved report to the DEC on September 22, 2020.		
8.9 FY2020 Q3 Financial Report (Deliverable)	**Complete:** Education Data activity submitted the FY2020 Q3 Financial Report to USAID on Jul 30, 2020.		

Planned Annual Work Plan Activities	Achievement Status	Implementation Issues	Actions for Next Quarter
8.10 FY2020 Annual Inventory Report (Deliverable)	**Complete**: Education Data activity submitted the Annual Inventory report on April 6, 2020, outlining its inventory of project equipment and supplies.		
8.11 FY2020 Foreign Taxes Report	**Complete:** Education Data activity submitted the annual Foreign Taxes report on April 6, 2020.		

2.3 Management and Administrative Issues

The Program Manager/Team Lead (PM/TL) and Deputy Program Manager (DPM) established regular communication with the Education Data activity contracting officer's representative (COR) and alternate contracting officer's representative (ACOR) through weekly meetings held at the project office. After March 20, 2020, meetings continued virtually through Google Hangouts and Microsoft Teams. The PM/TL and DPM also maintained frequent communication with the home office through weekly virtual Microsoft Teams meetings.

Midline EGRA changes.

1. *Contract modification – National EGRA in 2020.* Following an in-person meeting held on February 14, 2020, with USAID, Education Data activity staff prepared and submitted a contract modification request to USAID/Zambia on March 10, 2020, to expand the geographical scope of the Midline EGRA to all 10 Zambian provinces. The modification includes changes associated with language mapping, Midline EGRA, dissemination activities, ECZ-led NERS and the procurement of a local survey firm to provide Midline EGRA logistical and administrative support. During Q3, DevTech Systems, Inc., contracts staff sought additional information on contract modification timeframes, and USAID, Education Data activity and DevTech home office staff met during Q3 and Q4 to clarify outstanding considerations such as updates to research study timelines, sampling methodologies and subcontractor requests. On August 7, 2020, USAID sent contract modification feedback. On August 12, 2020, USAID approved the contract modification outlining 2020 EGRA data collection in all 10 Zambian provinces.

2. *Request to Postpone EGRA.* During Q3 and Q4, Education Data activity shared research design and safety concerns on conducting data collection in 2020 due to COVID-19 and school closures. Concurrently, in June 2020, USAID/Washington published the MEL Guidance, which outlines that EGRA should, to the extent possible, be conducted after a full school year and pose no harm or risk to learners and participants. Following the approved contract modification for EGRA data collection in all 10 Zambian provinces on August 12, 2020, USAID and Education Data activity discussed postponing the EGRA due to COVID-19, resulting in the recommendation to postpone the EGRA. On September 9, 2020, the Director of Grants and Contracts at the DevTech home office submitted a request to postpone the EGRA because of safety and research design considerations to USAID/Zambia.

Staffing.

1. *Full-time staff.* During Q1, Education Data activity hired Mi-Mi Saunders as the DPM during the period of performance. In close collaboration with the Project Manager(PM)/Team Leader (TL), Mrs. Saunders provides technical and management support in Zambia and liaises with the home office to execute key project activities and deliverables. On June 4, 2020, Education Data activity hired Mr. Lombe Kasongamulilo as Finance and Operations Manager following the unfortunate passing of Ms. Dorothy Daka, the previous Finance and Operations Manager, on January 12, 2020. Mr. Lombe Kasongamulilo is a chartered accountant with over 15 years of finance experience on various USAID projects. Mr. Kasongamulilo disengaged from Education Data activity on September 30, 2020, to pursue other opportunities in southern Africa. During Q4, Education Data activity actively recruited for a Finance and Operations Manager and conducted interviews with several promising candidates. Education Data activity plans to extend an offer to a qualified individual in FY21Q1.

2. *Short-Term Technical Assistance (STTA).* During Q3, Education Data activity engaged Miguel Nunez to contribute to the ECE Baseline Research Study. Consistent with the project's approved budget, Education Data activity sought to procure additional STTA support during Q4. In August 2020, Education Data activity advertised for short-term services to procure translators for all seven Zambian languages, two research assistants to support language mapping, research studies and EGRA preparations and one training specialist to support Midline EGRA training implementation. Following the request to postpone EGRA, Education Data activity recommended to not engage translators and training specialists until finalizing Midline EGRA timelines. Education Data activity conducted interviews for the Mid- and Senior-Level Research Assistant consultancy positions in September 2020. In Y3, the Research Assistants will support data verification and synthesis for the language mapping exercise in the five additional provinces not assessed by *Let's Read*, among other activities.

2.4 Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan Update

Education Data Activity's Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Plan (AMELP) report and performance indicator reference sheets (PIRS) can be accessed on the DEC at https://pdf.usaid.gov/ pdf_docs/PA00THW6.pdf.

Collaboration, learning and adaptive management (CLA) highlights for this reporting period are:

Collaboration. Education Data activity collaboration with various stakeholders in education in Zambia are reported under Section 3, Stakeholder Involvement.

Learning. Key activities related to learning that took place during this performance period include:

1. *ECE Baseline Research Study Results.*

    a. *Training.* During the ECE QCO and Assessor Training, 88 percent of participants had general research experience, with 71 percent having experience in conducting learner assessments. Prior to data collection, Education Data activity organized a day of field practice and dry runs, resulting in all 34 QCO and assessors with IRR scores above the gold standard. During data collection, Education Data activity analyzed 102 IRR tests to measure the degree of similarity in ratings to ensure a high degree of consistency in the data. The results demonstrate a very high degree of agreement among assessors on the IDELA, resulting in high data reliability. More than 80 percent of all IRR assessments were above 95 percent, with only one score falling below 90 percent during the entire data collection period. The internal agreement among QCOs and assessors offers additional insights for data collection best practices to

continue integrating into evaluations and research studies, including but not limited to: placing restrictions or skip logic in electronic assessments to minimize test administration error; frequent assessment uploads for routine monitoring and contingency planning and communicating daily with survey firms, QCOs and assessors in real time to problem solve and support data collectors.

b. *The State of ECE in Zambia.* The ECE Baseline Research Study MELE results offer important information on the current state of ECE in Zambia considered against MoGE ECE standard Guidelines and ECE Syllabi. The results demonstrate that most ECE classrooms are significantly overenrolled, learner attendance is low and there are more female ECE teachers than male teachers, consistent with general trends across Zambia. Approximately 68 percent of all observed classrooms exceeded the 25–30 MoGE class size guideline, with 32 percent of classrooms having more than 50 learners enrolled per classroom. Regarding teacher pedagogies, MELE results reveal that most ECE teachers primarily use repetition to provide instruction to ECE learners. Across all ECE learning domains, 60 percent of teachers relied mostly on repetitive, rote methods, with 44 percent of instruction being exclusively repetition. Further, there are insufficient reading and play materials to support play-based pedagogies. In 90 percent of the ECE classrooms observed, there were no storybooks, and in 60 percent of classrooms, there were no education toys or math materials. Instead, 88 percent of teachers use their own materials and visuals to support learning, demonstrating resourcefulness and awareness of the importance of such resources in learning.

c. *Learner Performance.* School readiness levels are calculated as an average score of all four IDELA domains—emergent numeracy, emergent literacy, social and emotional skills and motor development—represented as a percentage. Overall, ECE learners scored 45 percent at baseline. ECE learners tended to perform best in the motor development domain in comparison to the emergent numeracy, social and emotional skills and emergent literacy domains. In contrast, the overall Grade 1 school readiness score is 59.5 percent. There is a statistically significant difference in school readiness scores for Grade 1 learners that have and have not attended ECE. Learners that have not attended ECE have a school readiness score of 57 percent, while those that have attended ECE have a 62 percent score. This finding demonstrates that ECE programming in the sampled schools positively contributes to learners' skills development. Other findings indicate that while ECE does positively contribute to school readiness skills, Grade 1 learners who have attended ECE still exhibit low skills in letter identification, phonemic awareness and oral comprehension. In addition, the learner performance data yield that second language learners perform worse than those who learn in a language they speak at home. The findings suggest the need to continue supporting ECE development in Zambia, focusing on emergent literacy and listening comprehension.

d. *Public Gassing & Safety.* Coinciding with heavy rains, national incidents of public gassing attacks and ritual killings resulted in community-borne mob violence targeted at any non-community members deemed to be a suspect of gassing. As a result of increased risk to data collection teams, Education Data activity worked in close collaboration with CAPOLSA to ensure data collection teams were safe and supported by revising its procedures and protocols. Additional security measures taken included (1) increasing the frequency of communication between data collection teams, CAPOLSA and Education Data activity; (2) ensuring QCOs call each school prior to travel to evaluate localized safety conditions; (3) informing district education boards (DEBs) and the police when traveling to and from districts; (4) instituting a policy recommending teams to travel with a representative from the local DEBs or police to schools; (5) removing teams from districts experiencing elevated risk and (6) recommending that one team return to Lusaka and resume data collection once the security risks subsided. As a result

of the revised policies, there were no safety incidents, and all data collection teams were able to complete data collection in the sampled schools.

2. *ECZ Skills Workshops.* During Q3, Education Data activity conducted two skills-building workshops to adapt and verify the Midline EGRA tools and budget for large-scale assessments. Of budgeting, one participant noted that "the training has improved my understanding of the variables to consider when developing the budget, and additionally, it will improve efficiency in budget formulation." Of test adaptation and validation, one participant noted he or she had increased knowledge in "how to plot items and how to evaluate the number of timed tests or items." Participant testimonials help demonstrate reported increases in ECZ capacity. In Year 2, ECZ staff reported a 14 percent increased capacity to implement EGRA tasks, with increased capacity in 80 percent of all reported EGRA subtasks. Further, the results yield focused areas for additional development, such as skills development for sample size calculations, data cleaning and analysis and report writing. During Year 2, Education Data activity and ECZ planned to conduct workshops on sampling methodologies and selection and data cleaning and analysis. Given the request to postpone EGRA due to COVID-19, Education Data activity will continue collaborating with ECZ to strengthen capacity based on ECZ preference and conduct workshops concurrent with EGRA implementation.

3. Let's Read *School Verification.* During Q4, Education Data activity verified the open or closed designation status of the 816 schools assessed during the 2018 Baseline EGRA. Education Data activity collaborated with MoGE and *Let's Read* and obtained school databases for comparison. Education Data activity triangulated the data by drawing information from the MoGE, *Let's Read*, and Education Data activity school databases to identify data gaps or inconsistencies and which schools are still open and have closed since 2018. After data triangulation and an in-person provincial visit, Education Data activity verified that 96 percent (786) of sampled schools are open and two percent (16) have closed since 2018. The verification results demonstrate that Eastern and North Western provinces specifically require additional verification. Between 2018 and 2020, three new districts were created in Eastern Province, accounting for some sampled schools being geographically grouped in different districts or administrative areas versus Baseline. Regarding North Western province, there were some LoI inconsistencies with Lunda, Luvale and Kiikaonde. Because of the request to postpone the EGRA, additional verification was paused, noting the recommendation to not conduct EGRA assessments during 2020. Additional verification of the 2018 Baseline EGRA sample will be conducted prior to the Midline EGRA. Additional details can be found in Table 1.

Table I. 2020 School Verification of 2018 Baseline EGRA Sample

	2018		2020			
Language	**Assessed**	**Replacements**	**Open**	**Closed**	**Requires follow up**	**Total**
Chitonga	156	6	151	2	3	156
Cinyanja	150	9	149	1	0	150
Silozi	165	21	158	5	2	165
Icibemba	90	8	87	2	1	90
Lunda	82	2	74	2	6	82
Luvale	88	13	87	0	1	88
Kiikaonde	85	14	80	4	1	85

	2018		2020			
Language	Assessed	Replacements	Open	Closed	Requires follow up	Total
Totals	816	73	786	16	14	816
		9%	96%	2%	2%	100%

Adapting. Key technical and management activities related to adapting during this performance period include:

1. *EGRA implementation timelines.* On September 14, 2020, MoGE released the *Guidance on the Re-Opening of Schools* (Guidance) for all provincial education officers (PEOs), DEBs, and head teachers. The guidance outlined when schools will reopen, school fee payments, learning schedules, and revised school schedules. MoGE instructed all school personnel to begin the school year where school closures left off, resulting in non-examination learners starting Term 2 of the 2020 school year on September 21, 2020, and Term 3 opening on January 4, 2021. A revised school calendar has implications for EGRA timeline implementation, as EGRAs should be conducted after a year of academic instruction, or in Term 3. In addition, to be comparable to the 2018 Baseline EGRA, the Midline EGRA should be scheduled in Term 3 and after learners have received a full year of instruction. During Q4, Education Data activity discussed three revised EGRA timeline scenarios with ECZ and USAID to conduct contingency planning based on the request to postpone EGRA. Education Data activity anticipates reaching a consensus on EGRA postponement timelines with USAID and ECZ in Year 3.

2. *Employment Code of 2019.* The Employment Code Act, No. 3 of 2019 passed in May 2019 dictates updated requirements for employers and employees. To ensure DevTech is compliant with the new law, during Q2 and Q3, Education Data activity competitively solicited and procured legal services to interpret and apply the law for the DevTech Zambia Field Office. As a result, DevTech has updated employee contracts consistent with the law.

3. *Changes in QCO and Assessor Training Models.* During Q3 and Q4, Education Data activity collaborated with INESOR to examine the merits and areas for improvement on the technical and budget proposals. As part of negotiations, Education Data activity and INESOR considered adaptations to comply with MoH COVID-19 safety guidelines. Due to health and safety restrictions caused by COVID-19, additional training models and implementation were considered and incorporated into implementation plans. Some adaptations include considerations for provincial-based QCO and assessor trainings. Due to in-person gathering limitations and linguistic differences, conducting training in different provinces will allow for smaller gatherings, reduce travel and minimize in-person contact. Another consideration includes conducting a trainer of trainers event to ensure quality assurance across all QCO and assessor trainings, regardless of location. See Table 2 for additional information.

Table 2. Proposed Training Model

Training	Description	Participants	Location	Duration
Training of Trainers	Training for master trainers (MTs) to ensure quality assurance across all QCO and assessor trainings	ECZ, USAID Education Data activity, MSI & local survey firm	Lusaka	3–4 days
QCO	Training for QCOs to administer EGRA and SSME tools, supervise data collection teams, ensure Test Administration Manual fidelity of implementation, IRR testing and procedures, random sampling and school procedures.	QCOs, ECZ, USAID, Education Data activity, MSI, local survey firm, MoGE	Lusaka	5 days
QCO/ Assessor	Training for QCOs/assessors to administer EGRA, understand the Test Administration Manual procedures, school procedures, roles and responsibilities, practice conducting EGRA with learners and school procedures	QCOs, assessors, ECZ, USAID, Education Data activity, MSI, local survey firm, MoGE	Chipata, Kasama, Solwezi, Choma & Mongu	5 days
Dry-runs	In-person practice administering the EGRA at non-sampled schools in the LoI for QCOs and assessors	QCOs, assessors, ECZ, USAID, Education Data activity, MSI, local survey firm	Various	2 days

4. *Redirection of Activities.* During Q4, Education Data activity submitted a request to change the modality of activities due to COVID-19 for the (1) sampling sessions of Workshop 3; (2) Midline Language Mapping Exercise; and (3) QCO/Assessor Training for the Midline EGRA. Expected changes and varying budget considerations were recommended to align to MoH, USAID, and DevTech guidance to minimize in-person contact as much as possible. Adaptations included planning for virtual presentations via Microsoft Teams, breaking workshops into shorter periods and spread over a longer timeframe, assisting with virtual communication with local stakeholders including providing data bundles and talk time and, as needed, considering additional STTA support remotely via Microsoft Teams.

5. *Learning Loss.* During Q4, an outgrowth of discussions to postpone EGRA included a recommendation to examine learning loss due to school closures caused by COVID-19. As expressed in the MEL Guidance, having reliable historical data such as the 2018 Baseline EGRA results on learning outcomes is a necessary precondition for capturing learning loss. Education Data activity views a potential postponement as an important opportunity to adapt research efforts to examine learning loss using the 2018 Baseline EGRA results as the basis to compare learning levels pre- and post-school closures. In collaboration with USAID, ECZ and MSI, Education Data activity drafted a learning loss research study proposal with a proposed sample comprising a small subset of Baseline 2018 EGRA schools. During the next performance period, Education Data activity plans to conduct stakeholder engagement with ECZ, MoGE, USAID and other education sector organizations such as EDC, VVOB and UNICEF. Stakeholder engagement results will help Education Data activity revise and align the research design to MoGE interests and needs, increase collaboration and avoid duplication among implementing partners. Education Data activity will revise as necessary and submit the research proposal to USAID/Zambia for consideration and approval.

3. STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

A key component of Education Data activity is engaging the Government of the Republic of Zambia (GRZ) and other key education stakeholders to promote sustainability and ensure alignment of activities. Education Data activity held and participated in several meetings and discussions to support stakeholder involvement.

3.1 Inter-Activity Collaboration

During the performance period, Education Data activity periodically met with *Let's Read* to foster inter-activity collaboration. Beginning November 6, 2019, *Let's Read* and Education Data activity discussed ECE implementation timelines and proposed ECE research study timelines and methodology, and *Let's Read* postponed ECE implementation from January to May 2020. Education Data activity and *Let's Read* agreed to continue communicating should any implementation changes occur to best coordinate research and provide accurate data for USAID, *Let's Read* and MoGE. During Q1FY20, Education Data activity attended the *Let's Read* launch in Eastern province on November 12, 2019. On November 13, 2019, Education Data activity observed the ECE training of trainers to better understand the *Let's Read* ECE training curriculum and ensure alignment with the ECE Baseline research tools and questions.

During Q2, *Let's Read* outlined teacher training and instructional material delivery timelines. This information informed discussions to change the geographical scope and timeline of the EGRA with USAID and Education Data activity. On February 20, 2020, Dr. Hatfield, Director of DevTech's Education, Gender & Youth Practice and Senior Technical Advisor to Education Data activity, met with *Let's Read* senior management in their office in Lusaka to discuss ongoing collaboration.

During Q3 and Q4, Education Data activity engaged *Let's Read* to inform Midline EGRA preparations. Education Data activity solicited *Let's Read* feedback on the SSME tools, including the learner, teacher and head teacher questionnaires and the school inventory checklist. *Let's Read* recommended revisions to better align with implementation schedules and resources. Further, Education Data activity collaborated with *Let's Read* on possible resources to preload on tablets in anticipation of the *Let's Read* tablet launch. Education Data activity requested loading EGRA dissemination materials to increase access to and use of EGRA results to inform policy and practice at the district, school and teacher level. Lastly, on June 30, 2020, *Let's Read* shared updated school lists in the five target provinces to assist Education Data activity with verifying that the schools assessed at baseline are open and have active Grade 2 classrooms. Verifying the open or closed status of verified schools will assist with the Midline Sampling Methodology Plan and logistical planning with the local survey firm ahead of data collection. School verification occurred in Q4 in preparation for Midline 2020 EGRA data collection. Additional inter-activity collaboration includes understanding how the global COVID-19 pandemic has led to changes in *Let's Read* intervention design and implementation timelines. Discussions, planning and coordination are ongoing as needed.

3.2 Education Sector Participation

During the period of performance, Education Data activity supported education sector stakeholder involvement through the following activities:

1. On October 1, 2019, the Education Data activity Field Office, Home Office Project Manager Rebecca Westbrook and USAID held a meeting with ECZ to seek their input on the draft Year 2 Annual Work Plan, draft composition of the EGRA Working Group and draft memorandum of understanding (MoU) between DevTech Systems and ECZ. ECZ provided feedback on October 8, 2019, confirming that ECZ found the Annual Work Plan appropriate and ready for

implementation with minor corrections allowing for ECZ scheduling flexibility. Education Data activity and ECZ continued proactive collaborations during the performance period.

2. Education Data activity and ECZ met on October 29, 2019, and November 2, 2019, to discuss ECZ feedback on establishing the Technical EGRA Working Group and the ToR for the local survey firm supporting the 2020 Midline EGRA. ECZ provided written feedback on November 4, 2019, stating that the ToR and working group proposals are appropriate. Further analysis for the working group composition may be necessary.

3. On November 2, 2019, the Directorate of ECE provided feedback to the proposed ECE research study shared on October 31, 2019. The Directorate of ECE identified areas for clarification and involvement, including how to adapt, translate and validate the ECE research tools.

4. December 12–20, 2019, Education Data activity conducted the ECE research study adaptation, translation and validation workshop and collaboratively engaged MoGE officials to adapt the research study tools for Zambia. MoGE participants adapted and validated the tools. CDC or the ECE Directorate chaired all workshops.

5. February 3–7, 2020, GRZ officials from ECZ and the Directorates of Planning & Information and ECE, MoGE, attended the ECE Baseline Research Study QCO and Assessor training and dry runs. The Director and Assistant Director of the Directorate of ECE provided opening remarks for participants, elaborating on the state of ECE in Zambia and the critical need for reliable ECE data consistent with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. A Senior Education Officer from the Directorate of ECE facilitated sessions on the ECE environment and MoGE ECE guidelines and standards. Officials from the Directorate of Planning and Information, Research Coordinating Committee and ECZ provided updates on the tools adaptation, translation and validation processes for participants. From February 9 to 11, 2020, ECZ and MoGE officials from the Directorates of ECE and Planning & Information conducted dry runs in Chipata, Eastern province, and Mongu, Western province, together with Education Data activity staff. MoGE, ECZ, Education Data activity and data collection teams briefed PEOs and DEBs on the research study methodology and responded to additional inquiries from local officials. MoGE and ECZ officials conducting dry runs in the field also participated in the research study tools adaptation, translation and validation workshops held in December 2019. Due to this, they could provide contextualized and relevant feedback on test administration procedures to data collection teams. From March 1 to 6, 2020, Education Data activity engaged ECZ and MoGE officials from the Directorates of ECE and Planning & Information to assist in monitoring ECE Baseline Research Study data collection. Two monitoring teams composed of Education Data activity, ECZ and MoGE staff visited data collection teams in Katete district, Eastern province, and Nkeyema district, Western province.

6. From February 13 to 23, 2020, Dr. Randy Hatfield, Director, Education, Gender & Youth Practice and Senior Monitoring and Evaluation Associate/Home Office Program Manager from DevTech Systems, engaged in consultative outreach with ECZ and MoGE stakeholders alongside the Lusaka Field Office staff. The purpose of the meetings was to continue to build partnerships and assess stakeholder needs. Education Data activity staff also held meetings with UNZA, ECZ and the Directorates of ECE and Teacher Education. Education Data activity met with Dr. Chilala, Director of ECZ, and senior members of the ECZ Research Unit to discuss potential changes to the 2020 Midline EGRA scope.

7. On February 25 and March 10, 2020, Education Data activity met with the Research Unit at ECZ following a mutual agreement to continue collaborating on 2020 Midline EGRA tasks. During this meeting, Education Data activity discussed the possibility of ECZ leading the NERS in the five additional provinces based on their previous experience conducting EGRAs.

8. On April 1, 2020, Education Data activity submitted a formal letter to Dr. Michael Chilala, ECZ Director, to establish a Midline EGRA Technical Working Group comprising core ECZ, USAID and Education Data activity staff. The purpose of the Working Group is to ensure a high degree of coordination and partnership among stakeholders to effectively plan and implement all EGRA activities. The Technical Working Group held its first meeting on April 23, 2020, with subsequent planning meetings held between May and September 2020. During this period, the Technical Working Group planned for and provided feedback on the (1) midline language mapping; (2) NERS concept note; (3) skills-building workshop priorities, attendance, and scheduling; (4) Midline EGRA timelines and (5) concurrent ECZ responsibilities and major activities. The Technical Working Group held meetings via Zoom or Microsoft Teams to coordinate across varying geographical locations and minimize safety risks amid the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the meetings, ECZ and Education Data activity have established increased coordination and collaboration for EGRA planning and implementation.

9. During June 2020, the RCC, Directorate of Planning and Information and ECZ Research Unit provided feedback on the SSME tools to ensure the tools are relevant and of interest to MoGE strategies, policies and goals.

10. On June 3, 2020, Education Data activity engaged Mr. Mkumba, Chief Curriculum Specialist, CDC, to seek local language specialists support the assembly of the Midline EGRA tools. Mr. Mkumba collaborated with other CDC staff to participate in the Midline Tools Assembly and Validation Workshop held June 8–12, 2020.

11. ECZ and Education Data activity initiated co-planning for the EGRA Tools Assembly and Validation Workshop on May 5, 2020, during the EGRA Technical Working Group meetings. ECZ, Education Data activity, and USAID weighed health risks due to COVID-19 and concluded on a mixed approach of in-person and virtual support with reduced physical interaction. Following the Tools Assembly and Validation Workshop, 12 ECZ and CDC officials validated the Midline EGRA tools for data collection.

12. On May 20, 2020, the Education Data activity PM/TL began attending the virtual MoGE COVID-19 Working Group meetings. The purpose of the Working Group is to allow implementing partners and MoGE to plan activities that bridge the student learning gap and ensure that safety measures to protect learners. During the meetings, MoGE shared draft COVID-19 Guidelines for re-opening schools. UNICEF announced funding availability and a partnership with UK Standard Chartered Bank to provide education resources for the COVID-19 response in Zambia. On June 17, 2020, MoGE informed participants that more than 1,200,000 masks and sanitizers had been distributed to schools. However, additional needs include more masks and high-quality thermometers, as well as solutions for handwashing when schools lack access to water and social distancing when there are a limited number of desks. UNICEF announced that it would begin assessing schools' preparedness by conducting teacher, learner and parent interviews and classroom observations. Questionnaires were shared with Working Group members for their review and feedback. In addition, UNICEF and Save the Children shared that they have developed a template to track IP interventions by geographic location, school grades and type of intervention. The mapping will help inform who is conducting what, where there are additional needs, and how to avoid duplication.

13. On August 28, 2020, Education Data activity held a Working Group planning meeting with ECZ to seek feedback on postponing the 2020 Midline EGRA. ECZ supported the recommendation to postpone EGRA due to school closures. ECZ shared their experiences of conducting learner performance assessments with the World Bank during COVID-19 for Grade 7 and 9 learners.

4. CROSSCUTTING ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

During this reporting period, Education Data activity considered the following crosscutting issues during implementation:

4.1 Gender Equality and Female Empowerment

During the performance period, equal male and female opportunity and inclusion were considered in planning and implementing all activities. For the ECE Baseline Research Study, both men and women were encouraged to participate during all stages of implementation. For instance, both men and women participated in the ECE Tools Adaptation, Translation and Validation workshop in December 2019, with MoGE female staff from the Directorate of ECE chairing most sessions. This enabled female MoGE staff to take ownership in the tools adaptation, translation and validation process. Generally, however, more men than women attended by a slight margin. A greater male ratio of participants is consistent with the make-up of MoGE staff, as generally more men are employed than women.

Further, both men and women were encouraged to apply for QCO and assessor positions for data collection, resulting in slightly more female than male QCOs and assessors by 16 and 14, respectively. Gender equality was built into the ECE Baseline Research Study sampling methodology, resulting in an equal number and representation of female and male learner assessments. QCO and assessor teams randomly selected 511 ECE learners (51.1 percent girls and 48.9 percent boys) and 582 Grade 1 learners (50 percent girls and 50 percent boys), 317 who had participated in ECE and 265 who had not participated in ECE. Considering factors outside data collection control, such as unequal gender representation in ECE or Grade 1 enrollment, girl learners comprised 50.5 of the ECE Baseline sample, resulting in equal girl to boy representation. While there were some differences in IDELA ECE scores by sex across school readiness domains, overall, boys and girls scored 45 percent on the IDELA, indicating that among sampled schools, boys and girls perform comparably.

Both men and women were encouraged to attend the skills-building workshops, resulting in almost equal male and female representation for GRZ officials for the EGRA Tools Assembly and Validation Workshop. While only one female attended the EGRA budgeting workshop held June 23–24, 2020, Education Data activity recognizes a greater male to female employee ratio at ECZ, specifically within the ECZ Research Unit.

4.2 Environmental Compliance

A categorical exclusion has been assigned for the Intermediate Result (IR3.1), Educational Achievement in Reading Improved, which applies to the Education Data activity contract. Nonetheless, Education Data activity ensured all activities conducted during the reporting period did not negatively impact the environment. Education Data activity does not partner with or procure from organizations and/or companies that engage in environmental degradation. The Education Data activity team regularly checks project deliverables and communication materials to ensure that information sharing does not promote practices that would negatively impact the environment and that the information sharing sessions themselves have a negligible impact on the environment. During this performance period, Education Data activity substantially reduced using paper-based documents due to tablet-based data collection for the ECE Baseline Research Study and virtual working modalities such as Zoom, Google Hangouts and Microsoft Teams meetings. In addition, instead of printing materials for workshops, ECZ participants received planning and preparation documents on a USB flash drive to minimize the use of paper and sustain use of planning and budget templates for future use. Finally, Education Data activity collaborated with the USAID *Let's Read* project to support including digital 2018 Baseline EGRA dissemination materials on its tablets to distribute to head teachers. By conducting virtual work activities and providing participants and

stakeholders with electronic versions of documents, Education Data activity reduced waste and increased the likelihood that ECZ can adapt and use electronically available documents in the future.

4.3 Science, Technology and Innovation

Education Data activity explored the use of different virtual meeting and online platforms to continue seamless planning activities across different locations and time zones with USAID, ultimately choosing Microsoft Teams and Google Documents as cost-effective and appropriate platforms for document-sharing, meetings and workshops. In Q4, Education Data activity began sharing meeting notes with USAID via Google Documents to increase collaboration and feedback. During the EGRA Tools Assembly and Validation Workshop and EGRA budgeting workshop, STTA support was incorporated successfully via Microsoft Teams. Given varying constraints of network connectivity and resources, Education Data activity sought to pilot how using a centrally connected venue—such as a hotel or office with reliable Internet—could facilitate mixed in-person and virtual presentations, particularly given low or weak connectivity issues. For the EGRA Tools Assembly and Validation Workshop, Education Data activity and ECZ were still able to achieve all objectives and complete intended outputs, creating confidence that hybrid models can maintain quality standards. Further, ECZ and Education Data activity sustain ongoing planning discussions with the Technical EGRA Working Group, which is hosted virtually via Microsoft Teams. The Microsoft Teams application allows ECZ to connect via phone or computer, resulting in increased convenience to staff, as ECZ staff frequently travel to prepare for, administer and monitor examinations nationwide. Given COVID-19's trajectory in Zambia, Education Data activity expects to continue to explore innovative ways to adapt in-person activities using technology during the next performance period.

4.4 Sustainability

To promote sustainability, Education Data activity works closely with ECZ, MoGE and other stakeholders. During the performance period, Education Data activity and stakeholders from MoGE—specifically the ECZ Research Unit and CDC—participated in two skills-building workshops aligned to Midline EGRA preparation tasks. The finalization and validation of the Midline EGRA tools was one of the EGRA tasks ECZ agreed to assume responsibility for at Midline as part of the Transition Strategy. Based on ECZ's leadership of the assembly and validation process, Education Data activity believes the task was successfully transitioned to ECZ and is confident that ECZ could lead this process independently in the future. Similarly, for budgeting, ECZ first learned about varying budget resources and then directly applied these skills in pairs to create a joint budget. While budgeting for data collection was not one of the EGRA tasks to transition to ECZ at Midline, Education Data activity believes the skills learned through the workshop and the budget templates provided to ECZ staff will support ECZ's preparation of comprehensive budgets for future EGRAs as well as other national assessments. ECZ's willingness to both participate in skills-building workshops and draft the NERS Concept Note assuming responsibility for data collection in five of 10 Zambian provinces demonstrates a commitment to sustaining EGRA tasks. Despite the request to postpone the EGRA resulting in shifting implementation timelines, ECZ still increased its capacity to implement EGRA activities by 14 percentage points from 36 to 50 percent. Overall, ECZ reported increased capacity in 80 percent of reported EGRA subtasks. Education Data activity believes this demonstrates a commitment to sustaining human capital and skills development for ECZ to conduct EGRAs in the future independently.

4.5 Journey to Self-Reliance

USAID's Journey to Self-Reliance Country Roadmaps measure country progress across dimensions of commitment and capacity. Several primary indicators relate to Education Data activity's objectives,

including education quality, the quality of public services, and the quality of policy formation and implementation. Education quality is measured as the percentage of learners who reach minimum proficiency in reading by the end of primary school. According to Zambia's FY2019 Roadmap, four percent of learners in Zambia met the minimum proficiency in reading in 2005. However, the 2018 baseline EGRA found that 10.2 percent of Grade 2 learners could read an age-appropriate text with fluency and comprehension by the end of the school year. The Midline EGRA will enable MoGE, *Let's Read*, USAID and other key stakeholders to examine trends over time in learners' performance to support data-driven decision making.

During the performance period, Education Data activity aimed to sustainably build the internal capacity of MoGE and ECZ to prepare for and conduct EGRAs through involving them in all EGRA planning discussions, conducting skills-building workshops based on ECZ-identified priorities and co-leading and drafting important EGRA planning documents, such as budgets and tools. Further, as Education Data activity continues co-planning with local survey firms on the ECE Research Study and Midline EGRA, Education Data activity contributes to the Government of Zambia's journey to self-reliance.

In ECZ's Strategic Plan 2016–2021, some of the primary objectives are to "Enhance Operational Efficiency and Institutional Capacity of ECZ and Its Staff" and "Strengthen the Conduct of Education and Examination-Related Research Development and Information." In support of these aspirations, Education Data activity aims to strengthen the capacity of the ECZ and MoGE to track, collect and disseminate data at various levels within the education system. Consistent with ECZ's Strategic Plan to build institutional capacity, ECZ has agreed to lead the NERS (see Task 7 for additional information) and demonstrates commitment through its leadership to conduct the EGRA Technical Working Group meetings and assemble and validate EGRA tools, in addition to building accompanying budgets to conduct EGRA dissemination. Through ongoing collaboration to co-lead EGRA tasks with ECZ, Education Data activity believes jointly planned and implemented activities will positively enable ECZ to meet its Strategic Plan objectives.

5. UPDATES FROM LAST PERFORMANCE REPORT

#	Issue	Agreed Action Item	Current Status September 2020	Outstanding action items
1	Issue raised in Q3FY20 on how COVID-19 and school closures may affect the reliability and validity of EGRA results and safety considerations	Following a meeting on August 20, 2020, DevTech submitted a request to postpone EGRA based on USAID/Zambia concurrence and discussion.	DevTech submitted the request to postpone the EGRA on September 9, 2020, and the request to extend contractual deliverables based on the request to postpone the EGRA on September 15, 2020.	USAID feedback on the request to postpone the EGRA and the request to extend contractual deliverables
2	Issue raised in Q4FY20 on how MoGE guidelines to re-open schools based on revised school schedules may affect (1) EGRA implementation timelines for Midline EGRA comparability to baseline, (2) ECE Endline considerations and (3) future research studies, such as a proposed learning loss research study	Education Data activity has presented three possible EGRA implementation timelines to USAID, MSI and ECZ. Education Data activity hopes to work with USAID to finalize EGRA and ECE planning and implementation timelines.	DevTech submitted the request to postpone the EGRA on September 9, 2020, and the request to extend contractual deliverables based on the request to postpone the EGRA on September 15, 2020. Education Data activity will submit the Y3 Annual Work Plan by October 15, outlining outstanding implementation timeline decisions to finalize with USAID, ECZ and other stakeholders as needed.	USAID feedback on the requests to postpone the EGRA and extend contractual deliverables, in addition to finalizing ECE Endline Research Study timelines

6. PLANNED ACTIVITIES FOR NEXT QUARTER

Based on the (1) request to postpone the Midline EGRA and an accompanying GANTT chart, (2) request to extend contractual deliverable due dates and (3) proposed deliverable due dates outlined in the request to extend due dates and draft Year 3 Annual Work Plan, Education Data activity intends to conduct the following activities in the next quarter. The Education Data team continues to monitor the COVID-19 crisis closely and expects to continue contingency planning in the next quarter in close collaboration with USAID should adapting activities be necessary.

#	Key Tasks/Interventions/Action Items	Opportunity for USAID/Zambia Involvement	Tentative Date planned
1.	Submit Year 3 Annual Work Plan	USAID/Zambia involvement	October 15, 2020
2.	Submit the FY2020 Q4 Financial Report	USAID/Zambia involvement	October 30, 2020

#	Key Tasks/Interventions/Action Items	Opportunity for USAID/Zambia Involvement	Tentative Date planned
3.	Submit the FY2020 Annual Performance Report	USAID/Zambia involvement	October 30, 2020
4.	Conduct language mapping orientation for involved MoGE stakeholders	USAID/Zambia involvement	November–January 2021
5.	Desk review of additional province data for the five new provinces	USAID/Zambia involvement	Ongoing
6.	Conduct data verification with PEOs in the five new provinces	USAID/Zambia involvement	November–December 2020
7.	Conduct data verification with select DEBs and head teachers in the five new provinces	USAID/Zambia involvement	November–December 2020
8.	Compile data from the five new provinces	USAID/Zambia involvement	December 2020
9.	Clean and finalize language mapping data	USAID/Zambia involvement	December–January 2020
10.	Hire and train STTA consultants: Mid-level and Senior Research Assistants	N/A	October–November 2020
11.	Conduct EGRA working group meetings with ECZ and USAID/Zambia	USAID/Zambia involvement	Ongoing
12.	ECE Baseline Research Study: Finalize report based on USAID feedback and concurrence	USAID/Zambia involvement	November–December, 2020
13.	ECE Baseline Research Study: Draft dissemination plan for MoGE and education stakeholders	USAID/Zambia involvement	November–December 2020
14.	ECE Endline Research Study: Concur on implementation timelines and research design aligned to revised school schedules	USAID/Zambia involvement	November 2020
15.	COVID Learning Loss[2] stakeholder engagement	USAID/Zambia involvement	September–October 2020
16.	COVID Learning Loss: Seek USAID concurrence on research design	USAID/Zambia involvement	October–November 2020
17.	COVID Learning Loss: IRB	USAID/Zambia involvement	December 2020

---

[2] Action items 16–20 are contingent are USAID/Zambia COR and OAA concurrence and an executed contract modification and increased budget authorizing Education Data activity to conduct an additional research study.

#	Key Tasks/Interventions/Action Items	Opportunity for USAID/Zambia Involvement	Tentative Date planned
18.	COVID Learning Loss: Draft SoW	USAID/Zambia involvement	October–November 2020
19.	COVID Learning Loss: Advertise for research assistants	USAID/Zambia involvement	December 2020
20.	COVID Learning Loss: Conduct technical review & qualifications	USAID/Zambia involvement	December 2020
21.	Contingency Planning due to COVID-19	USAID/Zambia involvement	Ongoing

ANNEX 1. INDICATOR RESULTS SUMMARY

Indicator	Standard/ Custom	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Total		Explanation
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
												Year 2 **October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020**
IR Indicator 1: Number of EGRAs available for use by USAID and Ministry of Education	Custom	00	**00**	00	**00**	00	**00**	00	**00**	00	**00**	Per the AMELP, the midline EGRA data collection is expected to take place September–October 2020. Midline EGRA data, as a result, will be available in Year 3. The target for Year 2 is zero.
Indicator 1.1: Number of schools with language profile verified	Custom	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	4,250	**4,626**	The language profiles of 4,626 schools were verified in Year 1. Per the AMELP, no additional language profiles are planned for Year 2. School data of each of the sampled schools will be collected alongside the midline EGRA.
Indicator 1.2: Score of EGRA instrument completion	Custom	100%	**0%**	100%	**0%**	100%	**25%**	100%	**75%**	100%	**75%**	All EGRA and SSME instruments were completed in Year 1. For the midline, the score for EGRA is calculated as 50% IRB clearance of tools and protocols and programming into tablets: 25%; Approval of tools by MoGE and USAID approval: 25%. In FY20 Q3, ECZ and MoGE assembled and validated the Midline EGRA tools. In addition, Education Data activity secured IRB approval for the baseline and midline EGRA in 2018. In FY20Q4, Education Data activity submitted the tools to USAID for approval. In Year 3, the tools will be programed into Myna.

Indicator	Standard/ Custom	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Total		Explanation
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
Indicator 1.3: Number of EGRA assessors trained	Custom	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	180 with at least 135 (75%) attaining the gold standard	**n/a**	USAID and Education Data activity agreed in Q4 to postpone EGRA due to COVID-19. As such, assessor training is currently planned for FY22 ahead of a revised implementation timeline for the midline EGRA.
Indicator 1.4 Number of schools in which EGRA is completed	Custom	1,000	**00**	1,000	**00**	1,000	**00**	1,000	**00**	1,000	**00**	Due to EGRA postponement as a result of COVID-19, Education Data activity will now assess Grade 2 learners from 1816 schools in the five target provinces of *Let's Read* at Midline in FY2021.
IR Indicator 2: % of stakeholders reporting having access to EGRA results	Custom	00	**00**	00	**00**	00	**00**	00	**00**	00	**00**	Per the AMELP, Year 2 targets for Indicator 2 will be set with MoGE and USAID.
Indicator 2.1: Number of EGRA dissemination activities conducted	Custom	00	**00**	00	**00**	00	**00**	00	**00**	00	**00**	Dissemination of baseline EGRA results took place in FY19Q3. No further dissemination events are planned for Year 2. Dissemination of the midline EGRA results is planned for Year 3.
Indicator 2.2: Number of research studies completed	Custom	01	**00**	01	**00**	01	**00**	01	**01**	01	**01**	Education Data activity submitted the ECE Baseline Report to USAID on September 30, 2020.

Year 2
October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020

Indicator	Standard/ Custom	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Total		Explanation
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
IR Indicator 3: Institutional capacity index to implement EGRA	Custom	60% of tasks with more than an average score of 3.5.	36%	60% of tasks with more than an average score of 3.5.	36%	60% of tasks with more than an average score of 3.5.	50%	60% of tasks with more than an average score of 3.5.	50%	60% of tasks with more than an average score of 3.5.	50%	Per the AMELP, Year 2 target is 60% of tasks with more than an average score of 3.5. Baseline institutional capacity index was 36%. Education Data activity assessed ECZ capacity in FY20Q3 after skills Workshop 3 was conducted. Survey results indicate an increase in self-reported capacity by 14%. Due to the pending contract modification and COVID-19, the survey was conducted before all the skills-building workshops were completed. As such, slightly lower results were anticipated in comparison to the target. Also, low response rate and turnover of ECZ staff reduced the sample size and changed its composition.
Indicator 3.1: Number of individuals trained in implementing EGRA at ECZ and MoGE	Custom	50	00	50	00	50	16 total; 9 males and 7 females	50	00	50	16 total; 9 males and 7 females	Per the AMELP, at least 50 persons at MoGE/ECZ are expected to be trained on various EGRA tasks. Skills Workshop 3 took place in FY20Q3. As a result, 9 males and 7 females were trained in Midline EGRA tools assembly and in EGRA budgeting. Note that individuals are only counted once per calendar year; therefore, participants who attend multiple trainings are not duplicated.

The table header reads:

Year 2
October 1, 2019–September 30, 2020

Indicator	Standard/ Custom	Q1		Q2		Q3		Q4		Total		Explanation
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	
Indicator 3.2: % of EGRA tasks implemented by ECZ staff	Custom	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	33%	**27%**	33%	**27%**	33%	**27%**	At baseline, ECZ participated in 3 of 11 EGRA tasks (27%), including the tool adaptation and validation, EGRA training and the dissemination of the Baseline results. For Midline, ECZ has implemented the EGRA tools assembly and validation process thus far. Due to the postponement of the EGRA in Q4, additional EGRA tasks did not take place as previously scheduled, including Midline sampling, logistics planning, programming of EGRA tools and QCO and assessor training.
ES.1-1: % of learners who demonstrate reading fluency and comprehension of grade-level text at the end of Grade 2 with USG assistance	Standard (ES 1-1)	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	n/a	**n/a**	In Year 2, 1,000 schools were sampled with up to 20 learners in each school assessed in one of the seven LoIs. This will form the denominator for calculating the indicator at Midline. Assessments provide data for calculating the numerator reported in FY21.

ANNEX 2. SUCCESS STORIES

Bridging the Need for ECE Data: Results from Eastern & Western Province

During February and March 2020, Education Data activity, in collaboration with CAPOLSA, MoGE and ECZ, conducted the ECE Baseline Research Study data collection in Eastern and Western province in 52 schools. The ECE Baseline Research Study examines baseline school readiness skills among ECE learners[3] and differences between Grade 1 learners who have and have not attended ECE. Classroom observations provided meaningful data on the ECE environment and teacher pedagogies.

Based on consultative meetings with the Directorates of ECE and Planning & Information and UNICEF, ECE programming in Zambia is still relatively new. ECE became integrated into the national education system with the Education Act of 2011 and began enrolling ECE learners in 2012.

A data collection team in Eastern province during dry-runs.

Photo taken with consent. Source: Education Data activity

In 2015, the Directorate of ECE was established to oversee ECE and its expansion in Zambia. Despite successes in ECE enrollment doubling between 2014 and 2018, there is a need for up to date ECE school environment and learner performance data to inform policy and implementation of ECE programming.

The results of the ECE Baseline Research Study hold the promise of positively contributing to the need for ECE data. Because ECE learners do not take national assessments, having learner performance and ECE environment data can inform MoGE programmatic and policy decision making. For instance, the ECE Baseline Research Study conclusions indicate that, in sampled schools, ECE positively contributes to learners' skill development and that Grade 1 learners who participated in ECE still exhibit low skills in emergent literacy. ECE environment and pedagogical conclusions indicate that most classrooms are overenrolled but with low attendance and that most ECE teachers tend to use repetitive, rote instruction.

The ECE Baseline Research Study results offer a unique opportunity to discuss data-driven recommendations to improve ECE programming. During the next performance period, Education Data activity, in collaboration with CAPOLSA, plans to disseminate findings and discuss recommendations, including, but not limited to:

- Considerations for gradually expanding access to ECE programming, including increasing parental and community awareness of ECE;
- Development of quantifiable, localized, age-appropriate assessments to measure ECE learners' skills progression throughout the year and
- Collaborating with the *Let's Read* project to institutionalize play-based teacher training and pedagogies into pre-service teacher training systems.

---

[3] School readiness levels are calculated as an average IDELA tool score represented as a percentage. School readiness includes four domains: emergent numeracy, emergent literacy, social and emotional skills and motor development. For more information on the IDELA tool and schools readiness measures, visit https://idela-network.org/.

From Inception to Design: ECZ-led National Estimates Research Study

During the performance period, ECZ consistently engaged with Education Data activity to foster a collaborative partnership and sustain efforts that increase confidence that half of all EGRA-related tasks will be transitioned to ECZ by Midline. Transitioning EGRA-related tasks is consistent with ECZ's primary objectives to "enhance operational efficiency and institutional capacity of ECZ and its staff" and "strengthen the conduct of education and examination-related research development and inspiration" (ECZ Strategic Plan 2016–2021). Consistent with ECZ's aspirations, Education Data activity collaborated with ECZ. Despite the recommendation to postpone the upcoming EGRA, the research design and planning process foster collaboration and create a framework for a rescheduled Midline EGRA to be well-supported and jointly planned by both Education Data activity and ECZ staff.

During Q2, ECZ, Education Data activity and USAID discussed the importance of expanding the geographical scope of EGRA to all 10 Zambian provinces to provide nationally representative results. These discussions led to collaborating with ECZ on an ECZ-led national EGRA conducted in tandem with the Midline EGRA in five target provinces of the *Let's Read* activity to assess trends in performance since Baseline. Together, ECZ and Education Data activity discussed potential research methodologies, including, but not limited to, research questions, sample size, data analysis, pilot testing and practice, QCO and assessor training, monitoring and programming electronic assessment tools. Discussions resulted in ECZ agreeing to lead data collection in the five new provinces included in the NERS, a research study that will produce national literacy estimates for all 10 Zambian provinces reported at the provincial and language levels. Following an iterative feedback process, ECZ authored and revised at least four versions of the NERS concept note during EGRA Technical Working Group planning meetings. The concept note features a sample size of 486 randomly selected schools across all 10 provinces.

Despite a request to postpone the EGRA due to COVID-19 and school closures, Education Data activity and ECZ coordination during the year resulted in an ECZ-led effort to transition EGRA tasks and strengthen internal ECZ capacity. Further, with the geographical expansion of EGRA to all 10 provinces, ECZ will lead efforts to assess literacy benchmarks for all learners, regardless of province. When the EGRA is rescheduled, ECZ and Education Data activity plan to resume and adapt research designs as needed.

Education Data activity and USAID meet with Dr. Chilala, Director of ECZ, to foster ongoing collaboration to implement the Midline EGRA.

Photo taken with consent. Source: Education Data activity

ANNEX 3. MₒGE REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

ACTIVITY TITLE AND DESCRIPTION

The USAID Education Data activity began implementation in April 2018, with the objective to provide education assessment, data management and research and evaluation services in support of the forthcoming USAID *Let's Read* project that targets Eastern, Muchinga, North Western, Western and Southern Provinces. The USAID Education Data activity also aims to strengthen the capacity of the Examination Council of Zambia (ECZ) and the Ministry of General Education (MoGE) to track and collect data to improve learning outcomes in Zambia.

PARTNERS

USAID Education Data activity is implementing its activities in partnership and collaboration with:

- Ministry of General Education
- Examinations Council of Zambia
- *Let's Read* project
- USAID

REPORT PERIOD DELIVERABLES AND RESULTS

In support of the *Let's Read* project, Education Data activity completed the following activities between October 1, 2019, and September 30, 2019, alongside MoGE and ECZ staff:

1. Prepared for the implementation of 2020 EGRA data collection, jointly with ECZ and MoGE, by conducting the following collaborative activities:

   a. Drafted, assembled and validated the Midline EGRA tools in all seven LoI during the EGRA Tools Adaptation and Validation workshop. CDC and ECZ participants analyzed the EGRA tools' psychometric properties, and language specialists recommended revisions that later incorporated into the final Midline tools.

   b. Reviewed the SSME learner, teacher and head teacher questionnaires and school inventory checklist alongside ECZ, Directorate of Planning & Information and *Let's Read* staff to ensure the SSME tools answer key questions of MoGE interest and align to current research and data needs.

   c. Created the Technical EGRA Working Group with ECZ, USAID and Education Data activity staff members to increase a high degree of collaboration to prepare for and implement the NERS and Midline EGRA data collections.

   d. Verified the open and closed status of the Baseline 2018 EGRA schools using MoGE, *Let's Read* and Education Data activity school databases.

2. Requested to postpone the Midline 2020 EGRA due to the COVID-19 situation in Zambia, safety concerns and decreased reliability of EGRA results compared to the Baseline 2018 EGRA. Education Data activity submitted the request on September 9, 2020 and will continue ECZ and MoGE consultation to reschedule EGRA preparation and implementation.

3. Prepared for and implemented the ECE Baseline Research Study data collection from research design to data collection by conducting the following activities:

    a. Adapted and finalized the Save the Children IDELA and MELQO MELE learner performance and classroom observation tools in December 2019 to reflect the Zambian context. The IDELA tool was translated into Silozi and Cinyanja.

    b. Conducted QCO and assessor training in February 2020 with CAPOLSA and trained 34 men and women to administer the IDELA and MELE assessments according to data collection best practices and test administration and school procedures. As part of training, Education Data activity conducted IRR tests to ensure participants understood test administration procedures. 24 QCOs and assessors were selected based on IRR scores and participation during training.

    c. Conducted dry runs to familiarize MoGE, ECZ, Education Data activity and QCOs and assessors with the research tools and data collection procedures in Chipata, Katete and Nyimba districts.

    d. Conducted data collection in Eastern and Western province, resulting in 1,093 ECE and Grade 1 learner assessments and 50 ECE classroom observations.

    e. Conducted data collection monitoring trips with ECZ and MoGE staff who participated in the QCO and assessor training to ensure data collection teams administered the IDELA and MELE tools with fidelity and followed proper school and data collection procedures throughout data collection.

    f. Submitted the ECE Baseline Research Study report on September 30, 2020, following data cleaning and analysis.

    4. Drafted and began MoGE and ECZ stakeholder engagement and discussion on a proposed research study to assess learning loss and the psychosocial effects of COVID-19 on learners and teachers, as well as remediation efforts and recommendations.

5. The Q1, Q2 and Q3 performance reports were successfully completed and approved by USAID.

SUCCESSES

- During this performance period, Education Data activity worked with MoGE officials to successfully finalize the ECE research study tools. Education Data activity engaged 13 participants in the IDELA and MELE tools adaptation December 12–13, 2019. From December 16 to 17, 2019, Education Data activity engaged six participants in the translation of the IDELA tool into Cinyanja and Silozi. From December 19 to 20, 2019, Education Data activity engaged 10 participants in validating the tools. The workshop objectives were to share the ECE research study design with the participants, ensure the tools were aligned to the Zambian context, translate the IDELA tool in Cinyanja and Silozi languages of instruction and verify the adapted and translated tools for accuracy and appropriateness for Zambian learners. By the end of the workshops, all the objectives were successfully met, and all participants validated the tools for Zambian use.

- During this performance period, USAID Education Data activity worked with MoGE and ECZ officials to conduct data collection for the ECE Baseline Research Study. Education Data activity engaged three officials from the Directorate of ECE, two officials from the Directorate of Planning and Information

and two officials from ECZ to conduct dry runs, data collection and monitoring to ensure data was collected according to ethical principles and at a high quality.

- Following a planned change of scope for the Midline 2020 EGRA, Education Data activity engaged seven ECZ officials to begin planning for the EGRA, including having ECZ lead the proposed NERS to conduct the EGRA in all 10 Zambian provinces, including those not assessed during the Baseline 2018 EGRA. Considering the proposal to postpone the Midline 2020 EGRA, Education Data activity is actively collaborating with ECZ to realign timelines, assist ECZ to lead the research study efforts and plan for additional skills building.

- During this performance period, USAID Education Data activity worked with MoGE and ECZ officials to conduct planning for the Midline EGRA, including assembling and validating the Midline EGRA tools, creating large-scale assessment budgets and reviewing local survey firm technical proposals for administrative and logistical EGRA support. Education Data activity engaged seven members of ECZ, including the ECZ Director and Deputy Director, nine CDC officials and one official from the Directorate of Planning and Information.

- Due to COVID-19, Education Data activity and ECZ adapted to virtual communication and planning using Zoom and Microsoft Teams. Virtual planning has enabled ECZ and Education Data activity to continue planning and increase safety by minimizing in-person contact.

CHALLENGES

During the performance period, the following challenges were reported concerning the Midline EGRA and NERS data collection:

1. **Contingency planning amid the COVID-19 global pandemic:** Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and MoH guidelines to limit in-person gatherings, Education Data activity weighed options on how to safely conduct workshops and planning meetings with ECZ and MoGE partners. Education Data activity conducted market research to understand current venues and connectivity. Due to support received from ECZ, USAID and DevTech home office staff, a mixed in-person and virtual approach has been adapted to allow in-person participants to abide by MoH guidelines while ensuring adequate resources and internet connectivity to support activities.

2. **Key stakeholder engagement:** Finding MoGE availability for both in-person and virtual meetings posed a challenge given competing activities and ongoing contingency planning to adapt to COVID-19. Education Data activity addressed the challenge by negotiating new workshop timelines and conditions.

3. **Safety considerations during data collection:** Due to localized unrest caused by gassing incidents throughout the country and heavy rains resulting in washed away roads and bridges, several baseline ECE data collection teams faced increased security risks to access rural schools. Education Data activity worked closely with MoGE provincial and district-level staff to monitor the security situation and implement additional measures to ensure data collection teams remained safe. Due to the invaluable support provided by MoGE staff, all data collection teams were able to assess learners from each of the 52 sampled schools and return safely to Lusaka.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Frequent and streamlined communication with ECZ and MoGE staff is vital to ensure that all stakeholders understand each other's expectations and plan within the human resources, time and financial resources available to carry out the tasks.

- Contingency planning during a global pandemic requires frequent communication and outreach with ECZ and MoGE to ensure alternative action plans are properly analyzed against environmental and sector changes.
- When MoH guidelines are followed, activities can be implemented with a limited number of participants by observing social distancing, sanitizing and washing hands and wearing masks.

ANNEX 4. PLANNED MONITORING SCHEDULE FOR NEXT QUARTER

Education Data activity conducts data quality assessments regularly. As part of the Year 3 Annual Work Plan submitted to USAID on October 15, 2020, Education Data activity anticipates needing to revise AMELP monitoring schedules and indicator timelines, consistent with the request to postpone the EGRA because of COVID-19. Education Data activity anticipates collaboration and USAID concurrence on AMELP revisions and timelines. Nevertheless, four DQAs are scheduled for Q1FY21, as aligned with the Midline EGRA timeline.

#	Location	Date	Indicator	Point(s)-of-Contact	Issues/Comments
1	Lusaka	October 2020	DQA of Indicator: 1: Number of EGRA available for use by USAID and MoGE	Dr. Francis Sampa USAID Education Data, +260977606519. Email: fsampa@devtechsys.com	Update DQA date for Indicator 1 after finalized, executed contract reflecting EGRA postponement to 2021
2	Lusaka	October 2020	DQA of Indicator 1.1: Number of schools with language profile verified	Dr. Francis Sampa USAID Education Data, +260977606519. Email: fsampa@devtechsys.com	Update DQA date for Indicator 1.1 after finalized, executed contract reflecting EGRA postponement to 2021; updates proposed include assessing the number of schools and LoIs in the five additional provinces during NERS data collection
3	Lusaka	September 2020	DQA of Indicator 1.3: Number of EGRA assessors trained	Dr. Francis Sampa USAID Education Data, +260977606519. Email: fsampa@devtechsys.com	Update DQA date for Indicator 1.3 after finalized, executed contract reflecting EGRA postponement to 2021
4	Lusaka	September –October 2020	DQA Indicator number 1.4: Number of schools in which EGRA is completed	Dr. Francis Sampa USAID Education Data, +260977606519. Email: fsampa@devtechsys.com	Update DQA date for Indicator 1.4 after finalized, executed contract reflecting EGRA postponement to 2021