Promoting Literacy in Multilingual Settings

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Foreword

"Education for All" means quality education for everyone, including members of both ethnic and linguistic minorities. Such minorities are often disadvantaged within the national education system, as they usually face the challenge of gaining a basic education, including the introduction of reading and writing, in a language other than their mother tongue. As a result, ethno-linguistic minorities often have a higher rate of illiteracy, a higher level of poverty and a poorer quality of life. One of the guiding principles in UNESCO's 2002 position paper on language and education, entitled Education in a Multilingual World, states that "UNESCO supports mother-tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and the teachers."

In accordance with the above statement, the Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL) in UNESCO Bangkok is supporting pilot mother-tongue/bilingual literacy projects in nine countries – Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam. Each project has undertaken research with the participation of linguists and community members, prepared context-specific literacy materials using mother-tongue/bilingual approaches and trained local people in the use of these teaching/learning materials in order to facilitate effective learning by community members.

A regional workshop on mother-tongue/bilingual literacy programmes for ethnic minorities was organized by APPEAL, UNESCO Bangkok, from 6-10 December 2005 in Chiangmai, Thailand. The objective of this workshop was to provide opportunities for representatives of the nine countries participating in these projects, including high-level personnel from formal education departments, to share and learn from experiences in implementing mother tongue/bilingual literacy programmes. A study visit to a community learning centre (CLC) in Nong Ung Tai village in Omkoi district provided an additional opportunity for participants to obtain first-hand information about local practices in mother-tongue literacy. Thirty-one participants from the project countries took part in the workshop, along with two resource people from SIL International* and seven UNESCO Bangkok staff members. In addition, two government officials from other regions – one from Nigeria and another from Haiti – participated.

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*   SIL International (formerly called Summer Institute of Linguistics) is an international non-governmental organization (NGO) dedicated to promoting language-based development with minority language communities.

This publication, *Promoting Literacy in Multilingual Settings*, presents the outcomes of this workshop. It begins with two resource papers: one focusing on linguistic diversity, literacy and education, and the other on approaches to education in ethnic minority communities. Experiences from the nine countries participating in the UNESCO pilot project follow.

The second half of the publication focuses on aspects of multilingual education programme development that were identified during the workshop as being particular challenges for participating countries. These topics include developing low-cost and effective materials, training community teachers, and using appropriate teaching methods. Ideas and approaches for effective multilingual education programme development, as well as examples of good practice in the participating countries, are included in these chapters.

It is our hope that policy makers, planners and programme implementers from both formal and non-formal education departments, as well as from non-governmental organizations involved in multilingual education, will find this publication useful for their work.

Sheldon Shaeffer

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Introduction

Language and education are closely related. Since language is a main means of human communication, almost all educational activities, including literacy, use language in some way. In multilingual settings, decisions about the relationship between language and education are not straightforward and never easy. Instead, serious consideration is needed to determine which languages to use in education and literacy programmes.

Learners having insufficient comprehension and command of the languages used as the languages of literacy[1] and languages (or media) of instruction[2] are likely to learn differently from those fully proficient in the languages used. This usually includes ethno-linguistic minorities[3] in multilingual settings. In some cases, people speaking languages with millions of speakers also have to study through a language in which they may not be proficient. Most Asian nations are linguistically diverse, and thus the "language issue" is important across the region.

Chapter 1 discusses this relationship between education, including literacy, and linguistic diversity that is evident in most Asian countries. Indeed, the main focus of the book is on multilingual education that uses the learners' first language[4] (or mother tongue or home language) as the language of literacy and instruction, and gradually introduces the second language[5] (L2) and additional languages later. The educational situations that ethno-linguistic minorities face in Asia are highlighted. While the first chapter mainly raises issues, the rest of the book also attempts to share positive experiences in finding solutions to some of the problems described. Both Chapters 1 and 2 attempt to discuss the "big picture" of education in multilingual settings and set the stage for more practice-oriented discussion in the further chapters. The first chapter also introduces key concepts used throughout the book.

Additionally, the book discusses some experiences in multilingual education[6] (MLE) in Asia, mainly in Chapter 3. The focus of the final three chapters is on teaching-learning materials in local languages, teaching-learning methods, and teacher training.

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1   Language of literacy is a language through which the literacy learning takes place, including materials and instruction.

2   Language (or medium) of instruction is a language through which the contents of the curriculum in a given educational system or a part of it are taught and learned.

3   Ethno-linguistic minority refers to a group of people who: (a) share a culture (or ethnicity) and/or language of their own that distinguishes them from other groups of people; and (b) in terms of numbers, are fewer than the predominant group(s) of people in the given state.

4   First language (L1) or "mother tongue" can be defined as the language that: (a) one has learnt first; (b) one identifies with or is identified as a native speaker of by others; (c) one knows best; and (d) one uses most (UNESCO, 2003, p. 15): People can have several first languages.

5   Second language (L2) is a language that is not the mother tongue of a person, but she/he communicates with it.

6   Multilingual education (MLE) refers to the use of more than one language as the language of instruction and literacy, and through which learning of concepts and curriculum contents takes place. Multilingual education also refers to situations in which several languages are used in education, although individual learners may learn only some of them, for example, one or two.

Chapter 1

Linguistic Diversity, Literacy and Education

According to SIL International's Ethnologue database,[7] some 2,200 languages are spoken in Asia. Figure 1 illustrates the number of languages in each of the listed 30 Asian nations. The chart confirms the evident linguistic diversity of the region. Almost all Asian nations – or any nations for that matter – are essentially multilingual. There are few monolingual nations in Asia, though North Korea may be an exception. Yet, certainly all countries have deaf populations who use sign languages. Thus, when one considers this factor, even if a nation may seem monolingual, it is at least bilingual. Sign languages, however, are unfortunately not always listed as separate languages in all countries.

Although more than 2,000 languages are spoken in Asia, the number of national[8] and official languages[9] in these 30 nations is only 45 (see Table 1). The concepts of official and national languages are quite similar, and sometimes they overlap. Bahasa Indonesia, Mandarin Chinese, Thai and Vietnamese,

Table 1. Official or national languages in the nations of Central, East, South, and South-East Asia

Assamese	Japanese	Mandarin Chinese 2	Southern Pashto
Bengali (Bangla) 2	Kannada	Marathi	Tajiki
Dzongkha	Kashmiri	Meitei	Tamil 2
Eastern Farsi (Dari)	Kazakh	Myanma	Telugu
Eastern Punjabi	Khmer	Nepali 2	Thai
English 4 (1)	Kirghiz	Northern Uzbek	Turkmen
Filipino	Konkani	Oriya	Urdu 2
Gujarati	Korean 2	*Portuguese*	Vietnamese
Gurung	Lao	*Russian 2*	Western Farsi
Halh Mongolian	Malay 3	Sanskrit	
Hindi	Malayalam	Sindhi 2	
Indonesian	Maldivian (Diwehi)	Sinhala	

Source: Ethnologue (2005)

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7   Online at: http://www.ethnologue.com.

8   National language is "a language that is considered to be the chief language of a nation state" (Crystal, 1999, p. 227).

9   Official language is a language that is "used in such public domains as the law courts, government, and broadcasting. In many countries, there is no difference between the national and official language" (Crystal, ibid.).

Figure 1. Number of languages spoken in Central, East, South, and South-East Asia
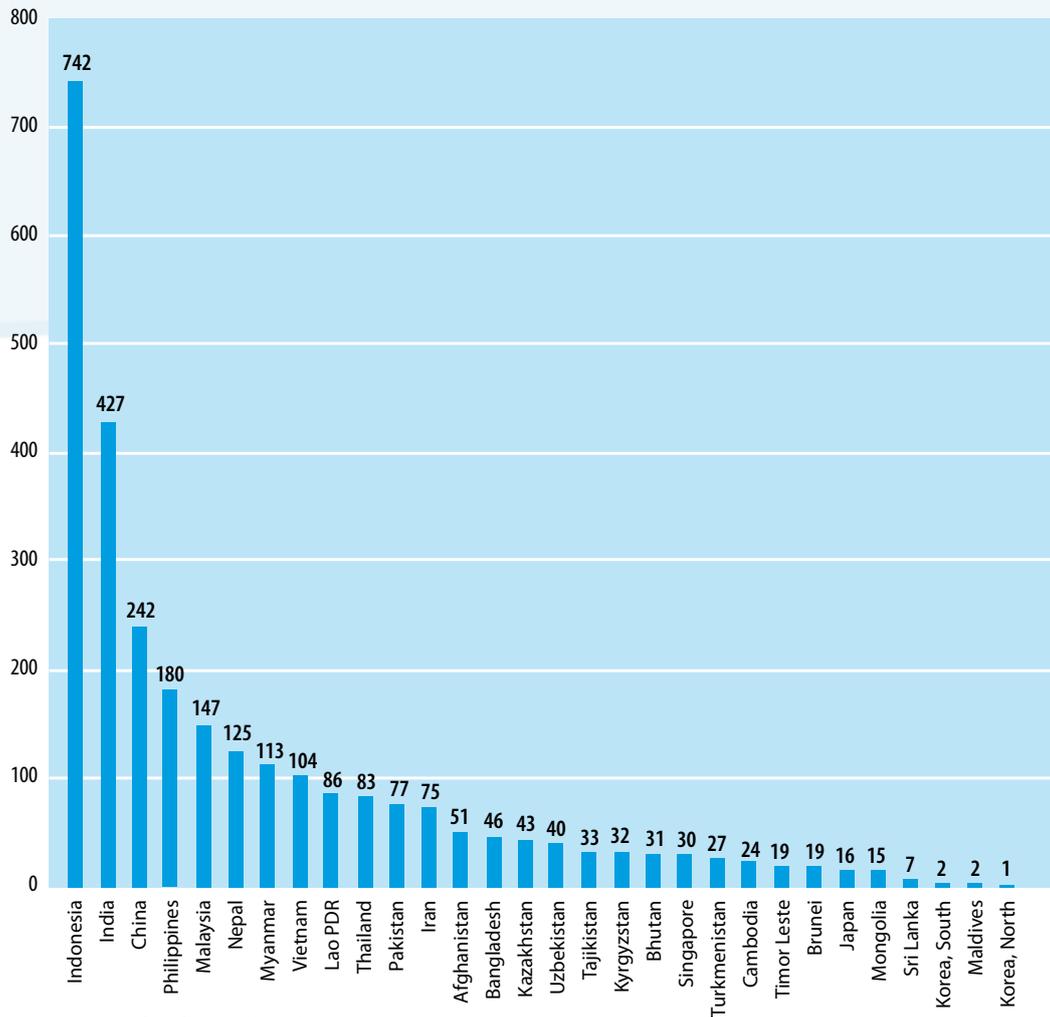
Source: Ethnologue (2005)

for example, play the roles of official and national languages in Indonesia, Thailand, China and Viet Nam, respectively. In many linguistically diverse countries, such as India, Pakistan and Singapore, determining the national language is more difficult, as no one language plays such a prominent role as in the four nations mentioned above. Yet, certain languages spoken in the country are adopted as the official languages. In some cases, such as India and Singapore, several languages have been given an official status.

Table 1 merely lists all official and national languages in Asia. Ethnologue (2005) and Leclerc (2006) provide more details about the status of these languages in different Asian countries. The numbers after language names state the number of countries in which the language is official, and the italicized languages are of European origin. It is interesting to note that in Asia, indigenous Asian languages outnumber European languages as official, making the Asian situation different from Africa and Latin America, where European languages dominate as official languages and the languages of education. The underlined languages use the Roman script[10] in writing. The script issue is more prominent in

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10 "Script" is "the graphic form of the units of a writing system (e.g. the Roman vs. the Cyrillic alphabet)." (Crystal, 1999, p. 299) For example, Roman script is used for Bahasa Indonesia and Filipino, Thai script is used for Thai, and Devanagari script is used to write Hindi and Nepali. All of these scripts are also adapted to create orthographies for minority languages.

Asia than the rest of the world. In Asia, non-Roman scripts dominate as the basis of writing systems,[11] orthographies[12] and alphabets.[13] Nevertheless, this is no longer the challenge it was before, as the most recent computer technology allows the use of almost all symbols in publishing. Yet, using rarely used symbols and scripts is not practical or cost-efficient. In multilingual Asian settings, the use of many different scripts is an extra burden for learners, as many have to master two or more different scripts to complete basic education.

Despite the undeniable multilingualism in most Asian nations, education systems in the region generally work as if the nations were monolingual. Consequently, in most cases, only the official languages are used as the languages of instruction and literacy in education. Thus, educational systems put the learners who are not proficient in these languages at a disadvantage. In some cases, monolingual education systems in multilingual settings even exclude some citizens altogether from education due to restrictive language-in-education policies.

A nation's language policy specifies the use of various languages for various purposes in that nation state. Usually a language policy states which languages are used as the official and/or the national languages. Nevertheless, not all nations have explicit language policies. Thailand and the United States[14] are apt examples. However, in both of these nations a certain language (Thai and English, respectively) is the de facto official and national language. Regarding education, most nations also have a language-in-education policy that specifies the use of various languages in educational systems of that nation.

Language and Literacy

Language in which literacy is learned plays a crucial role in literacy acquisition. This is particularly true for ethnolinguistic minorities who may not understand and speak the language of literacy. A recent UNESCO report suggests the following definition of literacy:

> Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to *achieve their goals*, to *develop their knowledge and potential*, and to *participate* fully in their *community* and *wider society*.
>
> (UNESCO, 2004b, p. 13 [emphasis by the author])

This definition sees literacy as something that enables people to achieve their own goals and develop their potential. If this definition is applied to ethnolinguistic minority communities, the language(s) in which literacy is learned becomes an important issue. People's goals cannot always be reached, and potential developed, if only alien languages are used in literacy. Likewise, if members of ethnolinguistic communities are to participate fully in their community, they need literacy in the community language. On the other hand, to participate fully in the wider society, literacy in the language of the wider society is required. So, in the case of ethnolinguistic minority communities, this definition has biliteracy[15] inherently written into it. Yet, biliteracy is not the norm in most societies and, thus, the quality of literacy in multilingual contexts is not always as good as it could be.

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11   Writing system is "a system of visual marks on a surface" to record a spoken language. (Ibid., p. 368)

12   Orthography is "a standardized system for writing a particular language. The notion includes a prescribed system of spelling and punctuation." (Ibid., p. 244)

13   Alphabet of a language is a set of symbols, usually letters, which represent the sounds of the language.

14   In 2006, there were deliberations in the United States Senate about making English the country's official language.

15   Biliteracy is the use of two (or more) languages for reading and writing.

OECD's PISA (Programme for International Student Achievement) study showed that, for example in Indonesia, 69 percent of 15-year-old secondary-school students performed at or below the lowest of five proficiency levels for reading literacy, and 94 percent performed at or below level two (OECD, 2004). In Thailand, the figures for the same categories were 37 and 74 percent, respectively. These low levels of tested reading literacy mean that many students are certainly not fluent readers and may find it difficult to use literacy as a tool in further learning or in daily life, in general. There are many reasons for the low level of literacy in several countries that took part in the PISA study. However, it is likely that the languages of literacy, Bahasa Indonesia and Standard Thai, are a factor for these unsatisfactory results because not all students who participated in the test are fully proficient in the languages of literacy.

Another important factor regarding literacy is the discrepancy between self-assessed and tested literacy skills. UNESCO has assisted some countries to conduct national literacy surveys, e.g. in Lao PDR. The report of the Lao National Literacy Survey (2004) shows that the tested literacy rates are about 25-29% lower than the ones based on self-assessment (see Table 2). Similar trends of overestimated literacy rates have been observed in other Asian countries as well, although published reports and figures are not available. However, on the basis of these observations, it can be assumed that the tested literacy rates may be some 30% lower than the rates based on self-assessment. This trend may apply to most countries of the region.

Table 2. Tested and reported basic literacy rates in Lao PDR

	Total	Male	Female
Tested basic literacy rate (15-59)	45.2%	53.7%	36.9%
Reported literacy rate (15-59)	72.3%	79.5%	65.5%
Difference (reported-tested)	27.1%	25.8%	28.6%

Source: Lao National Literacy Survey (2004, p. 58)

Few countries have such comprehensive recent reports on the status of literacy as Lao PDR. Therefore, the Lao case is also used here to illustrate another issue: disparity between speakers of different languages. Data from the Lao National Literacy Survey (2004) demonstrate the existing disparity between different ethnolinguistic groups regarding literacy rates in Lao (see Figure 2). If data were available from other countries, a similar pattern would most likely be observed.

The survey conducted tests in reading and writing using the Lao language, as well as in numeracy skills, with a maximum score of 30 in each test. To have 'secured functional literacy skills,' or what the study also called 'self-learning level,' a person would have had to have gotten a minimum score of 22 in every test. The test results and the consequent literacy rates show that the adult literacy skills among ethnolinguistic minorities are clearly below the national average. The existing disparities are even more prominent when minority language speakers are compared to the speakers of Lao-related languages (Tai-Kadai).

Figure 2. Tested secured functional literacy rates (in Lao)
by the language family in Lao PDR, ages 15–59

Language and Education

Like the language of literacy, the language of education in general is a similarly important issue in multilingual settings. In addition, the language issue is not confined only to small communities of minority people in remote corners of some countries. The issue is more extensive than what is commonly thought.

For example, half of the world's out-of-school children do not necessarily speak the language used in the local school (World Bank, 2005, p. 1). Table 3 lists large Asian languages that are not used as languages of instruction in schools and education programmes. As a result, tens of millions of speakers of these languages have no access to education in their first language. Javanese is the largest language community in Indonesia, for example. Western Punjabi is spoken in Pakistan, and is actually the first language of nearly a half of the population there. Many people in Pakistan, however, consider Punjabi as a dialect of Urdu, a national language, and not worthy of being used in education. Most of the listed languages are what many Chinese call "dialects," as they all share the Chinese writing system. Nevertheless, the oral forms of these languages are not mutually intelligible. In schools and education programmes, learners speaking these languages may not understand or speak the media of instruction used: Bahasa Indonesia in Indonesia, Urdu in Pakistan, and Mandarin Chinese in China. Therefore, speakers of these and other languages not used in education cannot perform to their potential at early stages of education.

Table 3. Some Asian languages with tens of millions of speakers
that are not used as the language of instruction

Wu Chinese	90 million	Min Nan Chinese	52 million
Javanese	75 million	Jinyu Chinese	45 million
Yue Chinese	64 million	Xiang Chinese	42 million
Western Punjabi	60 million	Hakka Chinese	30 million

Source: Ethnologue (2005)

This situation is illustrated in Figure 3. The picture shows two groups of students. The group crossing the river across a bridge can study through their mother tongue. Many of these students perform well in school as their first language is included as the language of instruction and literacy. The second group of students has to study in a foreign language. Although a foreign language is used, some students can still cross the river, though some with great difficulties. Their learning achievements may not be as good as they could be had their mother tongue been used. Nonetheless, many students cannot cross the river between their home language and the school. These students end up repeating grades, dropping out, and basically failing in their education due to restrictive language-in-education policies. This issue is studied further in Chapter 2.

Figure 3. Comparision of students learning
through their mother tongue and a foreign language

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For children, a solution to this problem is mother tongue-based multilingual education. Figure 4 illustrates what this means in practice. For adult members of ethnolinguistic minority communities, a solution is mother tongue-based literacy and adult education programmes. Chapters 2 and 3 discuss the practical applications of multilingual education further, and Chapter 2 introduces the components of strong multilingual education programmes.

Figure 4. Multilingual education that provides a bridge from a minority learner's own language to the second language and leads to multilingualism and multiliteracy

Minority language learners...

..."bridging" to success in education

In strong multilingual education programmes, the learners' first language is used as the language of instruction as long as possible, at least at the pre-primary and primary levels. Table 4 displays an ideal model of strong MLE using two languages. Initially other languages are taught as the second language using appropriate methodologies of second-language learning. At higher grades, both languages would be used as the languages of instruction and literacy, as well as studied as subjects. It is essential that the use of the first language continues throughout the education system. Likewise, equally important is that the second language is introduced gradually before it becomes a language of instruction. The same principles also apply to adult education and literacy. The bottom line is that learning is started with and through something that the learners already know, i.e. their first language, and unfamiliar things, such as the second language, are introduced gradually and learned after a solid foundation in the first language has already been accomplished.

International research shows that at least some five years of instruction in the first language – but preferably throughout the education system – is required to provide a solid foundation for further studies (e.g. Baker, 2006; Baker & Hornberger, 2001; Benson, 2004, 2005; Cummins, 2000, 2001; Thomas & Collier, 2002). A strong foundation in the mother tongue is also needed for second language acquisition and successful transfer of the literacy skills from the first to the second language.

Models similar to Table 4 are being used around the world (see e.g., Benson, 2002, 2004, 2005; Dutcher, 2004; King & Schielmann, 2004; Klaus, 2003; Kosonen, 2005; Malone, 2005; NORRAG, 2004; SIL, 2005[16]; UNESCO, 2004a, 2005). However, not all programmes described in these studies and reports use the learners' first language as much and as long as the ideal model. In Chapter 2, Susan Malone introduces a different, yet quite similar, model of strong MLE incorporating three languages.

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16   This online publication provides many case studies of multilingual education, mostly from Asian countries.

Table 4. Ideal model of mother tongue-based multilingual education for ethnolinguistic minorities

Level	Grade		
Primary Level	G6	L1 (LoI + subject)	L2 (LoI + subject)
	G5	L1 (LoI + subject)	L2 (LoI + subject)
	G4	L1 (LoI + subject)	L2 (LoI) + L2SL
	G3	L1 (LoI)	L2SL
	G2	L1 (LoI)	L2SL (oral + written)
	G1	L1 (LoI, literacy in L1)	L2SL (oral)
Pre-primary level	KG2	L1 (LoI)	L2SL (oral)
	KG1	L1 (LoI)	

(Notes: Gx = primary grade x; KGx = kindergarten grade x; L1 = learners' first language; L2 = the commonly used language in education or the learners' second language; L2SL = teaching/learning L2 as a second language; LoI = language of instruction)

Source: K. Kosonen

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced literacy and education issues in multilingual settings in Asia. It has highlighted some educational challenges that millions of learners are facing due to restrictive language policies. Multilingual education programmes are one solution to alleviate the prevailing situation. Yet, before MLE programmes can start serving speakers of ethnolinguistic minority languages, some – mainly attitudinal – changes are needed.

The first change is the acknowledgement of linguistic diversity. Only after the evident multilingualism in Asian societies is accepted as a fact can more supportive language-in-education policies be put in place. Therefore, the knowledge of a nation's linguistic situation is essential. A wealth of data on linguistic diversity is already available. Yet, most Asian countries have a need for more comprehensive language surveys. It is, thus, essential to gather and analyse data on multilingualism, as well as about a society's proficiencies in and uses of different languages.

Another essential issue is that educational planning is based on the existing facts. In multilingual nations, also the complex language situation should be considered in educational planning. Only after acknowledging linguistic diversity can authorities plan and implement strong MLE programmes. The rest of the book will elaborate how this can be and is being done in practice.

Chapter 2

Education in Ethnic Minority Communities

Questions to Consider and Problems to Solve[17]

The choice of the language…is a recurrent challenge in the development of quality education… Speakers of mother tongues, which are not the same as the national…language, are often at a considerable disadvantage in the educational system… (UNESCO 2003, p. 14).

For many speakers of ethnic minority languages, school is an alien place, teaching alien concepts in an alien language. In spite of increasing awareness of linguistic rights at the international level, education programmes available to many ethnic minority communities continue to require children to attend classes in which they understand neither the language of instruction nor the content of the lessons.

Outcomes of Non-Mother Tongue Education Programmes

For many learners from ethnic minority communities…

▶ *High repetition and drop-out rates*

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 (EFA): a legacy of non-productive practices that lead to low levels of learning and high levels of dropout and repetition.

(World Bank, 2005, p. 1)

▶ *Alienation from their heritage language and culture, from parents and home community*

When our 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.

(Parent of school child in Papua New Guinea, cited in Delpit & Kemmelfield, 1985, pp. 19-20)

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17   This article is based on a keynote presentation given on 25 November, 2005 at the 60th Anniversary of UNESCO and the celebration of Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn's UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadorship in Bangkok, Thailand.

▶ *Lack of knowledge and skills for employment*

Existing policies and supports have failed to reduce discrimination towards indigenous communities in vital areas related to employment, religion, language, ownership, possession or use of lands and natural resources…and access to education, health services and different institutions.

(Research and Development Collective, 2003, p. 17)

For the ethnic communities in general…

▶ *Loss of heritage language and culture; poverty and demoralization*

For many ethnolinguistic minority groups…promises of incentives such as economic and social mobility are doled out as poor compensation for cultural subordination and language shift. In the process, paradoxically, the linguistic minority groups are driven to further poverty – culturally and economically – because their languages, as resource for educational achievement and, through it, for equal access to economic and other benefits in a competitive society, are rendered powerless.

(Mohanty, 1990, p. 54)

For many nations and for the world…

▶ *Underutilization of human resources*

There is strong evidence that submersion in the L2 is at least highly inefficient, if not wasteful and discriminatory, since such school systems are characterised 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.

(Benson, 2002, p. 314)

▶ *Loss of linguistic and cultural diversity and of indigenous wisdom and knowledge*

Every language reflects a unique world view and culture mirroring the manner in which a speech community has resolved its problems in dealing with the world and has formulated its thinking, its system of philosophy and understanding of the world around it. With the death of the language, an irreplaceable unit of our knowledge and understanding of human thought and world view has been lost forever.

(Wurm, 1991)

▶ *Ethnic divisions and rebellion*

Our greatest national resource is the diversity of cultures in our country. Diversity means more viewpoints to clarify, more ways of solving problems, more creative ideas, a greater ability to deal with change… Where diversity is crushed…the nation becomes weak and divided.

(Waiko, 1997)

Factors Related to Language-based Exclusion

The lack of quality education available to ethnic minority communities is often related to three factors: 1) negative perceptions about non-dominant groups of people, in general, and about multilingual education, in particular, by members of the dominant society, 2) restrictive language and education policies, and 3) poor planning and preparation for those programmes that are attempted.

Problem: Negative perceptions[18]

MLE is considered <u>unnecessary</u>…

> *"It is a waste of time and resources. The best way for minority children to learn a new language is for them to use it as soon as possible and as much as possible!"*

> *"These children don't need a special MLE programme. They can learn Thai in regular Thai schools!"*

> *"It's too much trouble. Just let the languages die and get the minorities to become more like us!"*

MLE is considered <u>impossible</u>…

> *"There are no / not enough minority language speakers trained as teachers!"*

> *"It takes too much time and money to develop writing systems for all those languages!"*

MLE is considered <u>divisive</u> and therefore <u>dangerous</u>…

> *"Using minority languages in school will cause ethnic divisions and lead to all kinds of trouble!"*

Problem: Restrictive policies

Education for ethnic minority communities is affected by language and language-in-education policies (the first relating to the status of languages spoken within the national boundaries and the second to the use of languages in education.) Both types of policies can be described on a continuum from "most restrictive" to "most supportive" (Figures 5 and 6).

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18   All the comments listed here are frequently heard in discussions with speakers of dominant languages in Asia, Africa, the Pacific and the Americas.

Figure 5. The level of restrictiveness and support of language policies

Language Policies

Most restrictive ————————————————————— *Most supportive*

| Only one language allowed in order to promote national unity; diversity seen as a threat | One or more languages named as "official" or "national" languages; other languages not named (therefore excluded) | No language policy established; maintains de facto imbalance of language power and prestige in education, economics, polities | Special rights to dominant language(s) but legal status and protection to minority languages |

Source: S. Malone

Figure 6. The level of restrictiveness and support of language-in-education policies

Language-in-Education Policies

Most restrictive ————————————————————— *Most supportive*

| Minority languages not allowed in the classroom or on the school grounds | Dominant language teachers assigned to minority language areas so they cannot use the learners' home language in school | Minority language allowed only to supplement school language, as necessary, for teaching new concepts | Minority languages allowed as a subject (with time restrictions); no political or financial support provided | Political & financial support for developing minority languages and for MLE |

Source: S. Malone

In most Asian countries, language policies tend to be restrictive (intentionally excluding non-dominant languages) or to give official status only to dominant languages, with no mention of the smaller or less dominant ones. The consequences of both types of policies for ethnic minority communities are essentially the same: lack of the political, financial and infrastructural support that is necessary to develop their languages and implement strong MLE programmes.
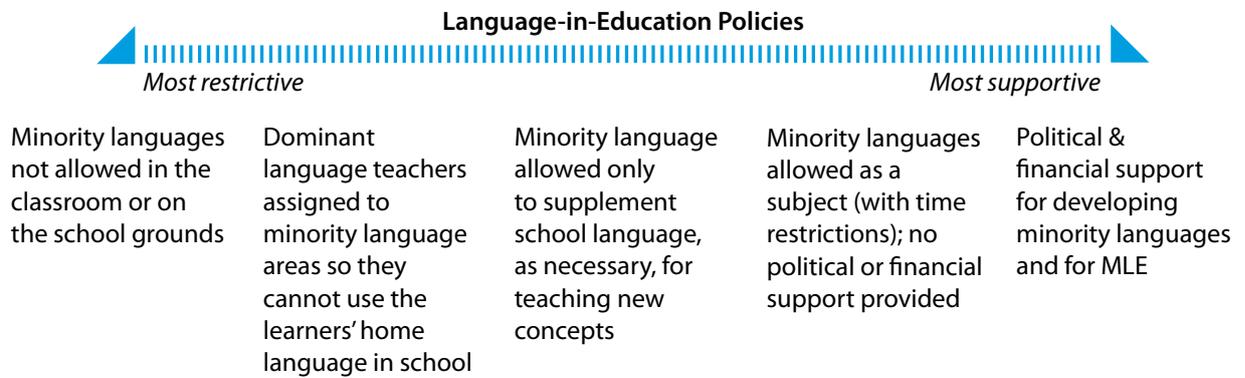
Problem: Poor planning and implementation

In those cases where a "first language" programme is attempted, it is too often 1) poorly planned and implemented, 2) with inadequately trained teachers, 3) containing low-quality classroom materials, and 4) given too little time allowance for learners to build a strong educational foundation in their first language and a good bridge to the second (school) language.

> Programmes are started and called "bilingual," but there is no bridge between L1 and L2. Of course, the children do poorly when they are abruptly "dumped" into the L2. Then people say, 'See, bilingual education does not work.' It does work, but you need a good bridge!
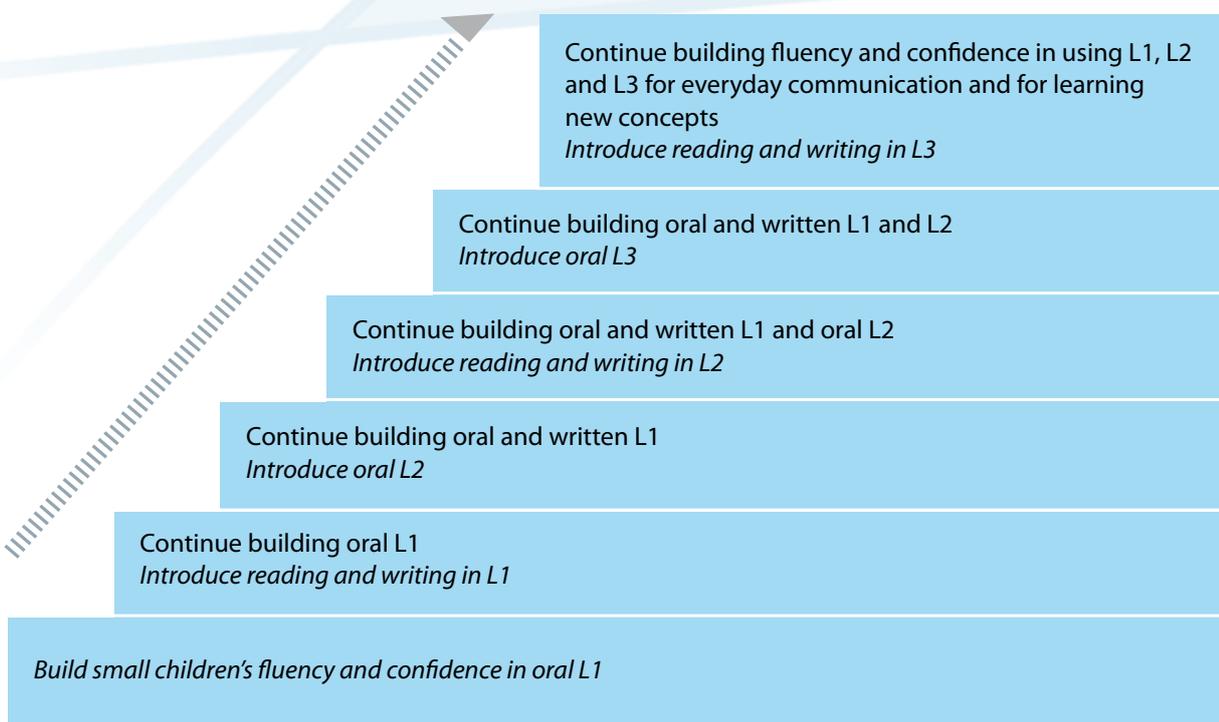
(An African educator, 2000)[19]

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19   Personal communication. World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 2000.

Making "Education for All" Truly for *Everyone*

Multilingual education programmes for ethnic minority communities should enable learners to build a strong educational foundation in their first language (L1), bridge successfully to additional languages (L2, L3, etc.) and continue learning in both/all languages, at least through primary school.

While each MLE programme is specific to the context in which it is implemented, we can identify the general phases or steps of the process by which learners build a strong foundation in their first language and a good bridge to additional languages. Figure 7 describes the phases of a 3-language programme (the 3rd language being taught as a subject, but not used as a language of instruction.)

Figure 7. Phases of a three-language programme

Continue building fluency and confidence in using L1, L2 and L3 for everyday communication and for learning new concepts
Introduce reading and writing in L3

Continue building oral and written L1 and L2
Introduce oral L3

Continue building oral and written L1 and oral L2
Introduce reading and writing in L2

Continue building oral and written L1
Introduce oral L2

Continue building oral L1
Introduce reading and writing in L1

Build small children's fluency and confidence in oral L1

Source: S. Malone

In the process described above, ethnic minority learners' language, culture, knowledge and experiences form the foundation of their education. To that foundation they add the new language(s), new content, new ideas, and new ways of thinking. In strong MLE programmes, building a "good bridge" between languages and cultures is thus an *additive* process, rather than a *subtractive* one.

In addition to the social and cultural benefits of strong MLE programmes, the educational benefits of enabling learners to build a strong foundation in their L1 with gradual bridging to the new language(s) have been demonstrated through research studies around the world.

The most powerful factor in predicting educational success for minority learners is the amount of formal schooling they received in their L1. …Only those language minority students who had 5-6 years of strong cognitive and academic development through their L1— as well as through [L2]—did well in Grade 11 assessments.

(Thomas and Collier, 1997, 2004)[20]

Strong MLE programmes enable learners to gain competence and confidence in using the new language(s) for communication and for learning new and increasingly more abstract concepts. Rather than being forced to memorize what the teacher says, learners grow in their ability to understand, apply, analyze, evaluate and, most exciting and rewarding of all, create new knowledge.

Planning for Strong Multilingual Education

Multilingual education programmes require a supportive political context, thoughtful planning, careful preparation, and cooperation among multiple agencies, organizations and individuals. Especially important is the formative participation of ethnic minority speakers in planning, and implementing programmes for their own communities. Figure 8 presents an overview of the components of strong and sustained MLE programmes. Note that each component requires support from multiple agencies at all levels of implementation.

Figure 8. Essential components of strong multilingual education programmes

Supportive language and education policies, with clear directives for implementation and sustainability

Preliminary research that provides information about languages and language communities and that identifies resources for MLE

Awareness-raising and mobilization that generates interest and support for MLE at all levels

Cooperation among supporting agencies – local, district, national and international

Effective and Sustained MLE Programme

Orthographies for each minority language that are acceptable to mother tongue speakers and to appropriate authorities

Monitoring, evaluation and documentation to assess learners' progress and identify programme strengths and weaknesses

MLE -specific **instructional materials** that build on the minority learners' language, knowledge and experience and enable them to "bridge" to one or more additional languages

Recruitment and training that bring motivated and respected people into the programme and build their professional capacity

Graded reading **materials,** in the learners' home language and additional languages that help them build competence and confidence in reading for enjoyment and learning.

Source: S. Malone

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20 See also Droop and Verhoeven (2003), Hakuta, Butler and Witt (2000), ADEA (2006), and NCERT (2005).

Conclusion

Can MLE be done? Experiences in minority language communities in Asia and around the world indicate that, indeed, MLE can be and is being done. Through the cooperative efforts of international agencies, governments, NGOs, universities, research institutes, and especially the ethnic minority communities, themselves, strong and sustainable MLE programmes are becoming a reality. Much is yet to be accomplished, but a beginning has been made.

Is it difficult? It is certainly challenging—especially in multilingual countries lacking extensive financial resources—to develop writing systems, establish the necessary training programmes and support the production of instructional and graded reading materials in multiple languages.

Is it really necessary? A better question might be: Is it really morally acceptable to force minority learners into education programmes that are inappropriate to their lives and destructive to their heritage languages and cultures?

Is it worth the effort? Perhaps the best people to respond to that question are the members of the ethnic minority communities themselves:

> *Now my child is in [local language] 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 his language. 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 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.*

> (Papua New Guinea parent, cited in Delpit and Kemmelfied, 1985)

Education for All that is truly for all must not leave the minority feeling rejected by the majority, or force minority learners to abandon what they already possess – their knowledge and experience and their linguistic and cultural heritage – in order to pursue their educational goals. If education is truly to provide learners with "training for life," then surely education programmes must be based on the principles of fairness, justice and the practice of celebrating, rather than repressing, diversity.

Multilingual Education Practice in Eight Asian Countries

This chapter describes activities related to multilingual education (MLE) and literacy in the learners' first language (L1) or mother tongue in eight Asian countries. These countries are participating in the regional initiative 'Mother Tongue/Bilingual Literacy Programme for Ethnic Minorities' coordinated by APPEAL – UNESCO Bangkok.

The general objectives of the regional project are: 1) to increase literacy rates among ethnic minority communities (related to EFA Goal 41) through the provision of opportunities to access basic education (EFA Goal 22), and; 2) to improve the quality of life and preserve traditional culture through the provision of relevant and comprehensive literacy programmes. The project emphasizes the importance of capacity-building, community empowerment, poverty alleviation and programme sustainability. The partner organizations responsible for the pilot projects in each country, together with language community members, share responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating the pilots. The national partner organizations are government agencies or non-governmental organisations (NGO), and both in some countries.

This chapter includes brief descriptions of the current situation in each country. The country sections are based on the reports presented at UNESCO's regional workshop in Chiang Mai, Thailand, during December 2005.[21] Each country case attempts to provide concise information about the national setting, policies and activities on ethnolinguistic minorities and education, as well as a short description of the pilot project. The main focus is on the development of teaching-learning materials, teacher training and the teaching methods used in multilingual settings. In addition, brief notes about the impact, possible challenges and future plans are provided.

It is delightful to note the diversity of the eight projects described here. All have found ways to address some issues and challenges of the ethnolinguistic minority communities with which they work. The cases demonstrate many good practices in multilingual education that seem to work in these particular contexts. The ideas and practices discussed here may work in other settings, as well. Therefore, the case studies can act as encouragement and a pool of ideas for others to apply to their own contexts. None of the projects has reached perfection yet – whether that is even possible – but they all have their strengths, be it community survey, community mobilization, community participation, gender issues, orthography development, multilingual curriculum, materials production, teacher training, teaching-learning methods, integration of literacy with development, project evaluation or other components of education projects in multilingual settings.

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21   See the references for the full name and authors of each country report.

Bangladesh

A vast majority of the population in Bangladesh speaks Bangla (Bengali) as their first language and is Muslim by religion. Yet, diversity exists in terms of ethnicity, religion, and language. The number of ethnic groups depends on the source, and ranges from 29 to 69. The Ethnologue (2005) lists 46 languages for the country. Bangla is the national language of the country, and Bangladesh has no separate language policy for ethnolinguistic minorities. Education policy documents emphasize the importance of the mother tongue in primary education, but this refers only to Bangla.

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The language of instruction and literacy is Bangla in all formal schools, as well as in adult literacy classes. Until recently, minority languages have not been used in education. In addition, there are few teachers from the minority communities at any level of education. As a result, the level of literacy is extremely low among the ethnolinguistic minorities. Yet, Bangladesh is committed to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals. Non-governmental organizations are active in education, and are running tens of thousands of non-formal schools around the country. Some NGOs work on education and literacy among ethnic minority children, and a few of these NGO projects also use minority learners' mother tongues as the media of instruction.

A national seminar on multilingual education was organized in June 2005 by various international agencies and NGOs. The objectives of this meeting were to raise awareness about multilingual education among planners and policymakers, as well as to share good practices in MLE and promote networking among various MLE practitioners.

The Oraon are the second largest ethnic group in Northwest Bangladesh. Sadri is the first language of most Oraon. ASHRAI, a local NGO, launched the project 'Action Research on Literacy and Curriculum Development in Mother Tongue for the Oraon Community of Northwest Bangladesh' with the assistance of UNESCO Bangkok in 2002. The purpose of the project was to develop a curriculum and educational materials in the Sadri language, and offer basic education for Oraon children in their mother tongue.

ASHRAI formed a research team to manage the project. The team outlined the following strategies for the project: a) orientation for the Oraon community about the importance and value of a mother tongue literacy programme; b) involvement of the community in all stages of the project; c) consultation of National Textbook Board Curricula for primary education, and review of other education materials for ideas and policies for curriculum development; d) selection and training of local authors from the Oraon community; e) field testing of the developed materials; and f) operation of pilot schools in Sadri.

Until the project started, Sadri had only been used in the oral form. Therefore, there was a need to develop Sadri orthography. As this was a sensitive issue and a difficult task for the research team to accomplish, they decided that the Oraon community itself should be responsible for orthography development. The developed Sadri orthography uses the Bangla script.

The project conducted a survey to identify key people from the Oraon community to be involved in different stages of the project. Teachers for the pilot schools were recruited from the same communities in which they would work. Priority was given to Oraon people who also spoke Bangla, so that they could contribute to action research and be involved in the development of learning materials. Teacher training workshops were organised for these teachers.

Through successive workshops, the Oraon community's learning needs were identified and the lessons to be taught were based on these needs. Most commonly used vocabulary from different Sadri dialects, as well as samples of social practices of Oraon communities in different regions, were collected. The learning materials were based on the collected samples.

Teachers and resource persons from the Oraon community formed a group of writers and received training in materials production. The group of Oraon writers developed the lesson plans and topics for the learning materials reflecting the traditional Oraon language and culture. The illustrations for the materials were drawn to reflect the real-life situations of the Oraon people. After initial drafts, the curriculum and materials were reviewed by an editorial board. Necessary changes and revisions were

made before testing the materials in pilot classrooms. Parents' Committees, consisting of the parents of pilot school students, were formed to be responsible for general supervision of the schools and participate in research activities.

Thus far, Sadri curriculum and graded learning materials have been developed for primary Grades 1 and 2. Related Teachers' Guides have also been prepared. In addition, supplementary reading materials in Sadri have been produced and given to the children for reinforcing and broadening their learning. Likewise, the project is compiling a Sadri dictionary, and the development of Grade 3 textbooks in Sadri is under way.

The Sadri language education is taking place in seven schools, and in this pilot phase around 200 Oraon children are receiving basic education in their mother tongue. An evaluation shows that the learning achievements of the Oraon students in the pilot schools are better than those of the government school students. Although ASHRAI's experiences have mostly been positive, some challenges have also been faced. For example, a lack of resources is hindering the expansion of the project. For the long-term sustainability of the project and wider use of multilingual education in Bangladesh, it is essential that the government stipulates clear policies that support the use of minority languages in education.

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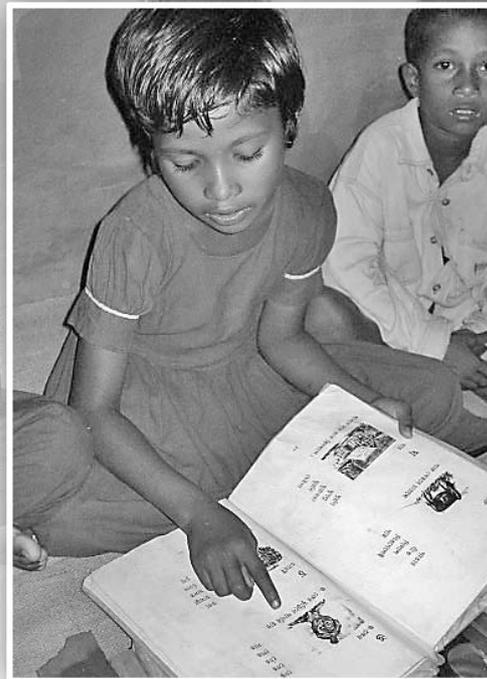
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Cambodia

According to the Ethnologue (2005), 24 languages are spoken in Cambodia. The national language, Khmer, is spoken as the first language by some 90% of the population. Cambodian education policy provides good support for Education for All activities. To achieve EFA in minority communities, special strategies such as bilingual education can be used. However, to date there are no explicit policies on the use of minority languages in education.

Pilot projects of bilingual education and literacy for ethnic minorities are ongoing in the northeastern provinces of Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri. In these provinces, around 70% of the population are ethnic minorities. Most of these people use local languages in their daily life. Baseline literacy surveys show that the literacy rates in Mondulkiri and Ratanakiri are the lowest in Cambodia, with less than 10% of the adult population being able to read and write.

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In the implementation of bilingual education and literacy programmes, the Cambodian Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) works in partnership with two international NGOs, the International Cooperation for Cambodia (ICC), and CARE International. In addition to ICC and CARE, several other NGOs are implementing bilingual projects in non-formal education (NFE) by using the curricula and materials developed by ICC. Currently five languages – Brao, Bunong, Kavet, Krung and Tampoun – are used along with Khmer in these bilingual education and literacy programmes. Orthographies for the five local languages were developed by ICC in collaboration with local communities and government authorities. After revisions, all five orthographies received government approval in 2003.

Cambodian bilingual literacy programmes use both local languages and Khmer as the languages of instruction and literacy. In the NFE classes for school-aged children and adults, the time allotment for the two languages is as follows: in the first year, 90% in L1 and 10% in L2; in the second year,

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transition from L1 to L2 begins and thus 50% in L1 and 50% in L2; finally, in the third year, 10% in L1 and 90% in L2. After the third year, minority learners continue using the standard Khmer curricula and textbooks.

In the bilingual literacy programmes in the NFE sector, the project staff and the NFE teachers work closely with members of local communities to develop 'home grown' curricula representing the indigenous cultures. For example, local oral histories are preserved because indigenous stories, legends, songs, poems, and folklore are included in the curricula and as sources of learning materials. The Khmer language component of the bilingual programmes is based on the Highlands NFE curriculum. Khmer dialogues and songs together with pictures introduce new Khmer vocabulary and teach oral skills together with written Khmer.

The literacy programmes have thus far produced the following types of literacy materials in local languages: alphabet charts, personal and original stories, folktales, graded readers, books on health topics, books on general knowledge, books on agriculture, books on animal health, and histories of local people.

Library boxes and pilot community learning centres (CLCs) or village libraries are being organised together with post-literacy activities for newly

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literate students. Bilingual literacy materials to be used in the CLCs are being developed. Materials are printed in diglot form with both national and local language side by side.

To date, about 150 community members have been trained as bilingual literacy teachers. About a third of them are women. Teacher training is ongoing in regular workshops. The bilingual literacy programmes have hitherto had almost 1,000 students, more than a third of them women. In 2005, there were a total of 49 bilingual literacy classes in Cambodia. The bilingual literacy work in Cambodia is expanding. Currently research is being conducted on three ethnic minority languages – Kuy, Cham and Jarai – and bilingual literacy programmes are likely to be started in those communities, as well.

China

The Government of the People's Republic of China recognizes 56 nationalities, one of which is Han. The other 55 are ethnic minorities. Linguists estimate that these groups speak some 241 languages (Ethnologue, 2005), making it the third most linguistically diverse nation in Asia. China's Constitution and the National Language Policy support the rights of all ethnic groups to use and develop their own languages. Likewise, the Law on Ethnic Regional Autonomy stipulates that schools with ethnic minority students use textbooks in minority languages, and if possible, minority languages are used as the languages of instruction. Generally, the main language of literacy in China is Mandarin Chinese. In ethnic minority regions, minority languages can also be used in literacy programmes.

In some ethnic minority regions, the Government supports bilingual education. However, the focus is on bilingual education in the formal system of education. Thus, most funding is also allocated to formal schools. Adult literacy in minority areas and in minority languages lacks sufficient financial support. Adult literacy programmes in Mandarin Chinese have also been implemented in ethnic minority regions. These programmes have not always been sustainable, however, because many minority

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adults find it difficult to apply the learned skills to their daily lives. Therefore, illiteracy is still prevalent among many minorities. An important reason for this has been literacy only in Chinese. Literacy in a minority language helps minority people learn Chinese. Literacy in local languages also contributes to the maintenance of minority languages and cultures. Consequently, literacy programmes based on the learners' first language should be a top concern for the Chinese Government and other sectors of the society.

The Lahu are one of the ethnolinguistic minorities in China. Education level is generally quite low among them. The Lahu live in Yunnan province, and their total population in China is more than 400,000. Although a Lahu writing system based on the Roman script was created in the 1920s and revised in 1956, very few people can read Lahu. Lancang is the only autonomous county of Lahu nationality in China. The Lahu population there is 200,000, which is 43% of the total population of the county and half of all Lahu in China.

After a needs assessment, Lahu villages of Nanuoke and Banli were selected as the sites for the Lahu-Chinese bilingual literacy project. Both villages are located in remote mountainous areas. In daily life, the villagers speak Lahu, and most speak only a little Chinese. However, they need to use Chinese in trading, in using health services and visiting government offices. The Lahu-Chinese bilingual literacy project has so far accomplished the following:

▶ Development of various kinds of Lahu-Chinese bilingual literacy materials based on the local communities' needs. Lahu community members who were first trained in materials development have played a major role in developing these materials.

▶ Training of more than 30 Lahu literacy facilitators across Lancang County.

▶ Creation of a 'Lahu-Chinese Bilingual Teaching Guide for Lahu Facilitators'. The teaching guide has been tested in some 30 Lahu-Chinese bilingual literacy classes.

▶ Establishment of community learning centres in both project villages.

The Lahu-Chinese bilingual literacy project is basically action research. The project has, thus, made the following findings:

▶ It is difficult for illiterate Lahu learners who are not proficient in Chinese to use Chinese literacy materials because the Lahu and Chinese languages are quite different.

▶ Lahu learners have made rapid progress in learning to read and write in their mother tongue, Lahu, a language that they already speak. Many are becoming functionally literate.

▶ The rapid progress has improved many learners' self-confidence.

▶ The bilingual literacy project has helped many Lahu to better communicate with the Han Chinese.

▶ The project has helped many Lahu to boost their Lahu identity. Many respect their own culture and language more now and have overcome their earlier feelings of inferiority.

▶ The project has helped many Lahu learners gain a deeper understanding of their traditional culture. Many are gradually realizing that their own language is an essential part of their unique culture.

The project has faced some challenges that include: 1) people see local language as having only a utilitarian value, 2) a lack of learning materials in Lahu language, 3) a lack of qualified facilitators for developing a written Lahu language, and 4) the influence of the Chinese culture. The project has come up with the following strategies to overcome these challenges and to support sustainable development of spoken and written Lahu:

▶ To emphasize the cultural and economic value of functional literacy in both Lahu and Chinese

▶ To train bilingual facilitators and to develop bilingual literacy learning resources and teaching materials

▶ To establish close relationships between formal schools, religious leaders, local government agencies, and community people

▶ To mobilize more government agencies and non-governmental organizations and personnel to support the bilingual policy and practice
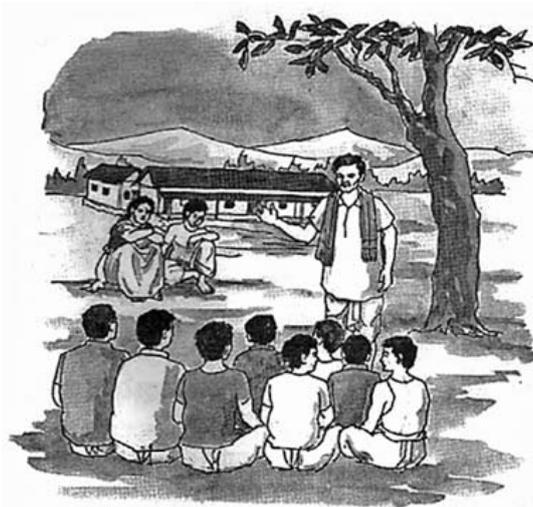

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India

With 427 languages, India is the second most linguistically diverse nation in Asia (Ethnologue, 2005). The Constitution of India supports the use of a learner's mother tongue in education. However, the number of languages used as a medium of instruction has declined from 81 in 1970 to 33 in 2005. The state of Assam, which is situated in Northeast India, has more than 20 ethnolinguistic groups. Nine languages are used as the medium of instruction at the primary level and seven at the secondary education level in Assam.

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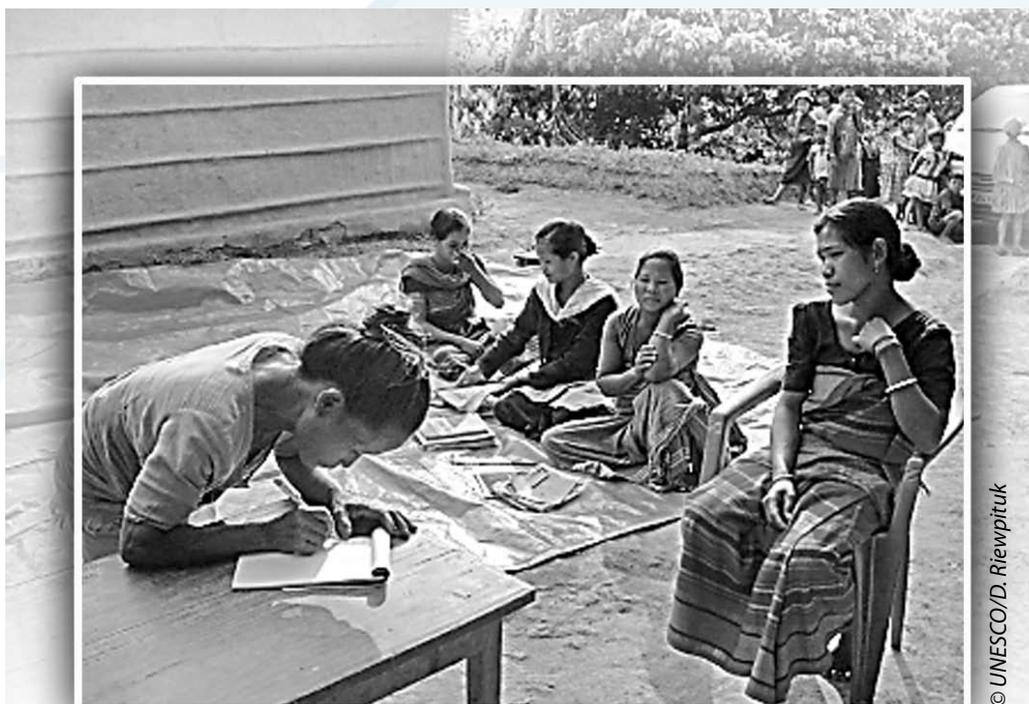
An attempt to reach EFA is a reason why the Indian National Literacy Mission Authority (INLMA) has encouraged adult literacy in learners' mother tongues, including minority languages. State Resource Centres (SRC) are institutions set up by INLMA to facilitate the process of literacy by giving academic and technical support to the District Literacy Committees who undertake the actual literacy work.

The Rabha are an ethno-linguistic minority group living in 10 districts of Assam. There are several Rabha sub-groups. Only three of them, about half of the total Rabha population, have retained the indigenous language, whereas others have shifted to the majority language, Assamese. Yet, also these people are keen to learn Rabha. Goalpara is a district with a large Rabha community. The literacy rates in the district are below the national and state averages. Earlier literacy programmes in Goalpara have not been successful. SRC Assam's field study indicated that adult learners wanted to learn in their mother tongue rather than Assamese. The main incentive for education and literacy in the mother tongue is

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that Rabha parents want their children to know the Rahba language and maintain their traditional culture. Consequently, SRC Assam decided to promote literacy in the Rabha language.

Before this project, Rabha was an unwritten language. SRC Assam worked with members of the Rabha Literacy Society and the Rabha Cultural Society. As a result of this collaboration, Rabha orthography was developed by adopting the Assamese script. Language standardisation, however, caused some conflicts between speakers' of various Rabha dialects. Consequently, it was decided that standard Rabha should include vocabulary from all dialects. The Rabha organisations also helped identify potential Rabha authors to be involved in materials production.

Project personnel and prospective Rabha learners were identified through a community survey. This survey was conducted by village volunteers who had received training in a workshop. As the survey involved the Rabha community, it thus acted as a good community mobilization exercise. The survey also identified interested volunteer instructors. The project requires a total of 500 instructors, as one instructor is expected to teach 10 learners. The volunteer instructors receive a total of nine days of training in three stages. The first five-day training workshop is pre-service training. After the completion of the first Rabha primer in a literacy class, an additional two-day training is provided. This also happens after the completion of the second primer.

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The literacy teaching-learning method that the project uses is based on the principle that Rabha (the learners' first language) is learned first. Only after good literacy skills are obtained in the L1 will the state language, Assamese, be taught. Literacy is acquired by introducing each letter of the alphabet at a time. The literacy project uses a total of three different primers of increasing difficulty.

Teaching-learning materials and teachers' guides were developed in workshops organised in Rabha communities. Local authors and

Rabha language experts played a major role in materials production. The drafts were field tested for accuracy and acceptance, and suggestions were incorporated before publication. Initially 1,000 copies of the primers were printed. After the initial batch of literacy classes for 1,000 learners, it was discovered that the actual number of illiterate people in the district was larger than anticipated. Therefore, additional funds were requested from UNESCO to print 4,000 additional primers.

As a result of the Rabha experiment, other language minority groups have requested SRC Assam to work on their languages, as well. SRC Assam is currently working with Tiwa, Sadri, Deuri and Amri Karbi language communities. SIL International has provided academic support for this. The Rabha project has experienced that initial community mobilization is essential for project sustainability. Building the capacity of the local communities is also seen as very important. To overcome the challenges of limited funds and project sustainability, the project has discovered that communities stay involved in the project if they are given responsibilities and duties that they are capable of performing.

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Indonesia

Indonesia is the second most linguistically diverse country in the world after Papua New Guinea. The Ethnologue (2005) lists 742 languages for the country. The number of languages spoken in Indonesia alone is almost as many as the number of languages in all other Asian nations combined. The Act on the National Educational System supports the use of local languages as the medium of instruction in early grades, if this is necessary in the delivery of particular knowledge and skills. Therefore, the Indonesian Government recognizes traditional cultures and local languages as the main sources of the national culture. They are also an inherent part of the national curriculum.

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In line with government policies on EFA and mother tongue-based education, BP-PLS Region II Jayagiri (The Centre for Growth of Non-formal Education, Region II – Jayagiri) has initiated a pilot project on mother tongue literacy that integrates community development. The

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first step of the pilot was a thorough baseline survey in June 2004 of Kampung Cibago, the anticipated project community.

Kampung Cibago is located in a poor and isolated area in West Java, and community members are mostly Sundanese. The survey determined, for example, that in Cibago: 1) people have a low level of proficiency in the national language, Bahasa Indonesia; 2) almost everyone speaks Sundanese as their mother tongue, and uses it as the main medium of communication; 3) quality of life is low and human resources are underdeveloped; 4) natural resources are mostly left unexplored; and 5) the local Sundanese culture is quite static.

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The main goal of the project is to empower the learners by developing their bilingual competency in Sundanese and Indonesian. Other goals are: mastery of literacy skills, management of natural resources, and participation in the community development processes. In the pilot phase, 40 adult learners are the main target group, and the remaining Cibago population is the secondary target beneficiary.

The project emphasizes the improvement of the learners' life skills as well as the mastery of literacy and numeracy skills. Using both the local and national languages is likely to
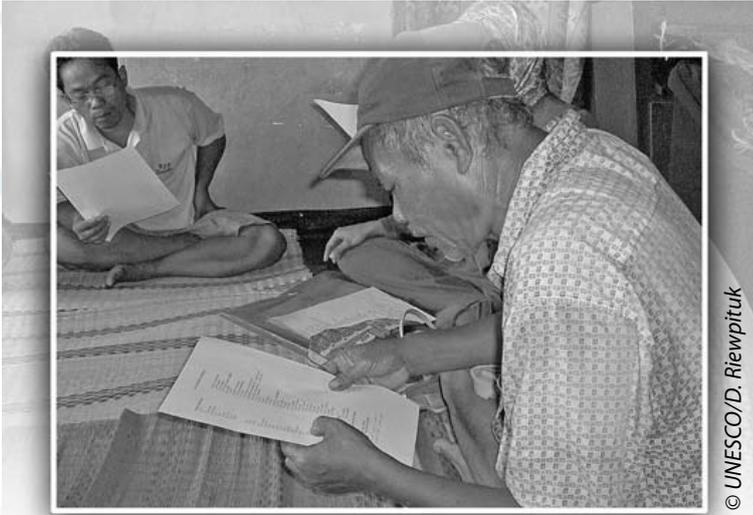
facilitate this process. In addition, the project helps the maintenance of local culture, customs and language within a modern knowledge-based learning process. The pilot is implemented as action research. The learning process incorporates the following three key components: 1) the mastery of literacy and numeracy skills, 2) the integration of literacy and numeracy with functional skills, and 3) the expansion of the functional skills through vocational competencies. The project aims to increase of learners' awareness of education, health and sanitation, and income generation. A variety of learning-teaching materials in the local language are being developed that address all these issues. A description of the elaborate process of materials production employed by the project is presented later in Chapter Four.

After the pilot phase, the project intends to expand, first at the district level, and eventually nationally. The goal is to have a programme based on the pilot running in the overall area of Subang district of West Java by the end of 2006. It is planned that this model could be adopted by 2008 in other parts of the country, as well.
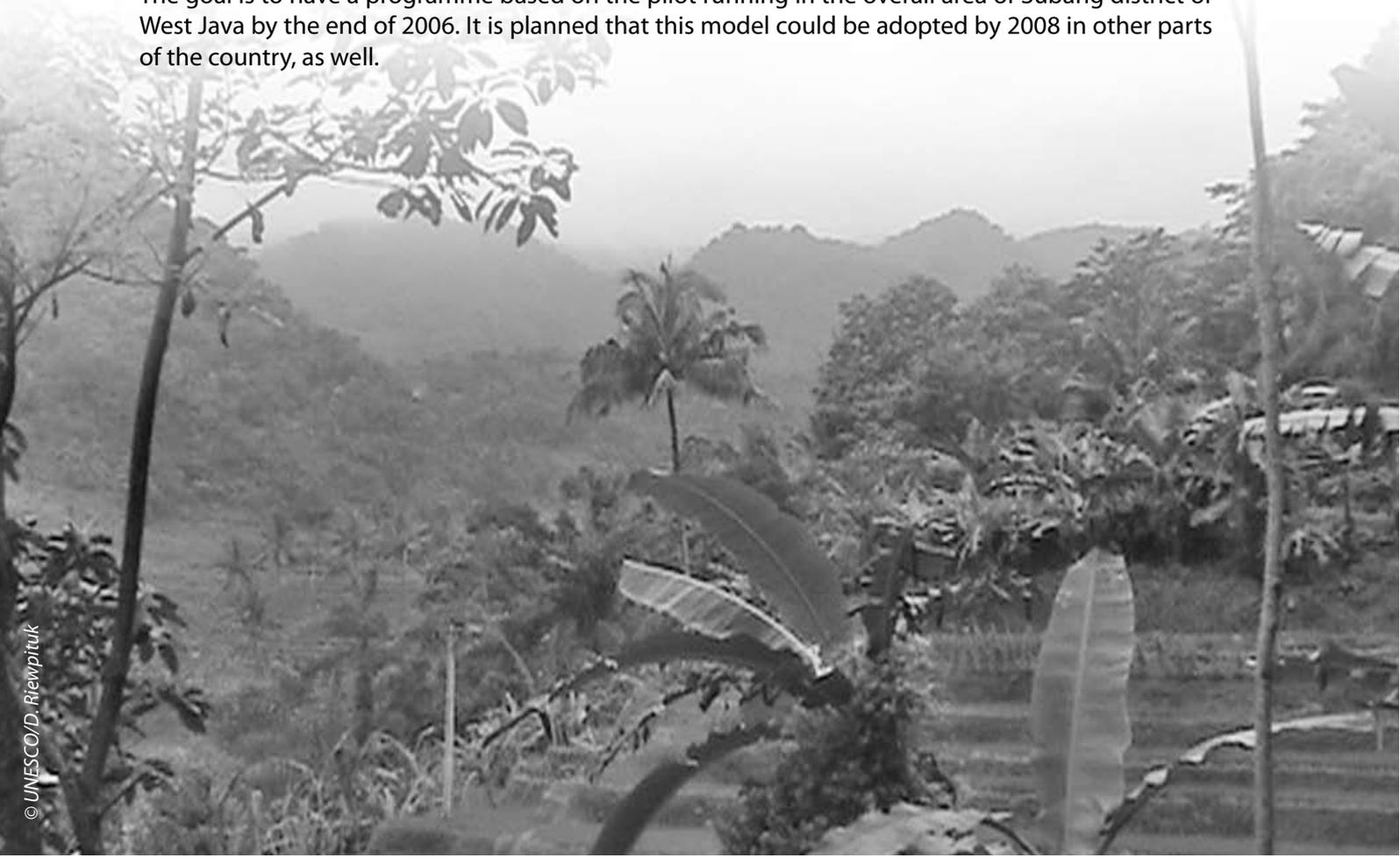
Nepal

Nepal is a multiethnic and multilingual nation. The National Census of 2001 lists 102 social groups and 92 languages, whereas the Ethnologue (2005) lists 125 languages for Nepal. The Government of Nepal has policies that aim to reach the goals of Education for All and to promote mother tongue-based and bilingual education. However, achieving these goals in practice has been challenging. For example, there are no mechanisms in the education system to provide mother tongue-based education at the primary level. Likewise, a lack of human and financial resources has meant that materials in various languages to support teaching and learning activities are not available.

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World Education Nepal and its local partner non-governmental organization, Backward Society Education (BASE), have been piloting a Tharu mother tongue literacy project with support from UNESCO Kathmandu.

Tharu Girl in her traditional dress

The Tharu literacy project has been an effort to develop a basic literacy course in the Tharu language for use in non-formal education classes. Members of the Tharu ethnic minority group have a history of being exploited as bonded labourers. In terms of education and other social and economic indicators, the Tharu are below many other ethnic groups. The main goal of the pilot project has been to provide

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an opportunity for illiterate Tharu youth and adults to build literacy and numeracy skills through the medium of their first language, and to help improve their standard of living by providing them with practical information about issues relevant to their daily lives.

Tharu women and men in the 15-45 age group who were either completely illiterate or who had dropped out of school before becoming literate participated in the project. World Education and BASE developed a Tharu language textbook and curriculum, based on a participatory needs assessment survey which had been conducted in eight villages of Dang district. Tharu community members participated in the development of the Tharu textbook, entitled *From Exploitation to Education*.

Four villages were selected as the sites for literacy classes. After orientation programmes and training of class facilitators, the Tharu non-formal education classes began. Class management committees, made up of community members, were responsible for assisting with supervision and problem-solving.

A six-day training was conducted for the facilitators to help them guide the learning process using the Tharu language textbook. Three days of the training were held pre-service and the other three days were held in-service. Trainees included four class facilitators and a supervisor responsible for supervising and supporting the classes. Trainers from BASE conducted the pre-service and in-service trainings.

The literacy teaching-learning method used was based on the 'Key Word Approach.' The teaching and learning activities were based on non-formal education teaching methods that are applied in Nepal, which consist of a mix of four key activities – introducing, teaching/learning, playing games, and testing.

Throughout the process, the project has received support and active participation from local community members (for example, in the class management committees). The involvement of older people from the communities in helping teach the meanings of Tharu traditions, words and concepts to the younger generation is an important outcome of the project. It has led to the beginning of interactions between young and old community members around the preservation of Tharu language and culture. It has also proven easy for the students to learn to read, write, explain meanings and solve problems in their mother tongue, as this is the language they also speak at home. In addition, the project has served as a vehicle for the communities to address a range of social and economic issues, from gender discrimination to income generation needs and basic human rights.

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The Tharu language textbook,
*From Exploitation to Education*

The Philippines

The number of languages listed for the Philippines is 180 (Ethnologue, 2005). Many small languages are endangered as the use of bigger languages increases. There are almost 12 million indigenous people (IPs) in the Philippines. They are often the last to benefit from governmental social and educational services. Although the national literacy rates are generally quite high, pockets of illiteracy in the rural areas, particularly among indigenous people, still remain. Studies show that illiteracy is often linked to extreme poverty, unemployment, unstable peace and order, and a prevalence of out-of-school children.

The language-in-education policy aims to achieve competencies in both Filipino and English. Thus, these two languages are used as the language of instruction at all levels of education. The regional and local languages can be used as auxiliary languages in the first two school grades, as well as the initial language of literacy in formal education. In non-formal education, regional languages or the learners' mother tongue should be used as the language of literacy. Literacy facilitators generally speak the local languages.

The Philippines Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) is working on various programmes and projects that attempt to serve the unreached people, including indigenous people and cultural minorities. The goal is to reach universal functional literacy in the country by the year 2015 as a part of global EFA efforts.

An action research project on the development of bilingual literacy for the Magbikin community in Morong Bataan has been organised by the BNFE, in collaboration with the Department of Education field offices, local government units and Magbikin community leaders. The main objectives of the project have been: 1) to develop a curriculum and literacy materials in the local language based on
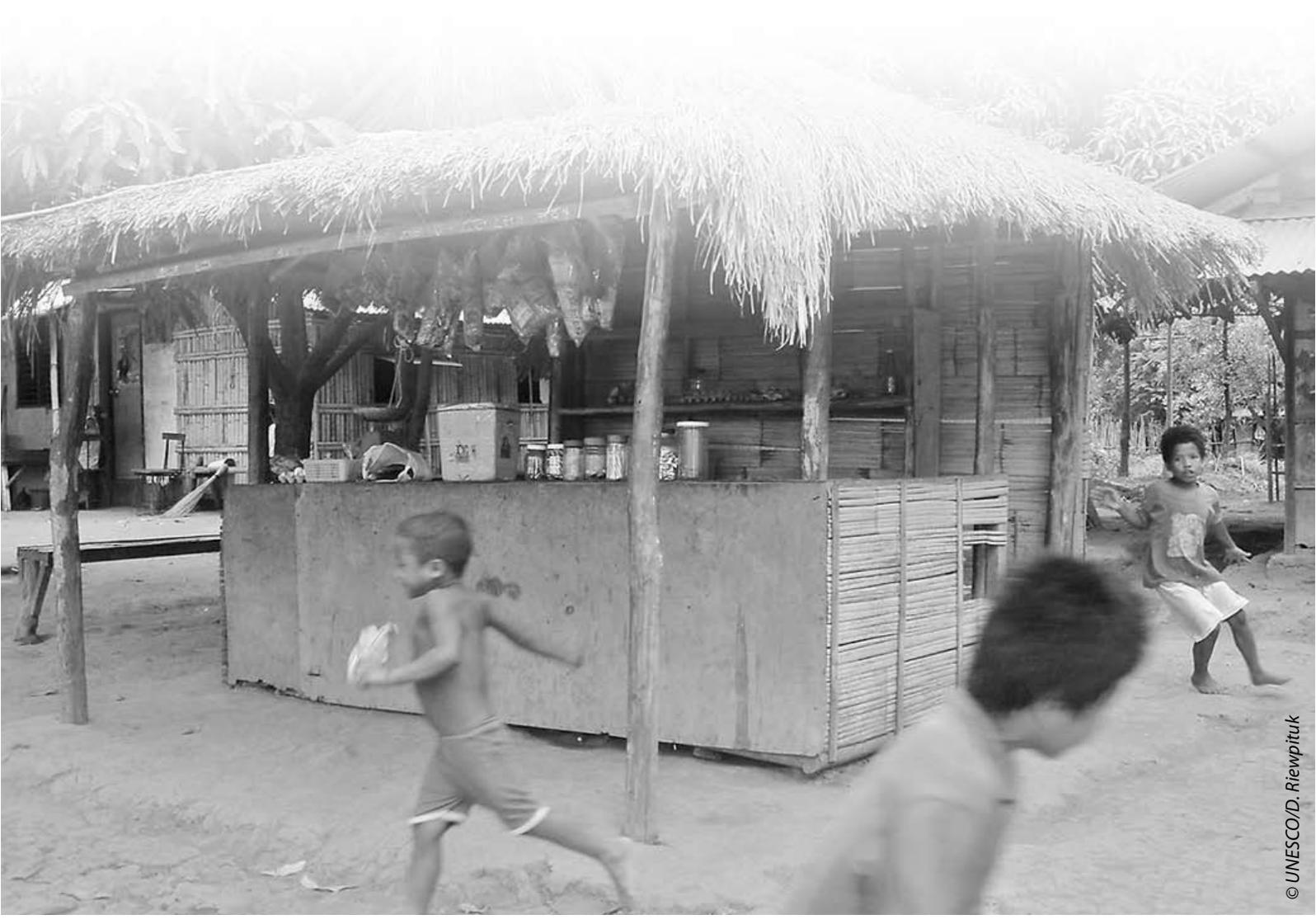
community dialogue and surveys, and 2) to use the learning materials in literacy sessions for the Magbikin community. The project has two inter-related phases: 1) community needs assessment, identification of learning needs, development of local curriculum and preparation of learning materials based on the curriculum, and 2) capacity-building for facilitators from the local community, and organization of learning sessions with literacy materials developed during the first phase.

Research on the Magbikin language and the orthography development was conducted in collaboration with SIL International and Translators Association of the Philippines (TAP). The local community played a key part in this process; they decided, for example, that the name of their language and people would be Ayta Magbukun.

Some Magbikin community members were trained as literacy facilitators. The training emphasised the importance of mother tongue-based instruction. Another aspect of the training focused on building lessons around a community's culture, traditions and best practices, and making them responsive and relevant to a community's needs and aspirations. Four types of literacy materials were produced by using a participatory approach. Most of the contents were on health and sanitation because the needs assessment showed that these were major concerns in the community. The project showed that 200 contact hours spread out in 3-4 months is required to complete the basic literacy programme.

In the pilot site of Barangay Binaritan, Sitio Kanawan Morong, more than 60 Magbikin people completed the basic literacy course in three sequential batches of classes. Later, the project expanded to two additional sites: Sitio Kinaragan, Limay and Barangay Biaan, Mariveles. Three literacy trainers operated in these communities, with some 70 people completing the basic literacy course. The completers will be elevated to the Non-formal Education Accreditation and Equivalency Programme, which will be handled by the Instructional Manager/Mobile Teacher assigned to the area. Others can continue their studies in institutions offering income generation and livelihood skills development courses.

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Within the community, at least the following three visible outcomes can be observed: 1) Community participation – there is a shift from apathy-dependency to a pre-critical thinking stage; 2) People empowerment – two community leaders are now serving as literacy facilitators, and they were also involved in curriculum development and materials production; 3) Leadership and governance – the tribal council now regularly meets and discusses plans for the community. In addition, a Magbikin youth group has been organized and is involved in the decision-making processes.

Future plans include: 1) expansion of the project to other minority communities, 2) documentation of best practices and processes, 3) development of a Magbikin dictionary, and 4) development of a mother tongue-based literacy programme for the Magbukun community.

Thailand

The Ethnologue (2005) lists 83 languages for Thailand. Neither the Constitution nor the National Education Act restricts the use of minority languages in Thailand. In fact, they do not even stipulate the use of Thai, the de facto national language, in the Thai society or education. Recently, the Ministry of Education and the Minister, himself, have become more interested in supporting the use of minority languages in education. Many ethnic minority people do not use the Thai language in their daily lives. Illiteracy among minorities is more prevalent than among the Thais.

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The Office of Non-formal Education Commission (ONFEC) has a long experience in literacy programmes for ethnic minority regions. However, before the UNESCO-supported pilot started, ONFEC had no experience in literacy in local languages or bilingual education. It, therefore, piloted a research project to promote bilingual literacy among the Pwo Karen community in the Omkoi district of Chiang Mai province, in the north of the country. The main goals of the project have been to study conditions and the people's learning needs in the target area, and thereby develop a curriculum framework and bilingual literacy materials in collaboration with the local community.

Action research has been the basis of the ONFEC project in Omkoi. The project has been a partnership of ONFEC administrators, academics, Pwo Karen NFE teachers, Pwo Karen students, and Pwo Karen community members. This team has worked on various aspects of the project, such as the development of a Thai script-based orthography for Pwo Karen and production of various publications in the local language. The role of the Pwo Karen teachers and other community members has been essential to the project's planning and implementation.

The literacy teaching-learning method employed in the project is based on the principle of separate story and primer tracks. The story track uses whole texts, such as stories and 'big books', to emphasize the meaning of literacy. The primer track, on the other hand, uses primer lessons that base learning on individual sounds of the language and the letters of the alphabet, thus emphasising learners' decoding skills.

Writers' workshops have been organised to produce teaching-learning materials and supplementary reading materials for the project. To date, the following kinds of materials have been produced in the Pwo Karen language: 'big books' for literacy teaching and learning, 'small books' for individual reading, an alphabet chart, a picture dictionary, card games, a manual for writing Pwo Karen, a basic Pwo Karen primer, and a Pwo-Thai transfer primer.

Before actual publication of the literacy materials, the project has employed an 8-step approach for the materials development as follows: 1) identify the target group for a set of materials, 2) set goals and objectives for bilingual literacy classes, 3) learn about adult psychology and adapt these principles to materials development, 4) choose contents that are relevant and closely related to the learners' lives, 5) learn how to make various kinds of teaching-learning materials, 6) produce age-appropriate, culturally-appropriate instructional and graded reading materials that will first develop the learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities in Pwo Karen and later facilitate the learners' transition from Pwo Karen to Thai listening, speaking, reading and writing, 7) edit the materials, 8) test the materials.

The project has operated effectively and with good cooperation from SIL International. SIL has provided experts and resource persons from time to time to help in various project activities, such as project planning, orthography development, production of teaching-learning materials, training of trainers, and a national seminar on multilingual education.

Apart from the Pwo Karen, representatives of other minority groups, such as the Mon and Bisu, as well as Thai officials, have joined some of the project's training workshops. This is paving the way for starting similar projects in other minority communities. The project has also expanded to three new sites in the Omkoi district. As a result of the present supportive policy environment, Thailand's Ministry of Education is planning additional bilingual education pilot projects in the southern Pattani Malay-speaking provinces of the country.

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Chapter 4

Developing Low Cost and Effective Materials for Multilingual Education Programmes

When people learn to read, they need opportunities to practice reading. In order to get plenty of practice, new readers need a variety of printed materials and other media to help them start reading and to encourage them to continue.

When people first start to read, they need materials in their first language that are short and easy to read. As they become more fluent readers in their first language and also learn to read in a second language, they need materials in each language that are longer and more complex. When new readers have access to a variety of such graded reading materials, they are encouraged to maintain and expand their reading skills. On the other hand, a lack of interesting reading materials will discourage new readers. One of the reasons newly literate people so often lapse into illiteracy is because they do not have enough books that are interesting and challenging to them. In order to maintain motivation to continue reading and to pursue lifelong learning, readers need books about topics that are familiar to them and provide them with new information and ideas.


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When a literacy programme is started, one of the first priorities should be to begin establishing a system for developing and producing literacy materials for on-going literacy.

People have suggested that it is difficult to provide sufficient adequate materials to support multilingual education programmes beginning in the first language. The key to overcoming the challenge of materials production for effective programmes for both adults and children would appear to be a bottom-up approach that equips and empowers the local community to produce their own culturally appropriate curriculum and instructional materials (Suwilai & Malone, 2003, p.4). This ideally requires collaboration between the ethnic language community, schools, local and international NGOs and academic and government bodies. Such a community-based approach contributes to the cost-effectiveness of the implementation of multilingual education for minority language communities.

Several components need to be considered in the materials development process. Within the country report for Indonesia delivered at the "Regional Workshop on Mother Tongue/Bilingual Literacy Programmes for Ethnic Minorities" in December 2005 (Country Report – Indonesia 2005, p.13), the materials development process is described as including the following components:

Figure 9. Process of materials development
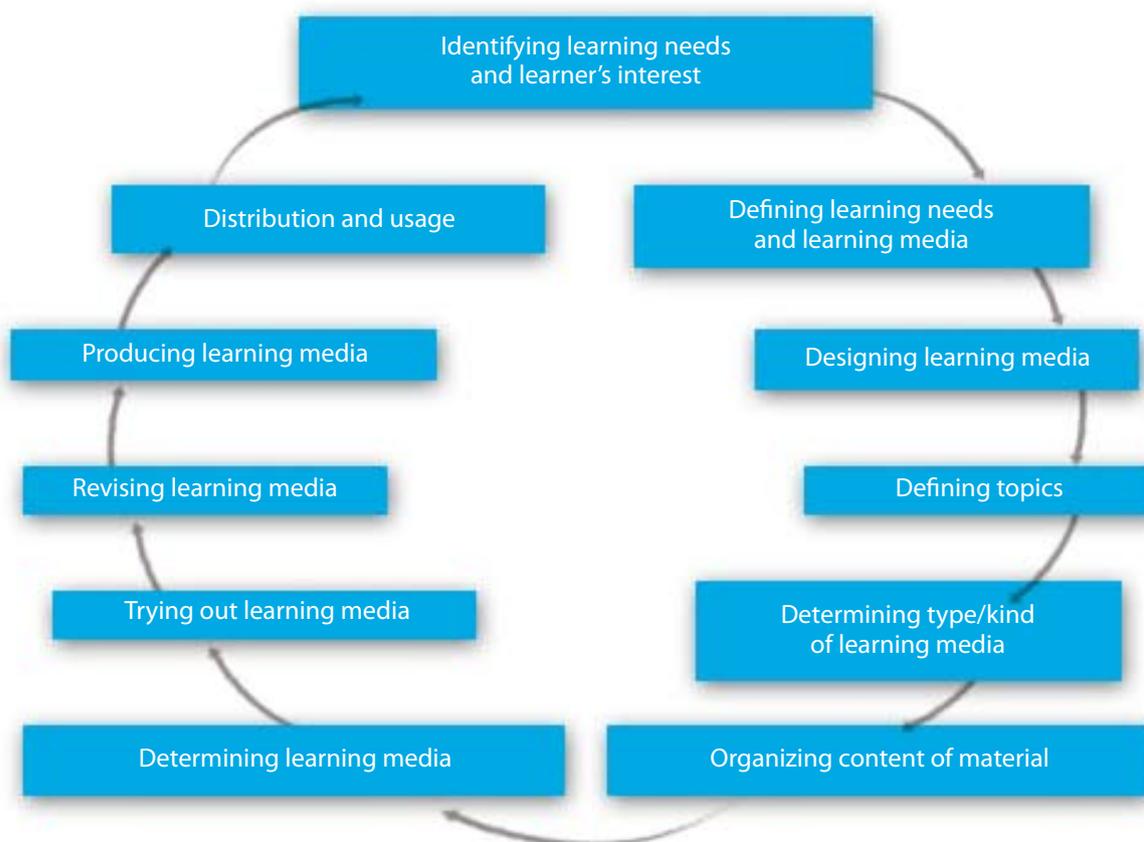
Source: Country Report – Indonesia (2005)

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Research

A vital component of materials development for well-planned community-based, community-managed literacy programmes is research (UNESCO, 2004a, p. 31). Participatory research of attitudes towards and uses of local language, learning needs and interests of potential programme participants are essential if an education programme for either adults or children is going to respond to community concerns and social sensitivities. In the model above, research of learning needs and learner's interests is defined as a foundational stage in materials development. Within any language community there are different groups of readers – different audiences – and these should be considered when developing literature (Malone, 2004, p. 68). Some common dichotomies are:

▶ young children — youth

▶ women — men

▶ people in rural areas — people in cities

▶ people with different reading abilities

Also, people have different reasons for reading. Some general categories for motivation in reading can be:

▶ to get information

▶ to learn about the world outside their community

▶ for spiritual growth

▶ to gain marketable skills

▶ to improve quality of life

▶ for enjoyment

Many communities have traditional literature that has been passed from one generation to the next for centuries. This literature — which, in most cases, was unwritten — includes songs, stories, poetry, folklore, wise sayings and religious beliefs. The world is changing rapidly and members of minority language communities want to put their traditional literature into written form to make sure that it is not lost (UNESCO, 2004a, p. 85).

Community members involved in producing literature for education programmes need to talk and listen to other community members and discover their hopes for written materials in their language. The discovery of appropriate topics for the development of materials may be the key to building motivation for reading and, thus, the foundation for lifelong learning through reading. Those involved in developing education programmes for minority language communities should dialogue with people in the community and discuss the kinds of material they are interested in reading (and which address the goals and problems that have been identified in the community). What would people enjoy reading about – both for pleasure and to learn new information and skills? It is important to research this information in the community as a basis for appropriate materials development.

Responding to Learning Needs

Readers can also be identified according to their level of reading ability:

- ▶ Basic literacy, in which learners gain basic reading, writing and numeracy skills in their first language.

- ▶ Fluency, in which readers expand their reading and writing skills in their first language and read so that they can learn new ideas and information.

- ▶ Transfer, in which readers transfer their literacy skills into a second language, while maintaining and expanding their reading skills in their first language.

- ▶ Life-long learning, in which readers continue to use their literacy skills in their first and second languages (and, as necessary, additional languages) for enjoyment and for their personal growth and development.

Materials that are produced for multilingual education programmes should be graded to meet the needs of each group of learners listed above - from very short, simple stories with many pictures to longer and more complex texts for fluent readers. At all levels, readers need to be able to practice reading with interesting, relevant materials.

Writing Systems

The process of materials development can in itself be a component of the standardisation of a writing system. As reading materials are used and discussed, and as learners read and write in their mother tongue, preferences are established that feed into community acceptance of an orthography. Concerning writing system development, David Bradley (2003) says,

> The overriding principle should be that the community must be happy with and in control of its orthography. Orthography development or reform must NOT be undertaken lightly and should involve the entire speech community. Materials for teaching the orthography are essential and there should be a variety of things for people to read.

> (Bradley, 2003, p. 8)

มู่น่างลี้อางฒึ้งอางฒ้า
AUNT IS PICKING MUSHROOM

ฌางคูจี้ฌางคูท๊อง
WEALTHY LAND

© ONFEC, Thailand

"Big book" pages from the Omkoi Pwo Karen literacy project in Northern Thailand.

Thus, the provision of reading materials for new readers – and for those gaining fluency in reading and writing in their mother tongue – contributes to the wider language development processes for minority language communities.

Community-based Materials Production

> …… a small group within a community, given training and resources, can rapidly produce and thereby preserve collections of traditional or new stories, songs and other literature.
>
> (Bradley, 2003, p. 8)

Community members involved in materials production could include parents and members of the extended family, political leaders, health workers, religious leaders, education workers and other stakeholders in the multilingual education programme. The participation of the community in the process contributes towards both local ownership and cost effectiveness of a programme, and it will help ensure that the materials produced are relevant to the local situation.

When multiple stakeholders are involved in development of reading materials for a multilingual education programme, these activities usually form part of the process:

▶ People from the community research and identify materials that are already available in the community, as well as those materials that still need to be produced in order to create a core of material available for learners of all levels.

▶ Mother tongue speakers in the community are recruited and trained as writers, artists and editors. "Writers workshops" are planned in which members of the language community learn how to write, illustrate and edit materials in their language.

▶ Limited quantities of community-developed materials are usually produced in a simple manner – often just in black and white with, perhaps, cardboard covers, in order to evaluate the usefulness and appropriateness of the material.

▶ After books and other reading materials have been thoroughly tested through use, they are then printed in larger numbers for use throughout a multilingual education programme.

Materials for Development

Minority language communities may have limited access to community development materials that would contribute to improve the quality of life and allow participants to be active in their community and national life. Preliminary research can identify topics that are of interest to community members and will aid in activities that contribute to individual and community life. One of the explicit goals of the multilingual education project for the Tharu community in Nepal is:

> To help young and adult Tharu men and women improve their lives by generating awareness, and helping them develop the skills to understand the roots of problems and implement practical solutions to issues they face in daily life – in areas such as agriculture, income generation, health, nutrition, environment, hygiene, drinking water, afforestation, civil awareness, women's empowerment and other social, religious, cultural, or educational issues.
>
> (Country Report – Nepal 2005, p. 10)

The Country Report outlines the ways in which the programme contributed to community empowerment:

> …the project harnessed the support and active participation of local community members. The involvement of elder people from the communities in helping teach the meanings of Tharu traditions, words and concepts to the younger generation was later seen as one of the important outcomes of the project. It led to the beginning of interactions between young and old community members around the preservation of Tharu language and culture. Besides the benefits of learning literacy and numeracy skills in their mother tongue, as perceived by the Tharu communities, the project served as a vehicle for the communities to address a range of social and economic issues, from gender discrimination to income generation needs to basic human rights.
>
> (Country Report - Nepal 2005, p. 2)

The curriculum and materials produced for the multilingual education programme contain components related to agriculture, income generation, health, nutrition and environment.

Types of Materials

Big Books

They are BIG! Often 'big books' are A-3 sized or larger, with large, clear, uncluttered illustrations that help the learners understand what is said in the text. The print is large and easily readable by a group.

'Big books' provide learners with an opportunity to participate in the reading experience as a group, in a relaxed, informal, and non-threatening way. They provide learners with an immediate opportunity to experience reading, reading together
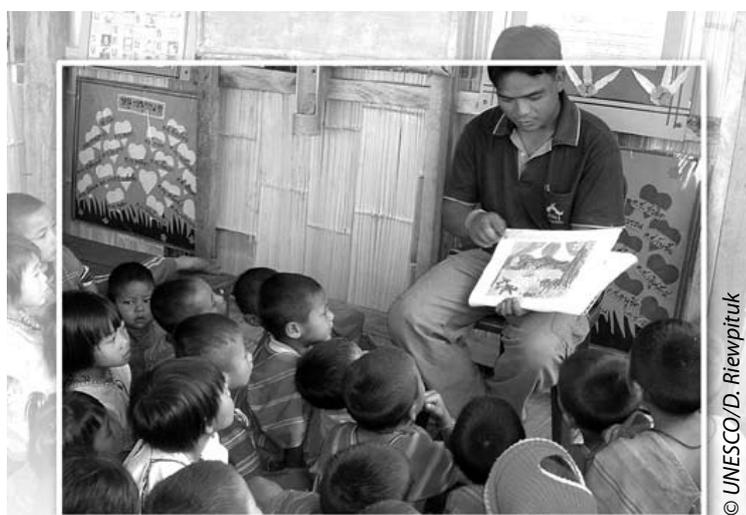
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with the facilitator and each other. Through this social activity, learners are able to see that reading is meaningful and enjoyable.

It is important that the story is about a topic that is familiar, acceptable and interesting for the learners. The language should be natural, predictable, memorable and interesting. If the book is for new readers, key terms and phrases are repeated several times through the story.

When using 'big books,' all learners, and particularly adults, are encouraged to discuss the topic of the book, talk about what they see in the pictures, read and discuss the text together, and then use the story to think about their own life situations.

Shellbooks

A new method of producing materials is being developed and tried in several areas. This method combines computer technology with simple community-based methods of reproducing materials. A shellbook is a book or other kind of reading material that is produced from a prepared "shell" or template. It is designed so that the same title can be produced easily in different languages. Shellbooks are well-suited to certain situations and types of literature, and can complement literature that has been locally produced in writer's workshops. Shellbooks are a great way of sharing good ideas, information and artwork with others. They are not, however, the way to create a complete "instant" body of literature. Materials written by the language community themselves are also critically important in localising the programme and promoting local ownership.

The shellbook production process is designed to be simple, cost-effective and implemented at community level using less time in researching, designing and illustrating materials without the need for 'expert' translators. It allows for the transfer of ideas across cultural, linguistic and technological divides, and for materials to be produced for maximum reach. A shellbook allows a common, core message to be shared between communities, but they look and read differently in different communities. For example, shell books have been produced in healthcare, agriculture, history, civic information, geography and for basic literacy classes. In this way, the development of a multilingual education programme and materials production can be less overwhelming.

Guidelines

Consider using shellbooks mostly for the intermediate stage of a literacy programme when simple materials are needed. Shellbooks are not recommended at the beginning reading level because those materials should be very language-and culture-specific. When considering adapting a "shell," test it first to be sure that the subject, text, format and illustrations are culturally appropriate.

Shellbooks are an excellent choice for the development of materials targeted at adults – particularly materials that would be of interest to multiple language or dialect groups. As always, involve community members in choosing, translating, testing, and producing the books, and have local authors adapt the local language texts from the original texts whenever possible in order to make them more relevant to the community. It is always important to do extensive testing to determine that the shellbooks are acceptable both linguistically and culturally.

A shellbook has certain elements (that are not language-specific) already determined and in place. These are:

▶ Illustrations

▶ Page numbers

▶ Blank spaces for text

▶ Page layout

▶ Text formatting

The shellbook developed by Shellbook Publishing Systems is one example of a computer tool for developing templates and sharing examples of materials. Refer to http://www.shellbook.com/ for more information about computer software to develop shellbooks.

Piloting and Testing Educational Materials

The production of printed materials is only the beginning of the literacy process. Immediately, one needs to both question the effectiveness and the value of the materials, and to suggest ways in which they could be improved. Some kind of testing procedure is necessary to do this. Some important questions to ask are:

▶ Is the content of the materials interesting to the learners?

▶ Is the language used in the reading material clear and natural?

▶ Are the illustrations related to the text appropriate to the local context?

▶ Are the materials attractive and simple?

▶ Can the instructional materials be used by non-professional teachers?

▶ Do mother tongue speakers consider the reading materials appropriate?

▶ Is the system for producing reading materials as efficient as it needs to be?

▶ Is the distribution system effective and reliable?

In addressing each of these questions, consider the parts of the publication or the development process that could be improved. The implementation of a local literacy programme is a cycle that allows piloting and testing to contribute to the evaluation process. Information discovered through evaluation can contribute to the improvement and sustainability of each component of a community-based multilingual education programme.

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Reference Materials

At the "International Conference on Language Development, Language Revitalisation and Multilingual Education" held in Thailand from November 6-8, 2003, and co-sponsored by UNESCO Bangkok, SIL International and Mahidol University, Thailand, a number of papers were presented relating to the development of materials for minority language communities. The papers provide those involved in the development of literature and instructional reading materials with further information about the process of materials development and also case studies related to localised development:

Malone, S. *Education for Multilingualism and Multi-literacy in EthnicMminority Communities: The Situation in Asia*
http://www.sil.org/asia/ldc/plenary_papers/susan_malone.pdf

Bradley, D. *Issues in Orthography Development and Reform*
http://www.sil.org/asia/ldc/plenary_papers/david_bradley.pdf

Gautam, V. *Education of Tribal Children in India and the Issue of Medium of Instruction: A Janshala Experience*
http://www.sil.org/asia/ldc/parrallel_papers/vinoba_gautam.pdf

Rajan, H. *Literature Development in Minority Language: Case Study of Gutob-Gadaba Language Revitalization Project in India*
http://www.sil.org/asia/ldc/parrallel_papers/herold_rajan.pdf

Siltragool, W. *Project on Research Study and Materials Development of a Literacy Programme for Ethnic Minority in Omkoi, Chiengmai (Thailand)*
http://www.sil.org/asia/ldc/parrallel_papers/wisanee_siltragool.pdf

The following publications contain extensive information on the development of cost-effective localised materials for multilingual education programmes:

▶ UNESCO (2004) *Manual for Developing Literacy and Adult Education Programmes in Minority Language Communities*. UNESCO Bangkok. On the web at:
http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/minoritylanguage/index.htm

This manual is about planning and implementing education-for-development programmes for adult speakers of minority languages. It is written for members of minority language communities and for outsiders — provincial and district trainers, supervisors and others — who work with and support the communities. The purpose of the manual is to provide information that will help programme leaders plan and implement adult education programmes.

▶ UNESCO Bangkok. *First Language First: Community-based Literacy Programmes for Minority Language.* At: http://www2.unescobkk.org/elib/publications/first_language/index.htm

This book is divided into two parts. Part 1 focuses on planning and strategies for implementing a sustainable multilingual literacy programme, while Part 2 contains resource papers and examples of good practices from five countries, as well as papers written by specialists in the field.

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Training Effective Community Teachers for Multilingual Education Programmes

In every multilingual education programme – whether designed for adults or children – there will be a need to train people to become teachers, trainers and supervisors. The most successful multilingual education programmes are those that have recruited motivated and credible individuals from the local community as leaders in the programme and helped them develop the skills to support and sustain their programmes.

The recruitment and training of teachers is a key component in the success of an education programme. Investment in the effective training of teachers is crucial. Just as we invest in classes and materials, we also need to invest in capacity-building for the teachers who are the direct link to the learners. Effective teacher training develops leadership for the language development programme. Well trained, confident teachers from the community encourage greater community ownership of the programme, which contributes to sustainability.

When should the training of teachers or facilitators begin? At the very beginning – as soon as the community or agency begins to consider implementing a multilingual education programme. Sometimes, because there has been limited access to education in the community, there are no teachers who are formally qualified to teach. However, community members can be equipped to be effective facilitators in multilingual education programmes. For both formal and non-formal education programmes, it is best to identify individuals who are:

- ▶ fluent in the local language
- ▶ understand and appreciate the local culture
- ▶ respected by others in the community

Members of the local community can be excellent teachers if they have access to instructional materials that are easy to use and if they can participate in training before they teach and have regular in-service training. Regular, supportive supervision is important for community teachers. Regularity and appropriateness of training is often more important than beginning with an extended length of time for training. Experience has shown that it is more effective to bring community teachers together more often rather than having them stay at a training venue for a long time. Bringing teachers together for "in-service" training is a social learning experience and teachers can share their experiences and learn from one another.

The involvement of community teachers from the beginning of the process can ensure that all aspects of the multilingual education programme are planned to be responsive to the needs and context of the environment in which the programme will be implemented. An important principle in implementing multilingual education programmes among minority language communities is

generally to start small and grow slowly. Thus, teachers and an initial core of community members can be involved in

- ▶ Community mobilisation and identification of learning needs
- ▶ Writing system development
- ▶ Curriculum and materials development
- ▶ Conducting classes
- ▶ Monitoring and evaluation

Characteristics of Effective Teachers

Effective teachers are facilitators of positive change! What are some of the characteristics of effective teachers? (UNESCO, 2004a, pp. 101-106)

Competence

- ▶ A teacher needs to be a fluent user of the language of instruction. Members of the community who are mother tongue speakers of the language of instruction are often the best teachers. Literacy teachers need to be able to read and write in the language of instruction to be a good model to the learners of both reading for meaning and accurate reading. It is often important to review reading skills during training, as many potential community teachers need to have the opportunity to practice reading and writing.

- ▶ A teacher needs to be competent in both the content of what they teach and the methodology – how it is being taught. Teacher trainers should work through both the content and methodology sequentially and provide plenty of practice for the teacher during training. As the teacher receives the opportunity to practice use of the strategies, they will be able to deliver the content of the curriculum naturally and appropriately.

- ▶ The teacher needs to be able to prepare teaching plans and make attractive, effective learning aids that will assist the learners. Teachers can be trained to make learning aids from local materials that reflect the local cultural context.

- ▶ The teacher should be able to identify the learning needs of the learners and design learning experiences that are appropriate to those needs.

- ▶ In an adult education programme, where the focus is on improving the quality of personal and community life, the teacher needs to be able to help the students make immediate application of their literacy skills and see language and learning as a tool for the community and for personal development.

- ▶ The teacher contributes to the documentation and evaluation of the programme by keeping careful records of progress in learning and the effectiveness of the materials and methodology used. The training process needs to equip the teacher with a procedure for record-keeping that is not time consuming and is easily maintained.

Confidence

▶ Providing opportunities for practice teaching during teacher training helps community teachers who perhaps have only had limited education themselves develop confidence. If teachers have been educated in a highly structured, formal environment, they may feel more comfortable using drills and other rote learning activities than facilitating discussions. All teachers need practice in the process of facilitating interactive learning experiences in order that the learner builds on the knowledge and experience that they bring to the literacy session.

▶ During training, it is important to encourage local teachers to ask plenty of questions in order that they understand the processes related to both the content and methodology of the literacy programme's design. Understanding the reasons for implementing certain approaches can help teachers be creative in their presentation of the content of the literacy sessions and experiment with new ideas. Confidence-building leads to leadership development and to facilitators building their own vision of multilingual education in the community.

▶ Providing a forum for the facilitators to share their experience and learn from each other's successes and failures at, for example, regular in-service training will help teachers to develop skills and confidence. On-going mentoring of teachers by other community teachers with experience is a method of promoting continuing professional growth.

▶ Teachers are responsible for ensuring that the learning environment is one which supports and encourages effective learning. Some children and adult learners may have had negative experiences in previous learning environments – for example, if they have not been able to understand the language of instruction. A confident, well-equipped teacher will be flexible and design learning experiences that are responsive to the needs of the learner. An effective teacher respects the knowledge and experience that the learner brings to the learning environment.

Credibility

▶ Community involvement in identification and recruitment of teachers enhances their credibility within the local community – particularly if the teachers have limited formal education themselves. However, even if a teacher is highly recommended by the community, it is still important that they have the skills and competence to be an effective facilitator.

▶ Often, some form of official recognition of training is helpful – either by a formal educational institution or through an NGO. Awarding certificates to trainees for components of training completed is often a means of enhancing the credibility of community teachers in the eyes of parents and other stakeholders.

Commitment

▶ It is important that teachers in a multilingual education programme value the language of instruction and recognise the benefits of beginning literacy in the mother tongue. Through observing the love of the teachers for the local language and culture, it is likely that the motivation of the learner will increase.

▶ As facilitators develop a shared vision with the programme implementers, they can take on increased leadership responsibility. The development of local leadership is vital to the sustainability of community-managed programmes. Involving community teachers in decision-making will increase their ownership of the programme and the commitment of the teachers to seeing their vision achieved.

Equipping Effective Teachers

In the multilingual education programmes for minority language communities that have proven successful and have been sustained over time by community members, training has focused on capacity-building for increased localised ownership of the programme. A training programme would include the following components (UNESCO, 2004a, pp. 102-3):

▶ Identifying the focus of the training

▶ Identifying the knowledge and skills staff members will need to do their work

▶ Identifying the people to be trained

▶ Finding out what these people already know and what they still need to learn

▶ Providing good initial training

▶ Identifying additional training needs through regular assessment

▶ Updating training regularly

▶ Identifying best practitioners and training them as trainers

Training for materials development

The participation of the community in the process of materials development – producing graded reading material, Big Books, visual aids, etc. - contributes toward local ownership of the literacy programme and the cost effectiveness of a programme, and it helps ensure that the materials produced are relevant to the local situation. Participation in the process of literature development is an effective training opportunity for teachers. As teachers are involved in developing Big Books, small books and other instructional materials, they become more familiar with the materials and will be more effective when using them in the classroom. Teachers are also familiar with the needs of the learners and will be able to help plan appropriate materials.

Training for learner-centred and participatory learning

A basic educational principle is that training goes from the known to the unknown. Thus, trainers will begin by identifying what potential teachers already know and use that as a basis for helping them grow as effective facilitators of learning. People will teach in the way in which they were themselves taught. It is important that training for facilitators models learner-centred, participative learning in order that they will use that methodology themselves in the classroom. If classes are to be learner-centered and promote interaction and participation, the training should be trainee-centered. It should encourage trainees to take an active role in identifying their training needs, solving problems and evaluating their own progress.

The activities that follow can productively be used in teacher training in order to equip teachers and develop leadership for the programme.

Some strategies for a teacher training seminar

► Initially, give teachers an overview of the complete teaching process. A holistic overview ensures that the teachers being trained will become familiar with their roles and responsibilities early in the process.

► If the trainers are not familiar with the community teachers being trained, it is important that the trainers conduct a needs assessment at the beginning of a training programme in order for them to know and understand the needs of those being trained.

► Vision-sharing and team-building activities are keys to developing sustainability and potential leaders for a community education programme. Team-building activities encourage community teachers to consider ways in which they can partner with others in the community to improve and expand the programme.

► Discussion and problem-solving activities will help community teachers to practice critical and higher order thinking skills, and to demonstrate their understanding of situations associated with teaching/learning. In group discussions, learners can share with one another and learn from each other's experiences. The facilitator should recognise and value the contribution of each participant. The teachers can then apply new information and ideas learned as appropriate to their situation.

► Role plays, demonstrations and practice help the community teachers apply what they have heard and read. Through observation of demonstrations and then role play and practice, the teachers can show their understanding and application of the methodology that they have been taught.

► Observing experienced teachers in their classes is an effective approach. Sometimes, it is possible for teachers to have "study visits" to other communities in which multilingual education classes are being implemented. A visit, particularly when guided by a supervisor or trainer, can be a learning experience.

Teaching Methods for Effective Multilingual Education Programmes

Some of the key questions that need to be answered when designing an education programme to meet the needs of learners from minority language communities concern the teaching method that will be used in the teaching-learning situation. It is important to design learning experiences to suit those who are being taught. For example, we need to consider:

- ▶ Different ages and genders
- ▶ Different backgrounds and experiences that the learner brings to the learning environment
- ▶ Different learning preferences of students
  - Auditory – some people have a preference for activities that include plenty of opportunity to listen and reflect
  - Visual – some people prefer to observe
  - Tactile – some people prefer to actively use their sense of touch and be active participants in the learning process
- ▶ Different, traditional learning styles within some communities

It is the responsibility of those who design a multilingual education programme for learners from minority language communities to identify appropriate:
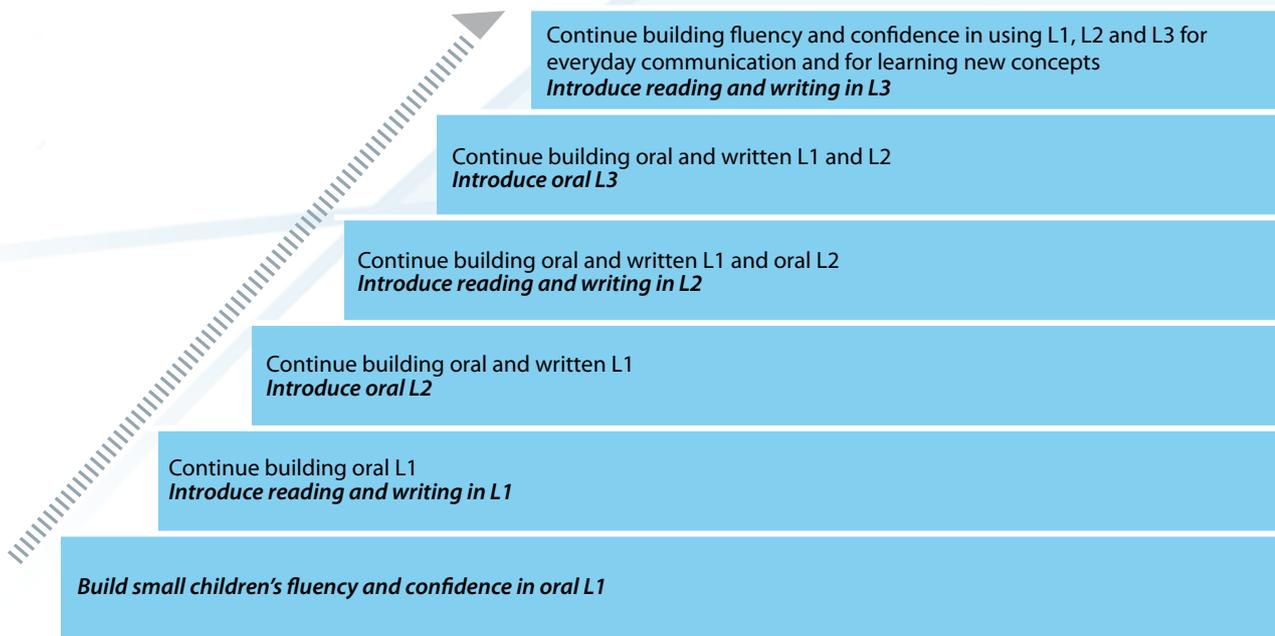
- ▶ content
- ▶ methods of teaching
- ▶ materials
- ▶ methods of assessment of learners
- ▶ programme evaluation

What are the appropriate approaches for the language community that will help learners gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to achieve their goals, meet their needs and solve their problems? When adult learners stop attending classes, it is usually because they are too busy to "waste" their time on something that does not seem to be helpful to them. Thus, those who create curriculum and develop approaches to teaching/learning need to understand the community context and the needs of the learners. This emphasises the importance of involving community members in every aspect of programme planning.

For a programme in a minority language community, there are some general steps which allow learners to build a strong foundation in their first language and then bridge to additional languages.

The graphic below (*Figure 10*) describes the phases of a 3-language programme (the 3rd language being taught as a subject, but not used as a language of instruction.)

Figure 10. Phases of a three-language programme

Continue building fluency and confidence in using L1, L2 and L3 for everyday communication and for learning new concepts
Introduce reading and writing in L3

Continue building oral and written L1 and L2
Introduce oral L3

Continue building oral and written L1 and oral L2
Introduce reading and writing in L2

Continue building oral and written L1
Introduce oral L2

Continue building oral L1
Introduce reading and writing in L1

Build small children's fluency and confidence in oral L1

Source: S. Malone

In the process described above, the language, culture and experiences of the learner form the foundation for learning. New languages and content build on the past experiences of the learner.

Teaching, Reading and Writing Skills

Many strategies for learning to read and write work in different socio-cultural situations. Some teachers mainly focus on teaching the alphabet, syllables and the sound/symbol relationships in a language. Other teachers focus on the meaning of what is being read and on whole words, sentences and texts, rather than on the individual sounds of the language.

In order for learners to be successful readers and writers, they need to have mastered both the skills of reading for meaning and accurate reading. In the country report from Thailand (Country Report – Thailand 2005, p. 30), teaching techniques and activities emphasising correctness and meaning are described:

Table 5. Activities for a balanced literacy programme emphasising
both accuracy and meaning

	Emphasis: Accuracy and Correctness Focus on parts of the language	Emphasis: Meaning and Communication Focus on whole texts
Listening	Recognize and distinguish sounds Recognize parts of words Follow directions	Listen in order to understand Think critically about what is said
Speaking	Use language correctly (pronunciation, grammar)	Speak with understanding in order to communicate thoughts, ideas, needs, and experiences
Reading	Decode words by recognizing their parts (letters, syllables, tone marks, etc.)	Read for meaning and understanding
Writing	Form letters properly and neatly Spell words accurately Use correct grammar	Write creatively in order to communicate thoughts, ideas, needs and experiences

Source: Country Report – Thailand (2005, p. 30)

When evaluating the activities that are included in a multilingual education programme, those involved in curriculum development should consider balance.

Are each of the 4 elements of the well-balanced literacy programme included in your approach? (UNESCO, 2004a, pp. 55-77)

Activities focused on reading and writing for meaning:

▶ Learners should have access to a variety of short, easy reading materials in the learners' mother tongue. These might include 'big books', regular books, posters and pamphlets on topics of interest to the learner. Learners can read alone or in pairs.

▶ Learners should have the opportunity to regularly listen to the teacher or others read.

▶ Create picture stories and add texts to pictures that have been drawn by learners.

▶ Learners should have the opportunity to interact with questions about texts in order to develop comprehension and critical thinking skills.

▶ Composing stories together as a response to shared experiences will allow learners to see their oral language become a written text that can then be read to others.

▶ Learners should have the opportunity to write creatively and expressively, using invented spelling as necessary in order to communicate in writing.

Activities focused on reading for accuracy:

▶ Writing new symbols and words, spelling activities and writing from dictation requires the learner to be accurate.

▶ Phonics and sound-symbol activities give learners the skills needed to decode unfamiliar vocabulary.

▶ The learner should have the opportunity to practice word-building – often by breaking a word down into its symbols and sounds and re-combining the elements of words to make new words.

Experiences in Thailand

The multilingual education programme held among the Pwo Karen community (Country Report – Thailand 2005) has a five phase programme for teaching 90 students in the Nong Ung Tai Community Learning Centre.

Table 6. Phases of a multilingual education programme

Phase One (3-4 yrs)	Phase Two (5-6yrs)	Phase Three (7-8yrs)	Phase Four (9-11yrs)	Phase Five (11 yrs upward)
Listening and speaking: Pwo Karen	Continue to practice listening and speaking Pwo Karen. Introduce reading and writing in Pwo Karen. Emphasis on effective communication and critical thinking. Activities to promote "reading for meaning" and "reading with accuracy."	Continue to practice listening and speaking Pwo Karen. Use Total Physical Response activities.	Continue to practice listening and speaking Pwo Karen. Listening and speaking Thai.	Start to practice reading and writing Thai. Continue activities as in Phase 4. Increase difficulty

Source: Country Report – Thailand (2005, pp. 25-28)

Materials are produced specifically for each level. In December 2005, the Pwo Karen programme had already produced:

▶ Pwo Karen Primer (Level One)

▶ 21 'big books'

▶ 54 regular books

In order to meet the needs of the students as they progress through the phases of the programme, they plan to produce a higher level Pwo Karen Primer and transitional materials to help students bridge to Thai language.

Experiences in Cambodia

The multilingual education programme for adults in the Bunong minority language community in Mondulkiri province, Cambodia (Country Report – Cambodia 2005) teaches using a 2-track programme. One track is called the "story track," which focuses on "reading for meaning," and the other is the "primer track," which focuses on "reading with accuracy" (Stringer, 1992, pp. 11-19). The creative, meaning-centred story track helps produce fluent readers and creative writers. In the primer track, the teacher introduces keywords orally, relates them in a meaningful context through pictures and teaches sounds and parts of the words. Primer track materials aim at helping the learner to speak, listen, read and write correctly. The story track materials help the reader develop reading fluency and comprehension, as well as to write meaningfully.

Table 7. Materials development for a 2-track programme for multilingual education among Bunong in Cambodia

		Materials Development	
		Story track materials	**Primer track materials**
Phase One	Listening and speaking Bunong	Material development and learning activities emphasising listening and speaking in Bunong	Material development and learning activities emphasising listening and speaking in Bunong
Phase Two	Continue to practice listening and speaking in Bunong	Continue to practice listening and speaking in Bunong	Develop primer for reading/writing Bunong Emphasis on accuracy
Phase Three	Continue to practice listening and speaking Bunong	Continue to practice listening and speaking Bunong language.	Develop primer for reading and writing Bunong Increase difficulty
Phase Four	Continue to practice listening and speaking the Bunong language Listening and speaking Khmer language	Continue to practice listening and speaking the Bunong language	Develop transition primer for reading and writing Khmer Develop dictionary

Source: Songvat (2005)

The intention of the programme is to begin learning in the Bunong language and introduce Khmer gradually over a period of three years.

Year One: Focus on learning to read and write Bunong – use Primers 1-4
Year Two: Focus on learning to read and write Bunong. Introduce oral Khmer. Primers 5-6
Year Three: Building reading fluency in Khmer. Khmer Primers 1-2

Methods and Materials for Teaching and Learning

When teaching adult learners, the facilitator needs to work to promote participatory learning – processes that involve the learner in their own learning. (UNESCO, 2001, pp. 10-40) Many techniques can be used:

- ▶ Participatory learning
- ▶ Brainstorming
- ▶ Paired discussion
- ▶ Gallery techniques
- ▶ Group discussions
- ▶ Role play/simulation
- ▶ Games/quizzes
- ▶ Songs

These methods recognise the value of each participant's contribution to learning. Learners can learn from each other's experience. For some teachers and facilitators, this may require learning new methods of teaching that contrast with the ways that they, themselves, have been taught. It is important during teacher training to model the effective use of participatory techniques in order for teachers to be motivated to use them.

A variety of materials can also be used in multilingual education classes:

- ▶ Printed materials
- ▶ Materials prepared by learners
- ▶ Materials collectively prepared by learners, facilitators, community, trainers
- ▶ Real-life objects
- ▶ Folk media
- ▶ Electronic media

It is vital to assess the effectiveness of the methods and materials that are used. Evaluation should lead to materials and methods being adapted to ensure that they are appropriate to the teaching and learning situation. Some appropriate questions to ask would be:

- ▶ Do the materials match the learning objectives of the learners and suit the learners' level of literacy skills?
- ▶ Do the materials and teaching methods used reflect local conditions?
- ▶ Are materials appropriately illustrated?
- ▶ Are the materials cost effective?

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