



Improving Learning

Australian Council *for* Educational Research

Zimbabwe Early Learning Assessment (ZELA)

UNESCO Institute for Statistics Workshop
12 May 2015

Background of ZELA

- Four-year program (2012-2015) conducted by the Zimbabwe School Examinations Council (ZIMSEC) and the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER)
- Funded under the Education Development Fund (EDF) managed by UNICEF
- EDF provides essential material resources and support to increase access to quality education for all Zimbabwe children

What is ZELA?

- Annual national assessment of student learning outcomes in languages and mathematics in Grade 3
- Background data on students, families and schools (Pupil and School Head Questionnaires)
- Program of capacity building
 - SPSS (Data analysis and Report Writing)
 - IRT (Item Response Theory in ConQuest)
 - SBA (School Based Assessment)

Key Research Questions

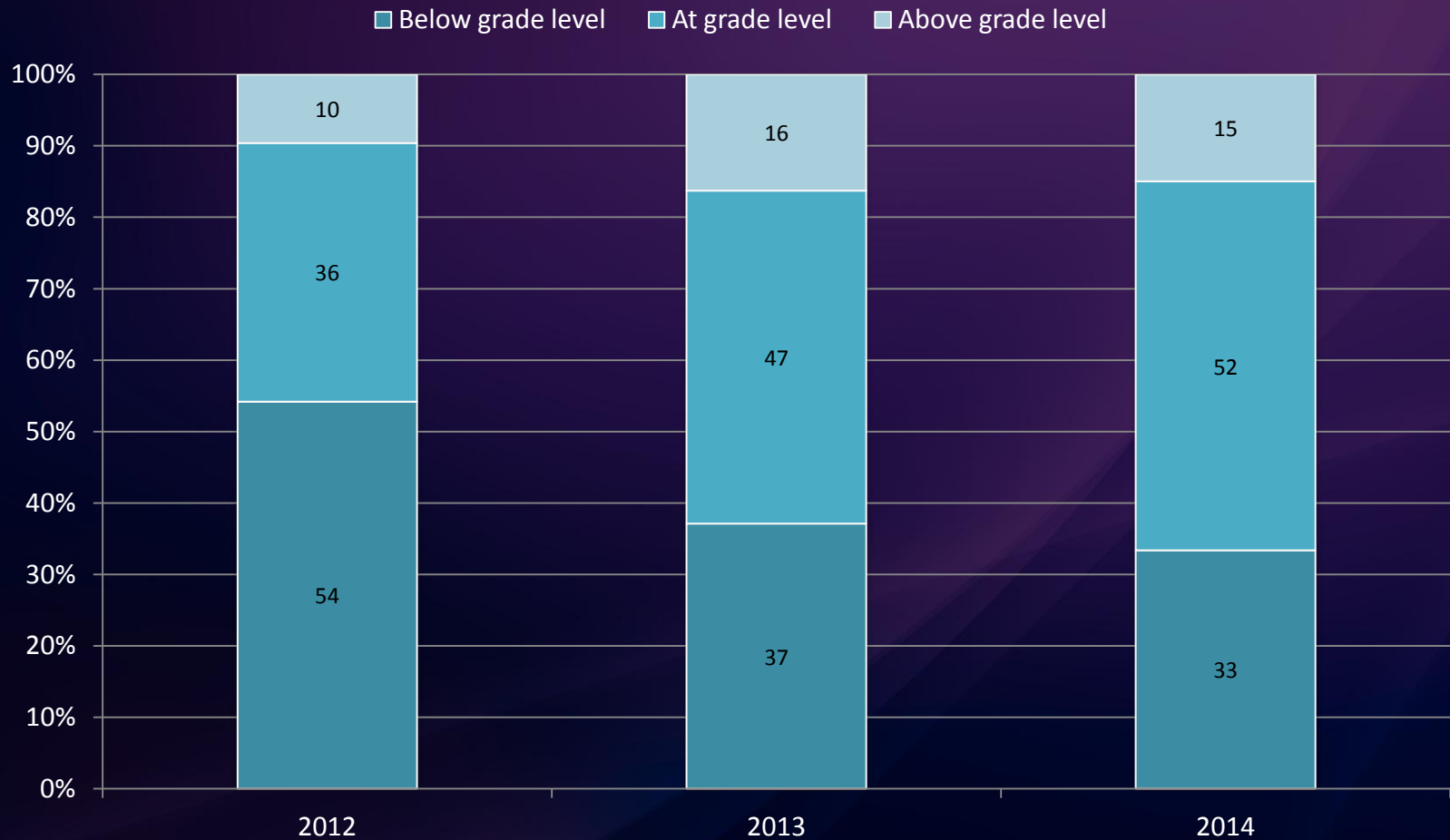
- How do the Zimbabwe pupils perform in the language and Mathematics tests? Is there a noticeable pattern of change over time?
- What are the relationships of the following groups of variables with performance on tests of language and Mathematics at the beginning of Grade 3 in Zimbabwe?
 - Pupil background characteristics
 - Teachers and teaching resources
 - School funding and facilities
- To what extent can improvement in test performance be attributed to the Education Development Fund?

To what extent can improvement in test performance be attributed to the EDF?

Findings between 2012-2014

- An increase in achievement over the time of the intervention (ZELA);
- Smaller differences in performance between student subgroups according to family background (equity); and,
- A reduction in the proportion of school-level variance in achievement

Student achievement *at or above* the grade appropriate level in Mathematics has significantly increased between 2012-2014



Student achievement *at or above* the grade-appropriate level in English has not significantly improved between 2012-2014



Key Messages Emerging in 2014

- There is a significant positive trend in Mathematics performance since 2012
- Performance in English has not significantly improved since 2012.
- Girls significantly outperform boys in both English and Mathematics
- Pupils who attend schools with water and electricity perform better in English and Mathematics
- Pupils in urban schools significantly outperform pupils in rural schools
- Socio-economic status is strongly related to pupil performance
- Schools in disadvantaged rural and urban areas that have fewer resources and less funding perform much lower than those schools with certified teachers and adequate resources and funding

ZELA Challenges

Effective dissemination of findings

Heavy workload

Sustainability into the future