



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

**Advocacy Kit for
Promoting Multilingual Education:**
Including the Excluded

**Programme Implementers
Booklet**





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Promoting Multilingual Education:
*Including the Excluded***

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Booklet for Programme Implementers

Introduction

Fifty percent of the world's out-of-school children live in communities where the language of schooling is rarely, if ever, used at home. This underscores the biggest challenge to achieving Education for All: a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition.¹

This booklet is about education programmes that meet the learning needs of people who speak non-dominant or minority languages – those described in the quotation above. This booklet uses a question and answer format to discuss the following general topics:

- Educational situation for people who do not speak official school languages
- Definition and purpose of “mother tongue-based multilingual education” (MLE) programmes.
- Process of building a strong educational foundation in students’ first language and a good “bridge” to the official school language
- Planning and implementing effective MLE programmes

Questions and Responses: Language and Education in Minority Language Communities

Q1: *What is the educational situation for people who do not speak official school languages?*

People whose home languages are different from official school languages are likely to suffer from a lack of educational access and/or quality:

¹ World Bank. 2005. *Education Notes. In Their Own Language: Education for All*. Washington D.C., World Bank. http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/Education-Notes/EdNotes_Lang_of_Instruct.pdf (Accessed on 17 November 2006)



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- Many, especially those in remote areas, have no access to schools at all, or have schools but no teachers.
- If there are schools and teachers, the teachers are unlikely to share the students' social and cultural background or to speak the students' language.
- Teaching materials and textbooks (if there are any) are in a language the students do not understand. Lessons ignore the students' own knowledge and experience, and give the impression that only the dominant language and culture are important.
- Because the students do not understand the school language – and therefore the lesson content – many of them do not do well in their classes. They have to repeat grades and eventually become discouraged and leave school altogether.

Q2: *What is Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education (MLE) and how does it help students do better in school?*

Mother Tongue-based MLE programmes begin in students' first or home language, help them build fluency and confidence in the official school language (and additional languages, as required) and encourage them to use both their own and the official language to achieve a quality education.

Effective MLE programmes help to overcome several specific educational problems experienced by minority students in mainstream, dominant language schools:

Problem in mainstream schools: Students are expected to communicate in the school language when they begin their education, even though they may not have heard it before.

- *MLE solution:* Students begin school using their home or first language. If students from several language groups are in the same class, a local lingua franca may be used.

Problem in mainstream schools: Students must learn increasingly abstract concepts using the new language before they have built the vocabulary in that language to understand or apply the concepts.

- *MLE solution:* In the early grades, teachers use the student's known language to teach academic concepts. At the same time, the students begin learning the new language, first orally and then for reading and writing.

As the children gain fluency in the new language, teachers begin to use that language for instruction. But they continue to use the home language to introduce new ideas, to review what the students have learned and to clarify things they did not understand.

Once students understand a concept in their first language, they do not need to re-learn it in the second language. They only need to learn the second language vocabulary to communicate what they know in that language. This is why many MLE teachers say, *"This is the first time that my students have understood these concepts!"*

Carefully planned Mother Tongue-based MLE programmes should produce students who are:

- *Multilingual* – they use two or more languages in their everyday interactions and for learning in school.
- *Multiliterate* – they read and write competently in both or all of their languages.
- *Multicultural* – they are comfortable living and working with people from outside their community while maintaining their love and respect for their home culture and community.

Q3: What is the process by which children go from their first language to the official language in school?

When teachers are professionally trained and have access to quality materials in both the students' home language and the official language, the process and pace of language education can be flexible. However, experiences in Asia and the Pacific have shown that when teachers lack professional training, when there are few teaching and learning materials and when the students have little exposure to the new language outside of school, it is best to proceed more slowly, so that neither students nor teachers are overwhelmed.

One of the underlying principles of mother tongue-based multilingual education is that students learn best when they use what they already know (their knowledge and experience, their own language) to learn what is new (new facts, new concepts, new languages). So MLE programmes focus on helping students build a good educational foundation in their first language and a good bridge to the new language.

Beginning in the first language. In good MLE programmes, students begin to construct a strong educational foundation when they begin to learn in their first language – the language they speak and understand best. Lessons introduce new topics by relating them to the students' own knowledge and experience. Research has found that this foundation in the first language is the key to helping students learn additional languages successfully:

The level of development of children's mother tongue is a strong predictor of their second language development... Children...with a solid foundation in their mother tongue develop stronger literacy abilities in the school language.²



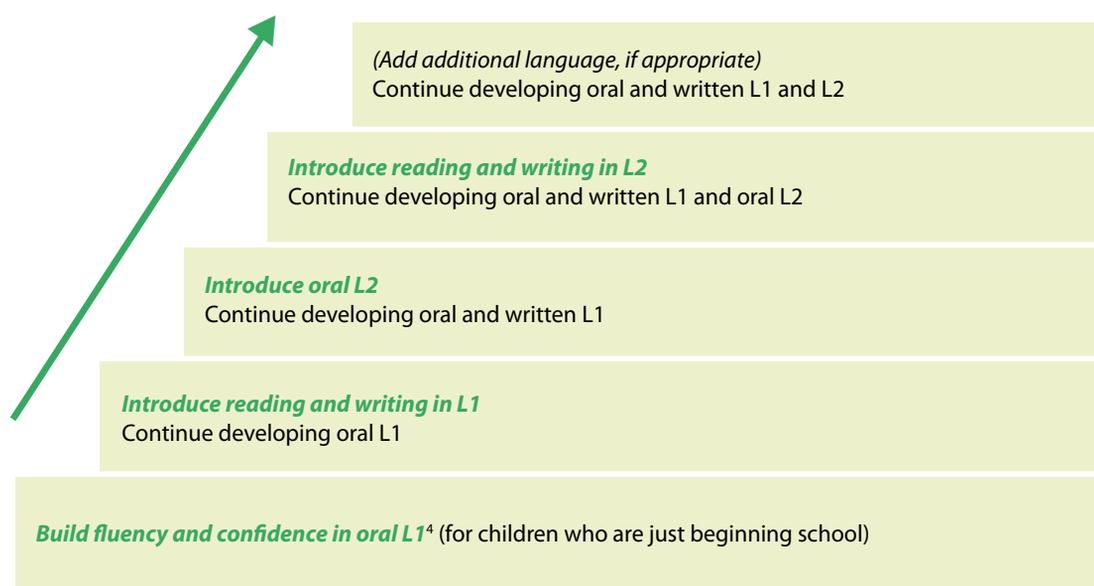
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2 Cummins, J. 2000. *Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why is It Important for Education?* <http://www.iteachilearn.com/cummins/mother.htm> (Accessed on 17 November 2006)

Bridging to the new language. Having established an educational foundation in their home language, students begin learning the new language, first orally and then in written form. However, they do not stop using their first language as soon as they have achieved basic competency in the new language. Rather, they continue using both languages for learning, at least through primary school:

When children continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary school years, they gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively. They have more practice in processing language, especially when they develop literacy in both, and they are able to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality.³

We can identify four general phases for language education, beginning in the students' first language and then adding the new language – first orally and then in written form. (Additional phases may be needed for each new language that is added.) Each phase builds on those preceding it, and at each phase teachers reinforce what the children have already learned.



Phases of language education at primary level⁵

3 Cummins, J. 2000.

4 L1 = the children's first/home/heritage language, the language they know best
L2 = the children's second language/official/national language

5 Adapted from S. Malone, 2005b. *Planning Community-based Education Programmes in Minority Language Communities*. Resource manual for mother tongue speakers of minority languages engaged in planning and implementing education programmes in their own communities.

Q4. What is involved in implementing strong and effective Mother Tongue-based MLE programmes?

A study of MLE programmes around the world reveals that the most successful and sustained programmes share several characteristics:

1. Minority language communities share responsibility for planning, implementing, evaluating and maintaining their programmes.
2. Government agencies, NGOs, universities and other interested agencies work together in supporting the programmes.
3. Adequate funding is provided for all programme components, especially training, materials development, and provision of wages for local teachers.
4. Students, their parents and their communities recognize the benefits of the programme in helping them achieve their educational goals.



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The process of implementing and sustaining these programmes usually consists of the following general categories of activities:



Programme implementers may not be responsible for all of the activities listed in the diagram above. For example, they may not be involved in establishing supportive policies or securing funds for the MLE programme. They will, however, be involved in most of the other activities. The following sections provide a brief and very general overview of these activities.

Gathering information for planning. Successful programmes begin with good planning, and good planning requires good information. Answers to the questions below will help to provide some of the information needed for planning effective MLE programmes:

- How do people in the language communities describe their current educational situation? (*What are their goals for their children's education? What problems or needs do they identify?*)
- Which minority language communities are ready to begin an MLE programme? (*Are they committed to developing their language for educational purposes? Have they identified potential teachers and writers? Do they have a place to hold classes? Are they prepared to take their share of responsibility for implementing and maintaining their programme?*)
- What is the status of the local language? (*Does it have a written form that is acceptable to mother tongue speakers, to educators and to appropriate government officials?*)

- What resources can be mobilized? (*Where will training take place? Who will be the trainers? Who will supervise the classes? Who will help to develop the MLE curriculum? Who will create reading materials in the students' languages?*)
- What factors might hinder implementation and sustainability of the programme, and what are possible solutions to problems? (*Will transportation be a problem for training, supervision and distribution of materials? If so, are there local training facilities that can be used? Can "master teachers" be promoted to supervise other teachers in their vicinity?*)
- What is the current language and education situation according to available reports and other documents? (*What percentages of children from each language community enter the school system? What percentage of those who enter finish Grade 6? Grade 10? What percentages of adults are able to use print literature? In which language or languages?*)



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Example from the Philippines: Preliminary Research for a Non-formal Adult Education Programme⁶

The Bureau of Non-formal Education of the Philippines has initiated First Language First bilingual education programmes in several language communities, but because of a lack of resources such as learning materials and trained facilitators, not all the programmes have been implemented as planned. One programme that has been sustained is the “Indigenous People’s Education Programme” of the Magbikin language community in Morong, Bataan. This action research project consisted of two phases. The first phase focused on identifying learning needs and developing local curriculum and learning materials. The second phase involved producing the learning materials, building capacity and organizing learning group sessions. A report of this programme identified several research strategies that programme facilitators used to learn from the community about their goals and needs:

- ▶ Project orientation sessions that focused on the purposes and processes for collecting information through action research
- ▶ Community dialogue sessions to establish rapport with leaders and other members of the community
- ▶ Group discussions on particular topics to generate information about the community
- ▶ Home visitations and interviews with key members of the community to validate and supplement the information gathered through group discussion

Needs and problems that were identified through these sessions were categorized and prioritized according to input from community members. Programme facilitators used these categories to develop a community-centered curriculum for the non-formal education programme.

6 Valles, M. C. 2005. Action Research on the Development of an Indigenous Peoples Education Programme for the Magbikin Tribe in Morong, Bataan, Philippines. UNESCO, *First Language First: Community-based Literacy Programmes for Minority Language Contexts in Asia*. Bangkok, UNESCO, pp. 181-195.

Raising awareness and mobilizing partners. People need information about the purpose and benefits of multilingual education if they are to support MLE programmes. Awareness-raising and mobilization activities should provide information that will encourage people to work together in planning, implementing and supporting their programme. Activities can take place at the community level, at the district or province level, or nationally.

Awareness-raising and mobilization in communities. People from minority language communities who have experienced many years of discrimination and neglect may feel that their language and culture are of no value. They often believe that the best thing they can do for their children is to get them into the “language of power” as quickly as possible. They are afraid that if they use their own language in the classroom, their children will have fewer chances to learn the official or dominant language.

To overcome these perceptions, awareness-raising should focus on both the educational and the cultural value of multilingual education. Activities can include talking about MLE with parents and other community members, showing them reading materials in their own language, performing dramas or skits (for example, a skit to show a class with the teacher using a language the students don’t understand, followed by another skit with the teacher using the students’ home language) and then talking about the message that was communicated, visiting an MLE class in another community, or showing a video of an interactive MLE classroom.

Example from the Philippines: Awareness-raising at the Community Level for a Primary School Programme⁷

Educators in the Philippines visited a local community to talk with parents about the MLE programme that had been established in their school. Some parents still did not fully understand the purpose of the programme and were worried that their children would not be able to learn Filipino and English (the official languages of the country) well. The visitors explained that the MLE programme was meant to help their children to build a strong educational foundation in their home language and a good bridge to the official languages. The visitors carefully answered the parents’ questions and gave examples from other parts of the country. At the end of the meeting, the parents told their visitors, “Okay. We’ll keep the programme. But you must go back and tell the people in Manila to be sure that they help our children to build a strong foundation and a good bridge!”

7 From author’s personal communication. 2001. Philippines.

Awareness-raising and mobilization at district and provincial levels. If local, district and provincial officials in the education system do not understand the reason for using non-official languages in primary school, they will have difficulty supporting MLE. Education officials need information about the rationale, purpose and benefits of MLE, and assurance that the MLE programme will be worth the effort it will takes to implement and support it.



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Mobilization activities can include:

- Group discussions (with members of the minority communities) about educational problems faced by students who do not speak the official school language;
- Visits to MLE classes, or viewing videos of classes, followed by discussions of what they observed;
- Participation in preliminary research, training workshops, and/or curriculum development; and
- Encouragement to think innovatively about ways to develop successful programmes.

**Example from Papua New Guinea:
Awareness-raising for Pre-primary Education
at the Provincial Level⁸**

When members of the Kaugel language community initiated a pre-primary mother tongue education programme for their children, one of first things they did was to establish their own language and education association and register it officially with the government as an NGO. The coordinator of the programme, a former schoolteacher, understood that if the local programme were to be sustained, it would have to be accepted and approved by officials from the provincial education office. The coordinator visited the education office in the provincial capital, taking samples of graded Kaugel language reading materials that had been produced for the programme. He invited the provincial education officer to visit training workshops and classes, and he sent regular reports about the programme to the education office. In addition, the Kaugel coordinator offered to assist provincial education officers in training people from other language groups who wanted to initiate pre-primary programmes. The relationship between the Kaugel programme and the provincial education office was mutually beneficial: Kaugel trainers assisted with provincial teacher training workshops, and the provincial education office provided classroom supplies (and credibility) to the Kaugel programme. The Kaugel programme, initiated in 1984, has been successfully sustained for over twenty years and Kaugel-First education is now part of Papua New Guinea's formal education system.

Awareness-raising and mobilization at the national level. Arranging visits to successful programmes within or outside the country is an excellent awareness-raising activity for policy makers and other national officials. Another strategy is to host a national or regional symposium or workshop that focuses on multilingual education.

8 From author's personal experience working with the Kaugel language programme from 1982 to 1987.

Example from India: Awareness Raising for Multilingual Education at the National Level⁹

In 2005, the “Workshop on Multilingual Education, with Special Focus on Tribal Education” was held in Mysore, India. The three-day workshop was sponsored by UNESCO, UNICEF, the National Council on Education, Training and Research and the Central Institute of Indian Languages.

The purpose of the workshop was to bring together members of the minority language communities, practitioners, scholars and policy makers to discuss issues relating to the educational needs of minority language speakers. Workshop planners hoped that participants would learn from each other while they talked about planning education programmes that were appropriate to the educational needs of the language communities and that affirmed the students’ languages and cultures.

Since policies are made at the state level in India, the workshop was intended particularly to raise awareness among government officials at that level. Speakers of the minority languages, members of NGOs that support MLE programmes and a number of national level scholars and government officials were also invited. The aim was to have a balance between grassroots workers, scholars and policymakers.

At the end of the workshop, participants identified four points that should be considered essential components of Mother Tongue-based MLE programmes in India:

- ▶ Community involvement from the beginning (including decisions about orthography)
- ▶ A curriculum that is rooted in the local context
- ▶ Mother tongue speakers from the children’s own communities as teachers
- ▶ A variety of reading materials in the children’s home languages

9 From author’s experience.

Developing orthographies (writing systems) for as yet unwritten languages. Developing an orthography or system for writing a particular language involves selecting and testing the symbols/letters and spelling rules (capital letters, punctuation, hyphens, etc.) that will represent the important parts of the language.

Orthography development has two goals: 1) speakers of the language will approve the orthography and use it consistently, and 2) the orthography will be acceptable to the relevant government agencies. The process of orthography development usually includes the following activities:

1. *Language surveys:* Collecting information about the language – number of speakers, geographic area in which the language is spoken, number of dialects/varieties and the degree of similarity or difference between them, people’s attitudes toward their own language(s), and domains (e.g. social, economic, political, religious, cultural) in which the language is used.
2. *Language analysis:* Identifying the parts of the language that need to be represented by letters or symbols.



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3. *Trial orthography*: Conducting an orthography workshop in which mother tongue speakers of the language, with help from linguists as necessary, identify the letters or symbols that will represent their language and produce a tentative or trial orthography.
4. *Testing*: Testing the trial orthography both formally (through observing people's use of the written language and noting problems) and informally (by encouraging as many people as possible to use it as much as possible and by asking for their feedback).
5. *Revision*: Identifying alternative letters or symbols that can be used if problems are discovered with the original (or revised) selections.
6. *Approval*: Conducting a second orthography workshop to present the revised orthography to mother tongue speakers for their approval. Requesting approval from relevant government agencies, as well.

Ideally, developing a writing system for a previously unwritten language begins by analyzing the language to identify the parts that need to be represented by letters or symbols. Sometimes, however, community members want to begin an MLE programme quickly and do not feel they have time for extensive language analysis. Working together, ideally with support from linguists, mother tongue speakers can develop an initial orthography for their language. It is important to note, however, that the more quickly the orthography is developed, the more carefully it must be tested. Also, it is best not to produce expensive reading materials until the mother tongue speakers and relevant government agencies have approved the orthography.

Example from Papua New Guinea: Developing Orthographies for Many Languages¹⁰

Alphabet Design Workshops¹¹ enable members of a minority language community to begin developing orthography (alphabet) for their language. The workshop plan is based on recognition that mother tongue speakers of a language have trustworthy perceptions about the way their language should be spoken and written.

An Alphabet Design Workshop for a language group usually lasts about ten days. At the workshop, mother tongue speakers, encouraged and supported by alphabet design specialists, write and edit stories, explore the sound patterns of their language and produce a Trial Spelling Guide that includes their new alphabet, spelling rules, and a short dictionary. Stories written during the workshop are collected in a separate book to be used later to test the new alphabet in the language community. Through these activities, participants develop a greater understanding of the structure of their language and the issues that should be considered in developing the trial alphabet.

Alphabet Design Workshops follow a basic pattern:

1. Participants write and then read stories in their language;
2. They identify problems with the alphabet as they go through the writing and reading process;
3. They discuss options for solving these problems;
4. They make decisions about which letters or symbols to use; and
5. They test their decisions.

These five steps are repeated as often as necessary in the decision-making process. This encourages participants to continue assessing their new alphabet and make necessary changes. The process also encourages them to understand that their writing system is not something that can never be changed but that it is a tool to be used and modified as needed by the language community.

10 Easton, C. 2003 (7-9 November). *Alphabet Design Workshops in Papua New Guinea: A Community-based Approach to Orthography Development*. International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalization and Multilingual Education. Bangkok, http://www.sil.org/asia/ldc/parallel_papers/catherine_easton.pdf (Accessed on 17 November 2006)

11 Alphabet Design Workshops were developed by SIL International in Papua New Guinea. See Easton, C. 2003. http://www.sil.org/asia/ldc/parallel_papers/catherine_easton.pdf (Accessed on 17 November 2006)

In Papua New Guinea, a country with five million people who speak over 800 languages, Alphabet Design Workshops have served a great need. When the National Department of Education embarked on an MLE programme in the mid-1990s, many language communities needed to develop writing systems so that they could enter the programme. Between 1998 and 2002, 47 Alphabet Design Workshops were held in which people from over 100 languages produced trial alphabets.

Developing an MLE-specific curriculum. Students in strong Mother Tongue-based MLE programmes (i.e. programmes that use the mother tongue as one of the languages of instruction for at least 6 years) should achieve three general learning outcomes:

1. They will understand and be able to apply grade-level academic concepts in the core subjects;
2. They will have begun to develop competence and confidence in using the official school language; and
3. They will have developed competence and confidence in using their own language, both orally and in written form, for a variety of purposes including using it for learning.



The MLE curriculum should cover the same content as the mainstream curriculum so that students can move easily into mainstream classes at the end of primary school or once first language support is withdrawn. (Please note that the first language should not be withdrawn too soon.) The MLE curriculum should also include a specific “language development” focus (see points 2 and 3, above). Teachers will need to learn appropriate strategies for helping students build competence and confidence in hearing, speaking, reading and writing both their home language and the official language.

The following are some step-by-step suggestions for developing an MLE-specific curriculum:

- 1) *First, list the learning competencies for each subject in the mainstream curriculum.* Remember that these competencies were written for students who speak the official school language as their mother tongue.
- 2) *Go through the competencies for each subject and identify the essential concepts that students are to learn.* Note that essential concepts in math, science, social studies, health and other content areas are not “language-specific”; so the concepts can be learned in any language. Develop MLE competencies that focus on these essential concepts and are appropriate for students from non-mainstream languages and cultures.
- 3) *Next, develop MLE-specific language education competencies for the children’s home language and for the official language* (see the phases of language development above). Ensure that these competencies focus on using both languages for everyday communication and for learning academic subjects.
 - Competencies that relate to using the language for communication have a dual focus: Students will learn to use the new language meaningfully and they will learn to speak, read and write it correctly;
 - Competencies that relate to using the language for learning academic subjects focus on building academic vocabulary in the new language. (Some examples are math terms for multiplication or division, and science terms for condensation or photosynthesis). These tend to be abstract terms, which are more difficult for language learners to learn, remember and use, so they will require special teaching strategies.
- 4) *Provide suggestions for learning activities that MLE teachers can use to help learners achieve each of the competencies.* You may need to make use of internet or other resources for teaching language across the curriculum.
- 5) *Develop Teachers’ Guides that include a template in which teachers list ideas for including local content in each lesson.* (An example for a health lesson would be to write the title of a health-related story written in the home language about local people.) Even when the students are able to use mainstream textbooks, teachers should continue to add local content to the lessons, to ensure that students continue building knowledge in both their languages, based on their own experiences.

Example from Thailand: Developing MLE-specific Instructional Materials for a Language Revitalization Programme in Primary School¹²

Members of the Chong language community in Chantaburi Province, Thailand, were concerned that their children were losing their language and culture. They wanted to include a Chong language time in the regular Thai-language primary school programme. Community leaders asked for and received permission from education officials to use the “Local Studies” class (part of the regular school curriculum) to teach their language and culture.

Members of the community took part in developing a curriculum for the Chong language and culture class.¹³ They developed the language content for oral language lessons, prepared all the instructional and reading materials, and volunteered as teachers for the class.

The language curriculum for the Chong programme had two purposes: to help Chong children learn to understand, speak, read and write their language in an enjoyable atmosphere, and to help the children appreciate their language and be proud of their part in revitalizing their cultural heritage.

One group of older Chong speakers provided the sequence of key words for the mother tongue teachers to use in Chong language learning activities. Another group of adults wrote stories based on Chong culture and oral history. These were made into a series of Chong reading books. A third group of parents wrote stories for 27 “big books” – large books that a teacher could read with the whole class, a process called “shared reading”. Chong high school students contributed by preparing illustrations for the big books. Adult Chong speakers also provided traditional songs for the children to learn in class. A transfer primer was developed to help the Chong children, who already knew how to read and write Thai, to bridge back to reading and writing in their heritage language.

This experience highlights the fact that members of minority language groups are the most important resource people for developing curriculum for a multilingual education programme.

12 Malone, D. and Suwilai P. 2005. Language Development and Language Revitalization in Asia. *Mon Khmer Studies*, Vol. 35, pp. 101-120.

13 This programme did not include use of the children's first language for other subjects.

Developing graded reading materials. Reading is like riding a bicycle – we only need to learn once. Students who have learned to read in their own language can transfer what they have learned to reading in the new language, even if the new language has a different script. The most important factor in helping students become fluent readers in their first language and in the official language is a variety of reading materials in both languages.

Experiences in many MLE programmes have shown that students do not require expensive reading materials. Neatly printed booklets with firm paper covers and black-and-white line drawings are usually acceptable, especially in the early stages of the programme. The most important characteristics of the materials are that: 1) the content is interesting, 2) the language is clear and understandable, and 3) the illustrations are related to the text and appropriate to the local context.



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In addition to the benefits these materials provide for local MLE programmes, the outcome of this process – development of literature in many of the nation’s languages that records the histories and the “stories” of its people – adds to the richness of the national heritage.

Example from China: Developing Graded Reading Materials¹⁴

The majority of the 1.6 million people who speak the Kam¹⁵ language live in the mountainous rural areas of Guizhou Province in China. In 2000, Kam community leaders embarked on a bilingual education pilot project in their language area. In the project, teachers use the Kam language in the classroom during the two years of pre-school (with children ages 5-6) before introducing oral Chinese in Grade 1.

One of the “rules” of reading education is that, in order to learn to read well, children need to read often and to read a variety of interesting texts. This presents quite a challenge in minority language communities that have little or no written literature. Kam programme leaders realized that they needed to begin quickly and work hard to produce the reading materials that would be needed for their project.

Production of reading materials began with a writers’ workshop. Guided by a Kam cultural calendar and a list of cultural themes, mother tongue writers eventually produced a total of 160 easy-to-read stories in Kam for the first year of preschool and another 160 stories for the second year.

Kam educators recognized that the children would require more stories and texts as they progressed from Grade 1 through Grade 6. These books would help the children build fluency in their own Kam language as they were learning to read and write Chinese. So the Kam writers produced about 40 stories for each year of primary school. The stories are about topics that are relevant and interesting to Kam children. In addition to those stories, Kam speakers produced another 120 “extra-curricular” stories for children to practice independent reading.

This emphasis on providing Kam students with ample reading materials has helped the children build high competence in their own language and has given them the confidence to transfer what they know to reading and writing Chinese. Preliminary observations indicate that Kam children in the early grades of primary school are reading and writing Chinese better than they ever did before.

14 Geary, N. and Pan, Y. 2001 (19-21 September) *Eight Hundred Stories for Dong Development: A Bilingual Education Pilot Project in Guizhou Province, China*. 6th Oxford International Conference on Education and Development. Oxford, United Kingdom.

15 “Kam” (pronounced like “gum” in English) is the name the people call themselves. Other people in China often refer to this group as the “Dong.”

Recruiting and training MLE staff. The most successful MLE programmes are those that have recruited motivated and respected individuals and helped them develop knowledge, skills, creativity and commitment for their assigned roles. Staff will be needed for both of the following categories of activities:

For multiple languages	For a single language
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Plan & coordinate the programme ▶ Develop the curriculum ▶ Train the staff (including training trainers) ▶ Oversee the development & production of materials (in multiple languages) ▶ Supervise classes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Plan & coordinate the programme ▶ Teach classes ▶ Create the reading materials ▶ Illustrate the materials ▶ Edit the materials ▶ Support the programme (create MLE support committee)

One of the challenges faced by MLE programmes is that, because of nonexistent or ineffective education in the past, there may be few mother tongue speakers from the minority language communities with professional teaching qualifications. Over time, as effective MLE programmes are established and sustained, this situation should change. Until then, one solution is to identify individuals who are fluent in the local language, who understand and appreciate the local culture and who are respected by others in the community, and equip them to teach. Experiences in countries around the world have shown that non-professional teachers who have easy-to-use instructional materials, good quality pre-service and in-service training and regular, supportive supervision can function very well in the classroom. If local teachers are not proficient in the official language, a language-learning component needs to be included in teacher training courses. One effective practice is to use “team teaching”: an assistant teacher from the local community works with a regular primary school teacher from outside the community, and each is responsible for the classes in his/her own language.

Example from Cambodia: Recruiting and Training Teachers¹⁶

The purpose of the Highland Children's Education Project in Ratanakiri Province in Cambodia is to establish village schools in minority language communities that have very limited or no access to education or other basic government services. The task of providing education is especially challenging in the remote highland areas because of a chronic and systemic teacher shortage, irregular school attendance, and lack of culturally appropriate teaching and learning materials.

Village school boards are responsible for management of their school and for selecting teachers. Teachers speak the local language as well as Khmer, the national language. Since teachers are from the children's home community, they also share the children's background knowledge and experiences. The challenge, as noted above, is that because of limited access to education in the past, none of the people selected to teach in the village schools have completed a primary school education.

The teacher-training course for the Highland Children's Education Project is designed to prepare these individuals to be teachers in remote bilingual and bi-cultural settings. The course aims to provide culturally appropriate teacher training to participants from indigenous minority groups by doing the following:

- ▶ Enabling participants to develop or extend their own academic knowledge;
- ▶ Equipping them with knowledge and skills in teaching methodologies;
- ▶ Preparing them to become reflective classroom practitioners who strive for ongoing self-improvement;
- ▶ Equipping them to contribute to community development through participatory forums and processes of schooling and education.
- ▶ Contributing to the enhancement of their social standing in their communities; and
- ▶ Supporting the development of indigenous perspectives on education.

Teacher training takes place in "learning cycles" in which trainees participate in cycles of intensive input followed by immediate practice and then evaluation. This is an "action research" approach which is recognized worldwide, particularly by educators, as a strategy for promoting effective learning and developing sound practices.

¹⁶ Middleborg, J. 2005. *Highland Children's Education Project: Good Lessons Learned in Basic Education*. Bangkok, UNESCO.

Documenting and evaluating the programme. In effective and sustained MLE programmes, evaluation and documentation begin at the planning phase and continue through the life of the programme. Following are components of the programme that should be documented and evaluated regularly and examples of questions that can help guide the documentation and evaluation process:

Curriculum/teaching method. Are learning outcomes clear? Do the teachers feel comfortable with the teaching methods? Does lesson content relate positively to the local culture? How can the curriculum be improved?

Personnel. Are teachers following the instructional plan? Do supervisors and trainers provide encouragement and support to local staff? What can be done to help staff at all levels build competence, confidence and creativity in carrying out their tasks?

Training. Do teachers who have completed teacher training workshops demonstrate that they understand the teaching method? Do writers who have completed writers' workshops demonstrate the ability to create, illustrate, edit and test their mother tongue materials? How can training be improved?

Materials. Are the instructional materials for non-professional teachers clear and easy to use? Do mother tongue speakers consider the reading materials appropriate? Can the students read them? Do they enjoy them? Is the system for producing reading materials as efficient as it needs to be? Is the distribution system effective and reliable? What parts can be improved?

Student progress. Do the students demonstrate that they are achieving the learning outcomes established for their grade level? Are they progressing successfully from one grade to the next? Are the students and their parents satisfied with their progress? What can be done to help students be more successful?

Programme growth and quality. Is the programme growing as planned? Are the people responsible for the programme, including members of the language communities, satisfied with the way it is growing? What can be done to ensure that the quality of the programme is maintained as it expands?

Cost effectiveness. Are stakeholders satisfied that the cost of the programme is worthwhile in terms of the benefits that have been achieved? If the programme is relatively new, are there ways to be more cost effective without sacrificing programme quality?

Long-term impact of the programme. What intended and unintended changes have come about as a result of the programme – for the minority language communities and for the wider society?

Developing sound evaluation instruments, documenting results and then using the information to make necessary changes helps to ensure that the programme will meet the expectations of those responsible for it and those who fund it. Most importantly, it helps to ensure that the programme meets the goals and expectations of the minority language communities. In addition, documentation of the strengths and weaknesses of existing programmes provides valuable information for those planning new programmes.

Example of Documentation and Evaluation of MLE Programmes: The Longitudinal Research Project

Longitudinal research studies of MLE programmes in Europe and North America have found that the benefits of multilingual education become most apparent after an extended period of time. Accurate evaluations of MLE programmes, therefore, need to follow minority language students all the way through their MLE programme and beyond, to see how they do in the mainstream education system relative to students who have not had mother tongue schooling.

Until recently, very little research of this kind has taken place in Asia, the Pacific or Africa. To provide policy-makers and educators from these parts of the world with information about multilingual education, a Longitudinal Research Project (LRP) was initiated in 2003 by SIL International to collect and analyze data from MLE programmes over a ten-year period.

The LRP will track participants in experimental (MLE) and “control” (no home language) classes through primary school and into secondary school. Particular attention will be given to student attendance and retention data, results of student performance measures from local, district, provincial and/or national examinations, and evaluations of instructional materials and methods, teacher attitudes, training and supervision.

Cooperation among supporting agencies. Governments alone cannot plan and implement strong, sustained MLE programmes without the participation of the minority language communities. The communities, even with help from NGOs, cannot sustain their programmes without governmental support at all levels. Strong and sustainable MLE programmes require cooperation and support from multiple agencies – government, universities, research institutes, NGOs and others – working alongside the communities in planning, implementing, and evaluating their programmes. Building cooperation among supporting agencies makes the best use of resources, including the experience and expertise of each partner.

Q5: Can we afford to implement MLE programmes in multiple languages? Is it worth the effort?

A better question might be, “Can we afford not to provide appropriate education for speakers of minority languages?”

We have a few hundred years of evidence that submersion in the L2 is “highly inefficient,” if not downright wasteful and discriminatory, since such school systems are characterized by low intake, high repetition and dropout, and low completion rates. The costs to the individual, who sacrifices productive agricultural and family work time to go to school, only to experience failure and rejection, are high. The overall costs to the society, then, are clearly astronomical, and must be seen as at least partially to blame for the lack of inclusive, participatory governing in post-colonial countries.¹⁷

In addition to educational and long-term financial benefits, MLE programmes serve a wider purpose. Government support for strong MLE programmes demonstrates to all citizens that minority languages, and those who speak the languages, are valued. MLE programmes that help learners to build a good “bridge” between their home language and the official languages help to build national unity without forcing people to sacrifice their unique linguistic and cultural heritage. Experiences around the world have demonstrated that denying or suppressing people’s linguistic and cultural heritage has been a cause for division and strife. MLE supports unity through affirming diversity rather than instead of diversity.

Perhaps the best people to answer the question “Is it worth it?” are the members of the ethnic minority communities themselves. To end this booklet with a community voice, here is the viewpoint of one parent from Papua New Guinea:

When children go to school, they go to an alien place. They leave their parents, they leave their gardens, they leave everything that is their way of life. They sit in a classroom and they learn things that have nothing to do with their own place. Later, because they have learned only other things, they reject their own.

They don’t want to dig kaukau [sweet potatoes], they say it’s dirty; they don’t want to help their mother fetch water. They look down on those things. There are big changes in the children now. They don’t obey their parents; they become rascals. And this is because they have gone to school and left the things that are ours.

17 Benson, C. 2001 (20 April). *Real and Potential Benefits of Bilingual Programmes in Developing Countries*. Third International Symposium on Bilingualism. Bristol, England.

Now my child is in a Tok Ples school. He is not leaving his place. He is learning in school about his customs, his way of life. Now he can write anything he wants to in Tok Ples. Not just the things he can see, but things he thinks about, too. And he writes about his place. He writes about helping his mother carry water, about digging kaukau, about going to the garden.

When he writes these things they become important to him. He is not only reading and writing about things outside, but learning through reading and writing to be proud of our way of life. When he is big, he will not reject us. It is important to teach our children to read and write, but it is more important to teach them to be proud of themselves, and of us.¹⁸



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18 Delpit, L. D. and Kemelfield, G. 1985. An Evaluation of the Viles Tok Ples Skul Scheme in the North Solomons Province. ERU Report No. 51. Waigani, Papua New Guinea, University of Papua New Guinea. pp. 29-30.

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Glossary of Terms – Language

Dialect	Manner of speaking a language that varies according to region or social group (see also variety)
Dominant language	Language spoken by the dominant social group, or language that is seen as the main language of a country <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ <i>May have official or national language status even if it is not spoken by a numerical majority of the national population</i>
Heritage language	Language of a person's ancestors or ethnolinguistic group
Home language	Language spoken in the home (see also L1, mother tongue) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ <i>Some people have more than one home language</i>
L1	First language, native language (see also mother tongue, home language, local language) <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ <i>Refers to language or languages learned from birth</i>
L2	Second language, non-native language, language of wider communication, or foreign language <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ <i>Often refers to contexts where the language is spoken in the wider society outside the home; in bilingual education, refers to second (official, foreign) language introduced after the L1</i>▶ <i>For ethnolinguistic minorities, the L2 is usually an official and/or national language</i>
Language of instruction	Language used for teaching and learning the school curriculum, also called medium of instruction
Local language	Language spoken in the immediate community <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ <i>May refer to languages that are not yet fully developed in written form</i>
Majority language	Language spoken by the majority of people in a region/country
Minority language	Language spoken by a social and/or ethnic minority group <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ <i>Sometimes used to refer to the language of a numerically large group that is not dominant</i>

Mother tongue (MT) First language, native language (see also **L1**, **home language**, **local language**)

- ▶ *Language that a person: (a) has learnt first; (b) identifies with or is identified as a native speaker of by others; (c) knows best; or (d) uses most*

National language Language considered to be an important, widely-spoken language in a country; sometimes also an official language

Example: India recognizes two official and 22 national languages; Bahasa Indonesia is both national and official language of Indonesia

Official language Language adopted by a country for public administrative and institutional use, often including schools

Example: India has Hindi and English as official languages of the country and a number of different official state languages

Variety Manner of speaking a language that varies according to region or social group (see also **dialect**)



Glossary of Terms – General

Alienation	Being disconnected from one's own language and culture <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ <i>Minority language speakers in dominant language education may later reject their own language and culture</i>
Awareness raising	Providing information that can help people achieve the goals and needs that they have identified for themselves
Bilingual	<i>Individual:</i> Ability to speak/understand (and sometimes read/write) at least two languages <i>Society:</i> Presence of at least two language groups
Bilingual education	Use of at least two languages for literacy and instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ <i>Ideally, literacy and learning begin with the learner's first language, and a second language is introduced gradually</i>
Competencies	Knowledge, abilities or skills in language or other subjects of the school curriculum
Curriculum	Teaching plan, content and instructional materials for an education programme
Dominant group	Most powerful social group of the country due to population (numerical majority), economics (wealth) and/or politics (power)
Facilitator	Person who helps others to learn; teacher
First Language First MLE	Schooling beginning with the L1 for reading, writing and learning, while teaching the L2 (see multilingual education)
Fluency	High competence in speaking, reading and/or writing
Implementation	The process of mobilizing people and resources to carry out a new programme
Indigenous	Person or group descended from original or early inhabitants of a region or country
Language minority	Group of people who share a language and often have less power in society due to population (numerically fewer), economics (less wealth) and/or politics
Literacy	Ability to read, write, calculate and otherwise use a language to do whatever is needed in life

Mainstream	Language and culture of the dominant group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>Often refers to schools designed for members of the dominant group that do not meet the needs of linguistic minorities</i>
Mobilization	The process of organizing a community (and its supporters) to work together to plan and implement a programme
Multilingual	<i>Individual:</i> Ability to speak/understand (and sometimes read/write) more than two languages <i>Society:</i> Presence of more than two language groups
Multilingual education (MLE)	Use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ <i>Ideally this begins with developing the L1 and adding other languages gradually</i>
Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)	Agency that is not part of any national government, often working for community development
Orthography	Standardized system for writing a language, including a script and rules for spelling and punctuation (see also writing system)
Partners	Individuals, organizations and agencies that collaborate with communities to implement a new programme
Submersion	Use of a second/foreign language for all instruction, with little or no help for learners
Sustainability	Setting up a programme so that it will continue for a long time
Transfer	What is learned in the L1 contributes to competence in other languages; one only needs to learn to read once
Writing system	Graphic representation of a spoken language (see also orthography)

