MTB MLE RESOURCE KIT
Including the Excluded: Promoting Multilingual Education

Case Studies Booklet
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Booklet for Case Studies
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Introduction

Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB MLE) programmes provide students from minority language communities with a strong foundation for learning in their mother tongue (MT) and then a good “bridge” to learning in one or more official school languages. In strong and well-planned MTB MLE programmes, students achieve success because they continually use what they already know to help them learn new concepts and new skills.

The case studies that follow describe MTB MLE programmes for pre-primary and primary school-age children in five Asian countries: Afghanistan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines and Viet Nam. Three of the programmes—in Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan—were implemented outside the formal education system and prepare students to enter and then progress through primary grades. The other two programmes—the Philippines and Viet Nam—have been implemented within the formal system with support from policy makers and national education departments.

The same general questions are used for all the case studies so that you can compare and contrast strategies and identify those that seem most realistic in your own contexts.
Pakistan: Sindh Literacy and Development Programme

Where do the language communities in the Sindh Literacy and Development programme live?

The Sindh Literacy and Development (SLD) programme works with four literacy and development organizations in Sindh Province, Pakistan. These are the Parkari Community Development Programme (PCDP), the Kachhi Community Development Association (KCDA), the Thradari Community Development Organization (TCDO) and the Dhatki Community Development Programme (DCDP).

The SLD programme works with two newer organizations that have been established by the Marwari people in two geographic areas—one group living in Sindh Province and the other in Punjab Province.

1 Ms. Erona Matthew, PCDP Managing Director, provided the information for this section.
2 See http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=4&programme=221
What was the educational situation for the children in these communities before the programme began?

Before the SLD programme began, many of the children in the Parkari, Kachhi, Thradari and Dhatki communities had no access to education. Some lived in remote areas where there were no government schools. In some areas, people lived on land belonging to rich landowners who did not allow the ethnic minority children to attend school. Many people did not understand the importance of education and health and were not aware that they had basic human rights. If problems arose, people often did not realize that they could work through the problems together. When project leaders started bringing awareness about MT literacy and education to people in their language communities, they also presented information about community health. They encouraged people to work together and advocate for basic human rights. Slowly the situation changed and as people became interested in education they also began to realize that they could work together to improve their communities.

What are the programme goals?

All the programmes share the same goals. These are to provide good primary education for children, to improve community sanitation and health and to bring the communities together to advocate for human rights.

Which agencies or organizations support the programme?

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) provided funding to PCDP to open five MTB MLE schools. CIDA also provided funding to KCDA for their programme.

Since 2007, Wycliffe Norway, in cooperation with Norway Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), has provided funding for PCDP and KCDA to open schools and expand their adult literacy and other development work.

Since 2015, The Seed Company has provided funding for TCDO and DCDP as well as two new literacy projects sponsored by the Marwari Community Development Organization (MCDO) in Sindh and Punjab.

SIL International literacy specialists and consultants continue to provide technical support in language development, MT materials development and teacher training.

Does the programme have policy support?

The government of Pakistan does not have a specific policy that supports MTB MLE. However, there is a relationship between Sindh provincial government officials and some SLD schools, teachers and supervisors. Because of these relationships some SLD schools have been registered with the provincial government and school supervisors have the authority to issue government exams. Some SLD schools have not been registered. Students in these schools are registered
in a nearby government school and are allowed to sit in the government school to write the government exams. Another example of provincial government support is that MTB MLE students receive a government syllabus and books without charge.

**When did the programme begin and how did it develop?**

In 2000 the Parkari Community Development Programme (PCDP) initiated an MTB MLE pilot programme for the Parkari language community. People from the community attended writers’ workshops where they developed graded reading materials in the MT. Programme leaders also held workshops to train teachers and to train village committees to take responsibility for their local school. Five schools were initiated in the Parkari pilot programme.

In 2001 the Kachhi Community Development Association (KCDA) developed materials in their language and opened a pilot school in the Kachhi community.

In 2007, Thradari and Dhatki leaders began mobilizing their communities for MTB MLE and developing MT materials. In 2010 each group opened a pilot school in their language areas.

The PCDP now has 29 MTB MLE schools; the KCDA has 16 schools and the TCDO and DCDP have one school each. PCDP students begin MTB MLE in Kindergarten and continue through Grade 8. KCDA, TCDO and DCDP schools go from Kindergarten to Grade 5.

PCDP and KCDA have now moved well beyond the pilot stage. TCDO and DCDP are finishing their pilot programmes and preparing to expand to new schools. Leaders of the two Marwari programmes are currently creating MT materials and doing community awareness to initiate their MTB MLE programmes.

In response to the request from communities for MTB MLE, PCDP has also started community self-help schools. These schools have a specific MT focus but the transfer to Sindhi, the first official school language, takes place more quickly. It is done this way because it is hard to find funding for a full five-year primary school. Because the students who completed their MTB MLE education were so successful in further schooling, PCDP has added a MT foundation to their self-help schools. Village adult education centres are following this same pattern.

**How do you develop MTB MLE curriculum and classroom materials?**

Government schools in Sindh province require students to learn three languages. The first language is Sindhi, the official language of Sindh province. The second is Urdu, the national language of Pakistan and the third is English. MTB MLE schools teach the students’ MT as the first language so students learn four languages before finishing primary school.

MT literacy workers, with technical support from SIL International literacy specialists and consultants, developed the curriculum for the MTB MLE schools. The curriculum is based on the government syllabus for each grade but adds MTB MLE-specific learning outcomes matched to
each government competency. The team then adds performance indicators for each learning outcome. The indicators state the things that students should be able to do to show they have achieved each outcome. Government supervisors have expressed their appreciation for the curriculum and given MTB MLE teachers permission to use it.

Teaching materials follow a pedagogical approach to language education that focuses on both meaning and accuracy. Men and women from the local communities attend writing workshops each year where they learn to create stories that relate to the students’ community and culture. These stories are for teachers to read to their students and for children to read alone or together. For academic subjects, the curriculum team reviewed government textbooks to identify the content of each of the lessons. They then developed MT-specific lessons to teach the same content but using local themes that build on MT students’ knowledge and experience. All the materials were checked with literacy consultants and tested in the community.

PCDP began the first literacy project and so was the first to develop a MT curriculum and materials. The other SLD literacy projects have used PCDP’s materials as a guide in developing materials for their own programmes. SIL consultants have continued to help the newer literacy projects with planning and by checking materials.

**How do you train teachers?**

Teachers for MT1 and MT2 take part in one pre-service and two in-service training workshops in which they learn MLE principles and teaching methodology. They practice the games, songs and other learning activities that they will use in their classrooms. Teachers also have time to practice reading and writing in their MT since this will be different from their own primary education experience. During in-service training, teachers are encouraged to give feedback and discuss the challenges they are facing in their classrooms.

For primary Grades 1 to 5 there are usually two teacher-training workshops a year. The first training session focuses on the syllabus for that year. During in-service training, teachers can share teaching problems, learn about topics they will encounter in the syllabus and get any additional help they need. Pre- and in-service training also provides instruction and time to practice specific parts of the curriculum.

Each programme also organizes training events to build the capacity of male and female members of the village school committees so that they will know their roles and responsibilities in supporting their school and teachers and will be successful in managing their school.

**How do you supervise classrooms?**

Each project has school supervisors who have been trained to monitor MTB MLE kindergarten and primary classes. School supervisors make weekly school visits. After each visit they complete

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3 MT1 and MT2 are equivalent to Kindergarten years 1 and 2.
a form that provides quantitative and qualitative information with details about teachers’ and students’ performance in the classroom. On each visit the school supervisor also meets with leaders of the village committee to learn about the school’s strengths and weaknesses.

Each village school committee is expected to visit their school on a regular basis to ensure that the teacher is coming regularly and on time and that the children are present and doing well in school.

When possible, SIL literacy specialists and consultants visit the schools, both to share their insights in how the programme can be improved and to give encouragement to the literacy teams.

**How do you evaluate students’ progress?**

Students are evaluated by regular tests administered by teachers, internal exams from the MLE school supervisors and external government exams administered by MLE or government school supervisors.

In 2007, at the request of CIDA, international literacy consultants from SIL International carried out a final evaluation of the PCDP and KCDA pilot projects. Starting in 2009 NORAD has sent representatives to carry out a biennial evaluation of PCDP and KCDA and their literacy programmes.

**What results have you seen to this point?**

One indication of the success and positive response to the programme is that many students who have completed the MTB MLE programme have gone on to complete high school and then returned as teachers. Here is a story from one of the villages with an MTB MLE school.

*In the beginning, only boys attended the MTB MLE school. Then the village leader encouraged people to send their girls and he also sent his daughter. As a result, seven girls began to attend the school even though many parents still kept their girls at home. When these seven girls were in primary school, they promised one another that since their parents had given them this opportunity, they would now take responsibility for bringing change to their village. So after they completed primary school they registered in the government high school. They were not regular students but the village teachers helped them study the government lessons and prepare to write the government exams. After high school they were accepted into college. During this time they started a campaign to bring awareness to parents of the importance of girls’ education. Four girls were appointed as teachers in the MLE school and two of them trained as adult education teachers and were teaching the women in the newly opened adult education centre in their village. Currently there are 48 girls enrolled in the MLE school. There has been a significant change in the girls’ village and it has become an example to parents in surrounding villages who have begun to see the importance of education, especially for girls.*
Finally, there is the experience of thirty-five boys who had completed their primary schooling in Parkari village schools in the desert.

The boys came to the city of Mirpurkhas to continue their studies. Since their homes and families were far away, they lived in a hostel and attended a government city school. At the end of each year from Grades 6 to 8, the top three positions in each class, including all sections in the government school, went to boys who had come from the Parkari desert schools and were living in the hostel. Even as a group, they were above any other group of students. Several times a Parkari boy took the top position in the entire school.

In the final years of high school, the exam scores from all schools in the area are used to decide class position. Once again, the Parkari boys finished at the top.

The excerpt below presents the main points from a group interview with the Parkari hostel boys:

When we first came to the city we were amazed to see all the big buildings, the hostel and the school. We wondered how we would study here because we were from a very poor background and had come from a desert school made of sticks and mud. At first we were afraid of the city school and the city children. We thought they would have a higher standard than we do and would think that we are low. It helped that we had started our education in Parkari. It’s our own language. Studying in Parkari opened our minds and that is why it was easy to learn other languages. If we had not started in Parkari we would not be doing so well because we would not have had a good foundation. We have good marks. We get top marks in our exams. The headmaster compared our marks with the other boys in the school and we were much better.

4 In some traditional societies in Pakistan parents do not think their daughters should go to school.
The headmaster said to us, ‘If you have other boys in your village, send them to our school.’ The school and the teacher were given honour and respect because of our marks. Now we have respect too (translated by Ms. Erona Matthew).

These Parkari boys from desert schools live in a hostel in the city so they can continue their education. © Sindh Literacy and Development Programme, Pakistan

What are your plans for the future?

As people in the area have seen the success of MT education, requests have come from many communities to open more MLE schools, but the lack of funding makes this very difficult. TCDO and DCDP are each planning to open two more schools in 2016. Two new language communities are developing materials for new pilot schools—one in each language—in 2017. PCDP and KCDA, the two established literacy projects, are focusing on sustainability through clusters and self-help groups. PCDP has initiated a Community Development Network that encourages local communities to provide financial support for their own MT schools and for other community development activities.
Afghanistan: Pashai MTB BE Programme

Where do the Pashai people live?

Approximately 400,000 Pashai people live in northeastern Afghanistan. The Pashai mother tongue-based bilingual education (MTB BE) programme began in the Dara-i-Noor District of Nangarhar Province.

What was the educational situation for Pashai children before the programme began?

Literacy rates in the areas where the Pashai live were extremely low. Although Pashai were bilingual in Pashai (their MT) and Pashto (one of the two official languages of Afghanistan), more than 85 percent of the people, including about 98 percent of the women, were illiterate.

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Ms. Caroees Brink, Technical Coordinator for Literacy and Multilingual Education, Serve Afghanistan, provided information for this section.
in both languages. Many Pashai people could not find good jobs because they could not read or write. Many Pashai children did not start school and of those who did start, many dropped out after one or two years.

What are the programme goals?

The programme goal has two parts. The first goal is that Pashai students will build a strong foundation in reading and writing in their mother tongue (MT) and gradually transfer their literacy skills to Pashto, the official school language in their area. The second goal is that students will develop confidence in themselves as learners, first in their MT and then in Pashto.

Which agencies or organizations support the programme?

The Pashai MTB BE programme is supported by Serve Afghanistan, an international non-government organization (INGO). Other INGOs have also supported the programme: TearFund Australia, Tearfund UK, Tearfund New Zealand and SIL International have all provided financial and/or technical support.

Does the programme have policy support?

In 2004 the Afghan government’s new constitution included permission for the development and use of minority languages in education. The Pashai programme was given official status in 2006 by the local government and, in 2007, by the national government through a Memorandum of Understanding with the Ministry of Education. In 2014 the government finalized its “Inclusive and Child Friendly Education” policy. This policy includes a statement on the right of Afghan children to be educated in their mother tongue.

When did the programme begin and how did it grow?

The Pashai Language Development Programme began in 1999. In the beginning, the focus was on teaching Pashai adults to read and write Pashto, the dominant language in this part of the country. This was because minority languages had not yet been approved for use in education and also because Pashai had not yet been put into written form.

In 2003, Pashai community leaders established a Pashai Language Committee. MT speakers developed the Pashai alphabet with linguistic support from SIL International.

In 2006, with permission from the Provincial government, the Pashai literacy team established MT literacy courses for boys. Students in these courses, which lasted two and a half years, learned to read and write in their MT and then also in Pashto.

In 2007, with permission from the central government, the literacy team established Pashai literacy classes for girls and then added classes for adult women. These classes followed the same pattern as the classes for boys.
In 2010 the Pashai established a five-year Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTB BE) programme. There are, as yet, no government schools that implement a full MTB BE curriculum so the Pashai programme was established outside the formal education system. The programme is composed of two years of pre-primary classes followed by three years of after-school Pashai classes for children in Grades 1-3 in government primary schools. Children in the two-year pre-primary programme learn to read and write first in their MT and then in Pashto. Parents who enroll their children in the MTB BE programme must agree that the children will continue their education in primary school. The second part of the Pashai MLE programme begins when children enter Grade 1 and continues through Grade 3. Teachers in the MLE after-school classes use the MT to help students review the lessons from that day and complete their homework assignments. Teachers also help students build fluency in Pashai literacy.

The Pashai MTB BE programme has recently expanded to include five courses for boys in Laghman, a neighbouring province where the majority of people speak Pashto as their mother tongue. Pashai boys who complete MTB BE pre-primary begin Grade 1 with both Pashai- and Pashto-speaking students.

As noted above, the after-school courses continue to Grade 3. This fits with the educational system in Afghanistan: Grades 1, 2 and 3 have one teacher for all subjects but after Grade 3, students have different teachers for each subject.

Currently there are thirty Pashai MLE programmes for boys and twenty for girls in Nangarhar and Laghman provinces.
How did you develop curriculum for the program?

The programme team developed the curriculum and teaching / learning materials for pre-school and after-school courses. They used the government curriculum as a guide to ensure that the lessons will prepare Pashai students to do well when they enter the formal education system.

The two-year pre-primary programme is three hours a day, five days a week. The curriculum goals for each year are below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In Year 1 students will...</th>
<th>In Year 2 students will...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Adjust to school environment</td>
<td>• Build fluency in oral Pashai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop oral Pashai language</td>
<td>• Begin reading and writing in Pashai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Begin pre-reading &amp; pre-writing in Pashai</td>
<td>• Build competency in oral Pashto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Begin oral Pashto</td>
<td>• Begin transferring literacy skills to Pashto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn basic mathematics</td>
<td>• Expand knowledge of mathematics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop socially and emotionally</td>
<td>• Continue social and emotional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learn about the heritage culture</td>
<td>• Build general knowledge and appreciate heritage culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Take part in physical education activities</td>
<td>• Continue physical development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Curriculum for the three-year after-school classes has three goals for students:

• Build fluency in Pashai and Pashto literacy
• Understand math concepts
• Understand their daily lessons and complete homework assignments for other school subjects

How did you develop classroom materials?

The Pashai programme team, with support from a technical advisor, developed materials for the pre-primary and after-school classes. These included a Pashai primer, twenty-five Pashai reading books, a pictorial dictionary, a book of proverbs, a riddle book and several story books.

How do you train teachers?

One-week training workshops for MTB BE pre-primary and after-school classes take place at the beginning of each school year and at the beginning of each term.
Programme staff also work with teachers in the government schools to help them understand the purposes and benefits of MTB BE and to learn how to use Pashai as an added language of instruction while teaching the Pashto national school curriculum.

**How do you supervise classrooms?**

Programme supervisors are supposed to visit each MTB BE class once a week. Programme staff and supervisors meet twice a month so supervisors can share problems and discuss progress. The meetings provide opportunities for staff and supervisors to learn from and support each other.

Programme staff also visit the MTB BE classrooms regularly.

**How do you evaluate students’ progress?**

Pre-school students take an exam at the end of the two-year pre-school programme. Students who attend the after-school Pashai courses take an exam at the end of each term (four times a year.)

**What results have you seen to this point?**

1,974 Pashai children completed the original Pashai literacy classes between 1999 and 2014. Half of them were girls. In those same years, 4,060 young people and adults graduated from 203 Pashto literacy classes. Half of this group was female.

Since 2012, 1000 Pashai girls and boys have enrolled in pre-primary classes.

In 2009 the Pashai programme was awarded UNESCO’s Confucius Literacy Prize.6

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Results of the pre-school exam show that 82 percent of all the pre-school students graduate and go to Grade 1 in the government school.

Feedback from government schools indicates that students from the Pashai MLE programme often rank first in their class. They are confident in interacting with other students, eager to respond to their teacher’s questions and are not afraid to stand in front of a classroom full of students. This is especially impressive because Pashai pre-school classes have twenty students and G1 classes in government schools have up to 100 students.

Parents see the difference between their children who were in the Pashai classes and those who were not. The younger siblings who attend the pre-school course are able to help their older siblings who are enrolled in non-MLE government schools. Parents often comment on another important characteristic of their children who are in the programme: they love to study and are eager to go to the after school study course. They are enthusiastic and confident in the classroom, whereas other children are often shy and not willing to go to school.

Recently, many people from the community were present at a graduation party to mark the end of the pre-school programme. After the students had demonstrated what they had learned, the Education Director of Dara-i-Noor district stated that the difference between pre-school students and students in the regular government school students is so big that it’s even difficult to compare them with each other.

**What are your plans for the future?**

Until recently, the MTB BE programme focused on the South East Pashai who live mostly in the Dara-i-Noor area. Recently, the programme team took part in conducting surveys in the parts of Afghanistan where people speak the other three varieties of Pashai. Hopefully, when the survey results are analyzed, they will identify communities and locations that are ready for their own MTB BE programmes.

However, if MTB BE is to expand beyond the Pashai community it needs to be integrated into the national education system. The Government of Afghanistan is aware of the need for MTB BE and the outlook is good that it will happen. In 2014 the Ministry of Education developed an “Inclusive and Child Friendly Education Policy” that includes a section on children’s right to education in their mother tongue. The policy states that curricula, examinations and assessment systems will be developed in ethnic minority languages through Grade 3, and that teachers will be trained in using their language as the language of instruction.

Based on their experience in implementing this pilot project, Pashai team leaders have learned several important lessons relating to expansion. First is that MTB BE programmes should be appropriate to the places where they are implemented. This means that classroom activities and materials should reflect the students’ culture as well as their language. Also, the implementation plan should be realistic with respect to the geographic, economic and political situation in the community.
The second lesson learned from this programme is that MT speakers from each community should help to ensure that curriculum and materials affirm and build on the students’ heritage language and culture.

The third and perhaps the most important lesson from the Pashai MTB BE programme is that the transition from using the MT as language of instruction to using the official language only for instruction must be gradual. Students must have time to develop a strong educational foundation in their own language, transfer those skills to their second (and third or fourth) language and become efficient learners who are able to use both or all languages for life-long learning.
Nepal: Rajbanshi-Nepali-English MTB MLE Programme

Where do the Rajbanshi people live?

The Rajbanshi people live in a remote area of southeastern Nepal where there is little exposure to Nepali, the national language. Although not everyone in the local community is a member of the Rajbanshi ethnic group, Rajbanshi is the first language or the common language of communication for the majority of people in that area.

What was the educational situation for Rajbanshi children before the programme began?

All government primary schools in Nepal use Nepali as the language of instruction. Children in the Rajbanshi community have very few or no opportunities to hear or speak Nepali before they begin school. This seems to be the main reason why local primary schools reported low attendance and high dropout rates in the past.

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7 Ms. May Wong, SIL International, Nepal, provided information for this section. Also see www.nnlpi.org.np/projects_mle.php
What are the programme goals?

The first goal is that Rajbanshi students will integrate successfully into the government’s education system in primary school and achieve a good education.

Another goal is that this programme will provide a model for other language communities that want MTB MLE.

Which agencies or organizations support the programme?

The School Management Committee of each MTB MLE school is responsible for the daily operation of the school programme and for supporting their teachers.

Local communities donated the land for their schools.

The District Education Office was not involved in implementation but allows MTB MLE in the three district schools.

The Nepali National Languages Preservation Institute (NNLPI) supports programme implementation.

Tribhuvan University Department of Linguistics provides linguistic support.

SIL International provides technical support.

Does the programme have policy support?

Nepal’s national education policy allows for the implementation of MLE schools.

When did the programme begin and how did it grow?

The MTB MLE approach was not widely known or practiced in the government education system when the Rajbanshi MTB MLE programme was initiated. Therefore, the plan was to implement the programme in three new community schools that were established for this purpose. Advocacy and programme planning began in 2009.

The programme team realized that the five-year government primary education provision was too short a time for early Grade MLE students to gain sufficient oral and written proficiency in Rajbanshi (L1), Nepali (L2) and English (L3) to achieve the government’s learning objectives. For that reason, the MLE programme added a year of kindergarten so that Rajbanshi students learn reading and writing in their mother tongue before they enter Grade 1.

Classes began in 2010. Three schools are now included in the pilot programme. After the pilot is completed, the MTB MLE approach will be adapted and extended to other suitable language groups in Nepal that request it.

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8 L1: mother tongue and first school language; L2: second school language; L3: third school language
How did you use the national curriculum to develop the instructional plan for this programme?

As noted above, the programme begins in Kindergarten and continues to Grade 5, the last Grade in the government primary education programme. The government does not have a national curriculum for kindergarten so the programme team, with input from community members, developed the curriculum for that grade.

Instruction in Grades 1 to 5 is based on the national curriculum, but adjusted for this MTB MLE programme in two ways: 1) Lesson content builds on the students’ knowledge and experience; and 2) Nepali and English are not introduced together.

The MTB MLE programme teaches three languages as subjects and uses two of the three languages for instruction. One language is introduced at a time so that students can build confidence in their ability to speak, read and write each one.

Rajbanshi is the first language in this programme. Students already know the language because they hear and speak it at home. They learn to read and write in Rajbanshi in Term 2 of kindergarten and build fluency throughout that year and in Grade 1. They continue oral and written Rajbanshi as a subject all the way to Grade 5.

Nepali, the national language and the official school language of Nepal, is the second language in this programme. Teachers introduce oral Nepali early in Grade 1 and help students build their vocabulary in that language. Rajbanshi and Nepali belong to the same “family” of languages;⁹ they share about 40 percent of their vocabulary and both use the

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⁹ Nepali and Rajbanshi belong to the Indo-Aryan (Indic) branch of the Indo-European language family.
same writing system. So the students’ foundation in reading and writing Rajbanshi prepares them to begin reading and writing Nepali in Grade 1, Term 2. Students continue oral and written Nepali as a subject to the end of Grade 5.

English is taught as a subject in the Nepal education system and it is the third language in this programme. Teachers introduce oral English in Grade 2, Term 2 and written English in Grade 2, Term 3. The programme team would have preferred to introduce English later to give students more time to attain proficiency in Rajbanshi and Nepali languages. However, students would not be able to achieve the expected outcomes for English by the end of Grade 5. Also, parents want their children to learn English early to help them learn about the world outside Nepal and to prepare them to find employment when they finish school. For that reason, the programme team decided to introduce oral English in Grade 2, Term 2, one year after Nepali is introduced. By that time children are familiar with activities for learning oral English because most activities are the same as for learning Nepali.

Rajbanshi and Nepali are both used as languages of instruction:

- Kindergarten and Grade 1: Rajbanshi only for instruction
- Grade 2: Rajbanshi with Nepali for instruction
- Grades 3-4: Nepali with Rajbanshi for instruction.
- Grade 5: Nepali only for instruction

A 2014 evaluation report of the programme says this about the way the programme introduces languages:

>This programme takes what the team calls a “staggered approach” to the introduction of languages in the curriculum by introducing L1 Rajbanshi in Kindergarten, L2 Nepali in Grade 1, and L3 English in Grade 2.

>In principle, the introduction of L2 and L3 do not need to be so early, because the focus should be on oral and literacy skills development in the L1. Building a foundation in the L1 supports better learning of the additional languages later. However, to be as consistent as possible with the national curriculum, and so that the government textbooks can be used as much as possible, the team strategically introduced Nepali in Grade 1 and English in Grade 2 in the MLE model.

>The kindergarten year was added to the existing five primary grades, formally becoming the first year of a six-year cycle. Focus in the first year is on Rajbanshi language, literacy readiness, story-telling and listening, and alphabet/syllable reading and writing.

>It should be noted that, similar to kindergarten in other countries, children who are not ready to move into Grade 1 repeat the kindergarten year, so that the programme can ensure that incoming Grade 1 learners have a good L1 foundation and are ready to start the formal primary curriculum.
How did you develop classroom materials?

The programme team developed all the teaching and learning materials for kindergarten. The team also developed all Rajbanshi MT language materials for Grades 1-5 plus other materials to supplement the government textbooks that are used for all subjects except Rajbanshi (MT subject).

This was the first time the programme team had developed MTB MLE materials so they learned as they developed materials for one term and one year at a time. After using the newly developed materials the first time, teachers provided suggestions for making them more relevant to the students' learning needs. The team used the teachers' suggestions and observations from school visits to revise the materials before they were finalized and sent for printing. Working one year at a time also gave the programme team a better understanding of students' progress each year.

There were not many songs in Rajbanshi that were suitable for children when the programme began so MT speakers composed children's songs to use in classroom activities.

How do you select and train teachers?

Each School Management Committee recruits MLE teachers for their school. Teachers must be MT speakers of Rajbanshi, they must come from the local community and they must have at least a secondary school completion certificate to begin teaching.

One of the important lessons from this programme was that teachers should come from the same community as their students. Local teachers are more likely to take ownership of the programme and they also stay longer in their job. In fact, apart from one teacher who left to work in another country and one teacher who left due to family reasons, the teachers who were recruited for these three schools have stayed in the programme, including those who married and had children during the programme period.

The programme team conducted one pre-service training at the beginning of the MLE programme and has in-service training two to three times a year. The training is especially important for new teachers who are not familiar with the programme's instructional design and activities, particularly for kindergarten and Grade 1. In grades 2 to 5, government curriculum and textbooks are used but teachers continue to use MLE teaching methods. In-service training provides opportunities for teachers to learn and practice new methods. Much of the in-service training time is used for demonstration and practice, especially in teaching MLE-specific activities. Teachers share their teaching experiences as well as the challenges they face and adjustments they make. This sharing of good practices by the teachers also provides the programme team with the input they need to make lesson plans more realistic and relevant to the local context.

Teachers who joined the programme later did not have a chance to go through the detailed pre-service teacher training which explained the purpose of the programme and the ways MLE classes are different from classes in regular government schools. For that reason, new teachers
spent time observing Kindergarten teachers and students before they attended their first in-service teacher training.

**How do you supervise classrooms?**

The programme team conducts school visits and class observations three times a year. This includes time for teachers to discuss their students' progress.

Officers from the District Education Office also make annual school visits.

**How do you evaluate students’ progress?**

Kindergarten and Grade 1 teachers conduct informal reading assessments in Rajbanshi and oral assessments for other subjects.

The programme team assesses students' reading and writing progress in all three school languages and other academic subjects twice a year, beginning in Grade 2.

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*Grade 2 student demonstrates her reading ability in the MT.*

© SIL International, Nepal

**What results have you seen?**

Rajbanshi parents and community members clearly appreciate having this MLE pilot programme in their language. Parents are happy that the programme helps their children learn from their own culture and also helps them gain knowledge from outside.

Besides academic achievement, parents report that their children love going to school. They talk about school experiences with their families and tell the stories that they learned. They are more independent and polite as well.
One mother from Chilhara MTB MLE School gave a speech in public during the school’s Parents Day. She had never been to school herself but she was bold enough to speak in front of the people. This is what she said:

_I never dreamt that my child would be able to read books in three languages. She can sing songs in our language but she can also sing Nepali songs and even few English songs. I am very happy about my child’s progress and thankful for the MLE programme and all the teachers._

A government official’s mid-term programme evaluation recognized the positive changes the MTB MLE programme has made in the community and in Rajbanshi children’s education.

_Now the Rajbanshi community is very aware about its linguistic as well as cultural identity and heritage. They have realized and are devoted to their children’s education in their own MT. Of their own free will, they have donated acres of land for constructing the school building and are well engaged in the school management committee (SMC) … One of the notable impacts is that the rate of school dropout has remained constant at only 4 percent which can be the best lesson for the majority of schools in Nepal._

A final evaluation of the pilot project also recognized the importance of this programme. Here is what the evaluator wrote:

_I am extremely impressed with the Rajbanshi MLE programme, which surpassed my expectations and offered many lessons that I will carry with me to MLE programmes in other countries. The positive impact of the programme on the three Rajbanshi schools and communities is very apparent, and I hope no one among the project team, the district education personnel or any other stakeholders in Nepal will allow the effect to stop at this small-scale level._

**What are your plans for the future?**

The lessons learned in implementing the pilot can be adapted for other language communities in Nepal. However, the same approach of starting new community schools to implement an MTB MLE programme will not be considered and cannot be sustained unless government officials, teachers, school management committees and parents consider it worthwhile and incorporate MTB MLE into the government education system. Hopefully parents from other language communities in Nepal will, at some point, share the enthusiasm of parents whose children are in the Rajbanshi programme.

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Viet Nam: MTBBE Action Research Project

Which language communities were part of this Action Research and where do they live?

The Mother Tongue-Based Bilingual Education (MTBBE) Action Research (AR) project was implemented in the Mong, J’rai and Khmer communities of Viet Nam. The Mong people live in Lao Cai Province; the J’rai live in Gia Lai Province; and the Khmer live in Tra Vinh Province.

What was the educational situation for children in these communities before the project began?

Viet Nam is a diverse society with 54 officially recognized ethnic groups, many of which have their own distinct language and live in remote and economically disadvantaged areas of the country. The total ethnic minority population is approximately 12.5 million, representing 14 percent of the total population of about 90.5 million. Vietnamese is the official and only language of instruction in schools. This has created a “language barrier” for many ethnic minority children who have limited or, in some cases, no understanding of Vietnamese when they begin formal education.

11 Ms. Joyce Patricia Bheeka, Chief Education Section, UNICEF Viet Nam, with her team, provided information for this section.
What were the Action Research project goals?

The MTBBE Action Research project aimed to find answers to two key educational challenges: 1) how to cope with the large number of ethnic languages; and 2) how to provide education for all children in Viet Nam so they learn and develop to their full potential.

The first objective was to implement a valid and feasible design of bilingual education in ethnic minority languages and Vietnamese in pre-school and primary schools. The second objective was to contribute to the development of policies and practices that will promote the use and development of ethnic minority languages and thus improve access and equity in education and other social services.

Which agencies or organizations supported the project?

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), with support from UNICEF in Viet Nam, was responsible for implementing the MTBBE Action Research project.

The Project Steering Committee was co-chaired by the Vice Minister of Education and Training, who is in charge of Primary Education, and the UNICEF Deputy Representative. Other members of the Project Steering Committee came from related government departments such as the Early Childhood Education Department (ECED), Primary Education Department (PED) and Ethnic Minority Education Department (EME) and from institutions such as the Viet Nam Institute of Education and Science (VIES) and the Research Center for Ethnic Minority Education (RCEME).  

An Advisory Group was composed of representatives from the government plus senior staff from UNICEF, UNESCO and World Bank.

UN leaders in Viet Nam, in particular the UNICEF Representative and the UN Resident Coordinator, plus donor communities such as the World Bank, European Union and Norwegian government, played critical roles in promoting South-South cooperation to support MTBBE at high-level advocacy events in Viet Nam and elsewhere.

At provincial and local levels, Provincial Department of Education and Training Research Management Teams and District Boards of Education and Training Action Research Management Boards, as representatives for the MOET, were responsible for implementation. These departments ensured that education managers, school principals and teacher associations in each province and district were involved in implementing the project in their areas of responsibility.

During the implementation phase, the Viet Nam Linguistic Institute provided technical support and SIL International provided support for training master teachers, MTBBE project planning, the Classroom Language Mapping project, and MTBBE awareness-raising for education managers and legal officers.

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13 See http://www.unicef.org/vietnam/Lao_Cai_mapping_profile_set.pdf
The Ethnic Council/National Assembly, especially the Vice Chairperson and the Deputy Director of the Ethnic Department, were important partners in promoting the MTBBE policy.

**Did the project have policy support?**

The Constitution, Education Law and other educational policy documents of Viet Nam have all provided support for the use of ethnic minority languages in education:

> The State shall enable ethnic minority people to learn their spoken and written languages in order to preserve and develop their ethnic cultural identity (Article 7, The Education Law of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam).14

**When did the Action Research project begin and how did it develop?**

In 2007, the MOET and UNICEF signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the MTBBE Action Research project.

The plan was to track two cohorts of students from the three language communities from preschool through Grade 5.

Preparation included the following activities:

- Select locations for the MTBBE Action Research schools;
- Design and develop the methods, materials, teacher training curriculum, baseline surveys and mechanisms for measuring learning outcomes;
- Raise awareness and mobilize support from policy makers, education managers, principals, teachers, students and community members;
- Develop teaching and learning materials for pre-school, Grade 1 and Grade 2.

Between 2008 and 2014, curricula and teaching and learning materials were developed for preschool and for primary grades 1 to 5 with help from education experts and MT speakers from the three language communities.

Project leaders selected three languages as the MTs for the project, based on the following criteria:

- Writing systems / scripts: The languages should have writing systems that are accepted by MT speakers, including those from different dialect areas. At least one of the languages should use a writing system that is different from Vietnamese.15
- Language use: Almost everyone in the selected communities should speak the same mother tongue. Children should have little or no exposure to Vietnamese before they begin school.

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14 See http://www.unicef.org/vietnam/brief_TA.pdf

15 Vietnamese uses a Latin script. Some non-dominant languages in Viet Nam also use Latin scripts while other languages, such as Khmer, use a non-Latin script. Project designers set these criteria so they could compare the process of transferring between languages that share the same script and between languages that use different scripts.
• Teachers: Teachers should be bilingual, fluent in the students’ MT, share the students’ ethnic background, have at least two years of teaching experience and be recognized as committed teachers by education managers and communities.

• Support from officials: Local and provincial education authorities must commit to supporting the entire MTBBE programme from preschool through Grade 5. Provincial departments of education and training, district boards of education and training, school managers and teachers’ colleges must commit to tracking the progress of students when they complete the MTBBE programme and move into higher grades.

• Community support: Parents and community members who already support other community development activities must also commit to supporting the programme.

Seven schools were selected to be part of the MTBBE Action Research. Mong is used in three schools, J’rai is used in two schools, and Khmer is used in two schools.

The first cohort of students—a total of 262 children from the three language communities—began preschool in 2008 and the second cohort began in 2009.

How did you develop the curriculum?

Nationally recognized curriculum experts from all subject areas and languages were invited to form a working group to develop the MTBBE curriculum. A benefit of the curriculum development process was that a large group of potential trainers, textbook writers, and advocates in the MOET, National Institute of Linguistics (NIL), and other agencies increased their understanding and appreciation for MTBBE.

The MTBBE curriculum, which was approved by MOET, is based on the national curriculum for mainstream schools but adapted to the needs of children from ethnic minority communities. It includes strategies specific to early childhood education programmes, such as basing instruction on themes that relate to young children’s experiences in the home and community.

The curriculum development team wanted to ensure a smooth transition between pre-primary and Grade 1 and between students’ MT and Vietnamese throughout the six years of the programme. They recognized that teachers do not need to re-teach concepts in Vietnamese that students had already learned in their MT. With that in mind, they focused on linking MT and Vietnamese learning competencies in order to avoid repetition. The main difference between the national curriculum and the MTBBE curriculum is that in the MTBBE curriculum 1) both Vietnamese and the students’ MT are taught as subjects and 2) the students’ MT is used as one of the languages of instruction, with Vietnamese:

• Pre-school to Grade 2: MT used as the language of instruction. MT and Vietnamese are taught as subjects. Students learn to read and write in their MT and then transfer their literacy skills to Vietnamese.
• Grade 3: Vietnamese is introduced as a language of instruction with the MT.
• Grades 4 and 5: Vietnamese gradually becomes the language of instruction beginning in the 2nd semester of Grade 4.

By the end of Grade 5, students should understand, speak, read and write their MT and Vietnamese and they should have achieved Grade level competencies for all subjects as described in the national curriculum, including for the Vietnamese language.

How did you develop teaching and learning materials?

A Materials Development Team was established with members from RCEME, EMED, ECED, VIES, NIL, and the National Institute of Pedagogy. This team, with support from UNICEF staff and an international technical expert, was responsible for coordinating materials development. They worked with cultural experts from each of the language communities to develop materials in each language.

The Materials Development Team followed these steps in developing pre-primary and primary teaching materials:

1. Develop trial materials for each language with support from technical experts. Send trial materials to the MTBBE Textbook Approval Committee to ensure that the materials are in line with the MOET-approved MTBBE curriculum.\(^{16}\)

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\(^{16}\) The MTBBE Textbook Approval Committee is composed of national experts in languages and in the subject areas. It is coordinated by the PED and supervised by the MOET Vice Minister.
2. Correct the materials as instructed by the MTBBE Textbook Approval Committee and submit them to the MOET Vice Minister for final approval.

3. Print the materials.

4. Train teachers on how to use them.

5. Distribute the materials.

Pre-primary teaching materials included big books for shared reading, picture books, wall charts, teachers’ manuals, resource books, word cards, and practice books.

As noted above, MTBBE curriculum for each primary Grade was based directly on the national curriculum. MTBBE teaching materials and textbooks cover all the topics and main contents of the primary curriculum but the content of the textbooks was adapted to be relevant to children in each language community.

**How did you train teachers?**

As noted above, MTBBE programme coordinators selected teachers from the three language communities who were bilingual in their MT and in Vietnamese and who had already completed teacher training in the government system. The coordinating team considered the particular characteristics of each pilot province to determine the most effective strategies for preparing teachers to teach in MTBBE schools.

Programme coordinators realized that this would be the first time that ethnic minority languages were used for literacy and learning in Viet Nam’s formal education system. The MTBBE teacher training process they developed had these general objectives:

- MTBBE teachers will become fluent in reading and writing their MT and able to teach their ethnic minority students to read and write it.
- Pre-primary teachers and provincial and district education managers will be able to create teaching and learning aids from locally available materials.
- Grade 1-5 teachers will understand and participate in the action research. They will understand and follow MTBBE-specific teaching approaches and they will be able to use the teaching and learning materials for each subject.
- Teachers, school principals and district and provincial education officers will apply the principles of action research—reflecting on and researching their own practices and making changes based on their findings.

The first phase of training in 2008 prepared pre-school and Grade 1 teachers for the school years beginning in 2008 and 2009. Programme coordinators included as many potential future teachers as possible in each training event.
During and at the end of each phase of training, teachers’ strengths were identified and their ongoing needs and skills were diagnosed to determine their suitability as MTBBE teachers at the specified Grade levels.

MTBBE programme coordinators included school principals and district and provincial education officers in selected parts of the training so that they understood the approach and how to support MTBBE classroom teachers. Bringing these groups together during selected parts of the training also helped create team spirit.

During each phase of training, programme coordinators watched for especially talented and committed participants who could serve as authors, researchers or resource people for other bilingual teachers in their areas.

The MTBBE programme cooperated with Lao Cai and Tra Vinh Teacher Training Colleges to develop and institutionalize the MTBBE teacher training modules for pre-primary and primary teachers in Mong and Khmer MTBBE classrooms.

How did you supervise classrooms?

RCEME staff visited MTBBE schools and provided technical support as needed. MOET officials from the Ethnic Minority Education Pre-school and Primary Education Departments and selected MTBBE curriculum and materials developers also participated in the school visits and provided technical input to MTBBE teachers and school principals.

During each trip, teams observed Vietnamese, Mother Tongue and Mathematics lessons and provided feedback to teachers on how best to take advantage of their strengths and overcome any weaknesses.
At the end of each supervisory trip, feedback sessions with Provincial Departments of Education and Training, District Boards of Education and Training leaders and education managers were very useful. Participants were able to update information on the status of each school and listen as teachers shared their classroom experiences. The technical comments by the central programme staff were particularly valuable.

Provincial and district programme staff visited the schools each quarter to provide timely support to teachers.

**How did you evaluate students’ progress?**

Yearly student assessments were an essential part of the MTBBE Action Research. The assessments provided valuable information about the impact of the programme on learning outcomes.

The first student assessment in September 2008 collected baseline data for the first cohort of students. The assessment focused on five components in both the mother tongue and Vietnamese at pre-primary level.

A second assessment in May 2009 assessed the same group of students’ progress over the pre-school year. It found that the MTBBE students had made “significant progress in all five components” compared with a sample of non-MTBBE students. The 2009 assessment added sections on teachers and learning materials. It provided valuable information that was used to improve textbooks, provide insights for teacher training, and strengthen the teaching-learning process.

**What are your plans for the future?**

UNICEF will continue to communicate with policy makers at all levels to encourage their support for continuing MTBBE in the three language communities and, where feasible, expand it to other languages.

UNICEF will build on the growing interest and engagement of the Ethnic Council of the National Assembly and political leaders in the provinces by disseminating the MOET’s final evaluation results and recommendations from the final evaluation. This will be done with the support of high-level institutions like the National Assembly and other related councils, to ensure the expansion and sustainability of the MTBBE programme.

Participants in the Action Research identified, tested and revised the essential components of MTBBE that will support expansion to new schools and new ethnic minority groups in Viet Nam. The programme also helped to create a socio-political climate that promotes expansion. UNICEF will encourage and provide technical support to the three provinces engaged in the Action Research to sustain their MTBBE programmes, continuing the good practice in Lao Cai and An Giang. UNICEF will also develop a specific advocacy strategy to engage more political leaders and decision makers in the National Assembly, in universities and research institutions in considering language issues in education for both bilingual and multilingual students as these students are often from the most remote and disadvantaged provinces.
However, expansion will require reforming the legal documents and guidelines relating to education for ethnic minority students to allow their MTs to be used with Vietnamese as a language of learning in the formal education system. Expansion and sustainability will also require supportive policies and permanent dialogue between education and other related legal agencies as well as scholars, academics and religious leaders such as the Central Buddhist Association.

Also, further assessment of individual components of the programme might be necessary to identify those parts that can be revised to improve the programme's economic feasibility.

Research from other parts of the world has identified specific medium and long-term benefits of strong MTBBE programmes. These are primarily in terms of reduced replication and dropout rates in primary school and a greater percentage of ethnic minority children in secondary school. Long-term tracking of students from this MTBBE Action Research programme will enable authorities to determine the relationship between programme costs and long-term benefits for individual students and Viet Nam in general.

**References**


Which language communities are included in this MTB MLE programme and where do they live?

This MTB MLE programme serves three language communities: Maguindanao, Hiligaynon and Tboli. These three plus fifteen other ethnic groups—a total of about two million people—live in South Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat areas of South Central Mindanao.

What was the educational situation for children in these communities before the programme began?

Widespread poverty in South Central Mindanao was having a negative impact on school attendance rates, completion rates and learning outcomes. The government had implemented a new policy that called for using students’ MT as a language of instruction from Kindergarten to Grade 3 and for teaching it, along with Filipino and English, as a subject. The problem was that teacher training in MTB MLE methods was inadequate and teaching-learning materials were provided in only 19 of more than 170 Philippines languages.

17 Ms. Bonna Duron-Luder, Basic Education Advisor, Save the Children in the Philippines, provided information for this section.
What are the programme goals?

The programme has three specific goals:

1. Provide quality education for children ages 3 to 8 in the three language communities and improve their learning outcomes.

2. Support at least 1,500 parents, teachers and other responsible members of the community in implementing and sustaining MTB MLE and child protection programmes in their communities.

3. Build local and national support for MTB MLE policy and programmes.

What agencies or organizations support the programme?

Save the Children, Philippines signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Education in Region 12. A Technical Working Group established as part of that MOU was instrumental in developing and approving MT-based teaching and learning materials.

Nine Language Advisory Committees were established early in the programme. They were composed of principals/school heads, teachers, parents, local public officials, tribal leaders and youth. The original intent was that the Language Advisory Committees would take the lead in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating MTB MLE activities. However, the Committees’ roles were changed when they became Community Based Child Protection Advocates and took responsibility for child protection and other activities relating to the MLE programme.

Region 12 of the Department of Education and SIL International provided technical guidance and support for materials development. They also helped develop lesson plans and trained teachers and day-care workers in using the MT-based teaching and learning materials.

Programme leaders worked with regional offices of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, government units at provincial, municipal and barangay levels and the National Commission on the Indigenous Peoples.

Does the programme have policy support?

In 2009, the Department of Education issued Order 74 calling for MTB MLE to be implemented throughout the country. This Order required schools to use students’ mother tongue for instruction from pre-primary at least through Grade 3. Students’ MT with Filipino and English are all taught as subjects during those years. The government also passed the Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013, which included MTB MLE. The Enhanced Basic Education Act together with Dep Ed Order No. 74 clearly demonstrated the government’s support for MTB MLE throughout the Philippines.

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How many schools are in the programme now?

During the three years of implementation (2012-2015), twenty-nine learning centres and ten elementary schools implemented MTB MLE classes.

How did you develop the curriculum?

MTB MLE-specific curriculum, lesson plans and materials for the pilot programme were based on competencies established by the Department of Education. The Department of Education for Region 12 reviewed and approved the lesson plans for teaching the three languages.

Programme leaders recognized that it would be difficult for MTB MLE students to learn to read and write three languages (MT, Filipino and English) within a short period of time. A priority in planning the curriculum was to enable children to gain confidence in reading and writing their MT first and then transferring their knowledge and skills in MT literacy to reading and writing Filipino and then English.

How did you develop classroom materials?

During the three years of the pilot programme, the programme team held a series of workshops in which participants developed, produced and then distributed teachers’ guides, 97 big book titles (83 in the MT and 14 in Filipino), five big pictures and recordings of children’s songs in the three MTs that are used in the programme.

The programme team, working with the Department of Education, developed “transfer primers” to help students transfer from reading and writing their MT to reading and writing Filipino. The primers help students to 1) identify letters that look the same and sound the same in their MT and Filipino; then 2) letters in Filipino that are not used in the MT; and then 3) letters in both languages that look the same but are pronounced differently.

The first two years (2012 and 2013) focused on developing lesson plans and teaching materials for schools in each language area. In the third year the team reviewed and finalized the lesson plans and teaching materials and developed the transfer primers and language bridging guides.

How did you select and train teachers?

To address the need for teachers who are fluent in the three languages, programme leaders advocated with the Department of Education at the district and division levels to assign newly certified teachers to schools in their own language communities.

The programme team implemented a series of training sessions to help teachers understand the purpose of MTB MLE and use the curriculum, teaching materials and teaching methods effectively.
A total of 97 Kindergarten to Grade 3 teachers (81 females and 16 males) participated in the series of training events. Training focused on establishing MTB MLE classrooms, using MT-based teaching and learning materials effectively, and encouraging students’ active participation in classroom activities.

**How did you supervise classrooms?**

School Heads with Instructional Supervisors and Programme Coordinators from the Department of Education at school, district, division and regional levels are involved in the programme. Their responsibilities are to

- Understand the purpose of MTB MLE and why it is important
- Understand relevant theories of learning in general and of language learning
- Mentor and supervise teachers/facilitators and build their competence, confidence and capability to facilitate successful learning in their classrooms
- Guide teachers and facilitators in adapting curriculum to incorporate local context and culture, and
- Ensure that standards of quality are met and that reading, teaching and learning materials are appropriate.

‘Learning circle’ sessions are included in supervisory visits. In these sessions, participants reflect on their own learning and on the process of implementing MTB MLE in their schools or communities.

**How did you evaluate students’ progress?**

In partnership with the Department of Education, Region 12, Save the Children provided technical support in developing guidelines for the “MTB MLE Learners’ Assessment”.

MTB MLE primary students enjoy learning in their MT.
© Save the Children, Philippines
The guidelines focus on two major areas. The first relates to the effectiveness of the program and the results provide input into programme design and implementation. The second relates to reading outcomes. The purpose is to identify students’ learning gaps, issues and concerns. Assessments in Grades 1 to 3 focused on students’ ability to read words and sentences correctly and to read with understanding. The results from these assessments are used for strengthening training programmes for teachers, principals, and education supervisors.

**What results have you seen to this point?**

The three year pilot programme served 4,621 children (2,373 boys and 2,248 girls) from pre-school through Grade 3 in twenty-eight learning centres and ten elementary schools. This was an increase of between 10-20 percent over participation before the programme began.

By the end of the three-year pilot, the assessments showed a gain of 35 percent (Hiligaynon), 65 percent (Maguindanaoan) and 39 percent (Tboli) among Grade 3 pupils in speaking and reading their MT. Also, 51 percent of the Grade 3 pupils who were assessed exhibited reading abilities in Filipino.

Eighty teachers improved teaching skills, through training.

Parents and community members have a better understanding of the relationship between mother tongue instruction and improved education.

Five regional and municipal Language Advisory Committees were organized.

Implementation guidelines for MTB MLE implementation in the region were approved and disseminated by the Department of Education.

Other languages in the region such as Obo Manobo, Teduray and Blaan, have adopted the MTB MLE model developed in this programme. Also, the Department of Education and other organizations in the Philippines are promoting this model.

**What are your plans for the future?**

The pilot experience provided information that will help to strengthen the use of children’s MT in Save the Children's regular programming for early childhood and basic education.

MTB MLE is already implemented on a nation-wide scale but programme leaders need to advocate further with the regional Department of Education to use the model developed in this programme.