

Panel: 7MLEo89


Language-in-Education Policy Change Towards Multilingual Education in Myanmar, the Philippines, and Thailand

7th International Conference on Language and Education
Bangkok, 4-6 October 2023



OUTLINE of the panel

- **Carol Benson:** Introduction
- **Kimmo Kosonen:** An analytical framework on the inclusion of NDLs in multilingual education policy
- **Non Sorn & Sam Marip:** Myanmar
- **Maria Mercedes Arzadon:** The Philippines
- **Kirk Person:** Thailand
- **Carol Benson:** Discussion, Q&A



An analytical framework on the inclusion of non-dominant languages (NDL) in multilingual education policy

Kimmo Kosonen (co-authored with Carol Benson)

Benson, C. & Kosonen, K. (Eds.) (2021)

COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: A DIVERSITY OF VOICES

Language Issues in Comparative Education II Policy and Practice in Multilingual Education Based on Non-Dominant Languages

Carol Benson and Kimmo Kosonen (Eds.)

This second volume of *Language Issues in Comparative Education*, following the tradition of the first, introduces the state of the field, re-establishes core terminology and concepts, and situates the chapters in terms of their contributions to multilingual education based on non-dominant languages. The first group of chapters examines language-in-education policy change, applying an innovative framework to analyze diverse contexts including Mozambique, Estonia, and Finland. The next group of chapters describes activities designed to implement multilingual education. Using examples from Chad, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Nepal, they explore progress in teacher 'professionals' development and elaboration of materials for literacy and learning through non-dominant languages. Some highlight new areas of the field, attending to speakers of non-dominant languages other than the ones chosen for instruction, and to the urgent multilingual needs of refugee learners. The final group of chapters presents strategies for research and advocacy, illustrated with examples from DR Congo, Uganda, and India. Taken together, these contributions form a cohesive body of work that takes stock of advances in multilingual education and moves the field forward.

The authors and editors share a common commitment to comparativism in their methods and analysis, and aim to contribute to a more inclusive and multilingual education for all.

Carol Benson, PhD (1994), is Associate Professor of International and Comparative Education at Teachers College, Columbia University. She researches policy development and innovation in multilingual education for speakers of non-dominant languages, with ongoing collaborative projects in Cambodia and Senegal.

Kimmo Kosonen, PhD (1998), is a Senior Consultant in multilingual education with SIL International, and Specialist in language development at Payap University in Thailand. He has published on non-dominant languages, multilingual education, and language-in-education policy in Asia.

Cover illustration: **Talking Tree** by Jessica Bal



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Language Issues in Comparative Education II

Carol Benson and
Kimmo Kosonen (Eds.)

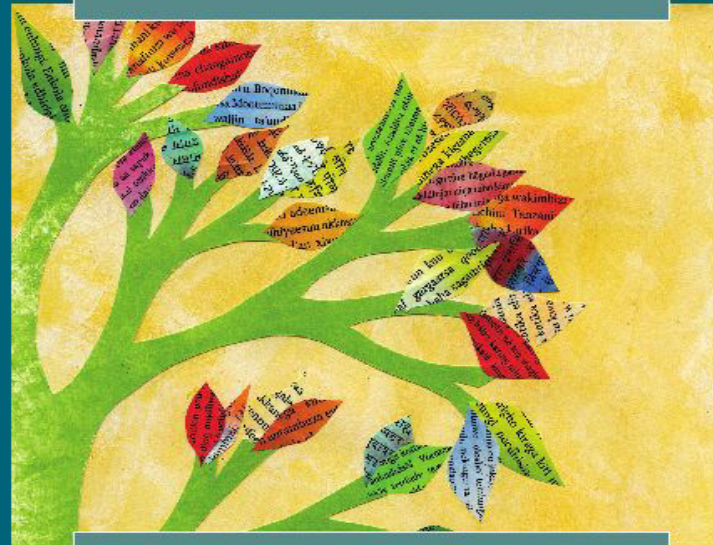
TRIL

COMPARATIVE AND INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION: A DIVERSITY OF VOICES

Language Issues in Comparative Education II

Policy and Practice in Multilingual Education Based on Non-Dominant Languages

Carol Benson and Kimmo Kosonen (Eds.)



BRILL | SENSE

This presentation is based mainly on:

Kosonen, Kimmo & Benson, Carol (2021). *Bringing Non-Dominant Languages into Education Systems: Change from Above, from Below, from the Side—or a Combination?*

In Benson, C. & Kosonen, K. (Eds.) *Language Issues in Comparative Education II: Policy and practice in multilingual education based on non-dominant languages*. Leiden & Boston: Brill.

Data sources and analysis strategies

- Document analysis: Legislation, policies, decrees, decisions
 - Ministry of Education reports
 - NGO, technical assistance, and development project reports
 - Our own fieldwork and experiences (*total of 50+ years combined*)
 - Personal communication with colleagues and stakeholders
-
- Define levels of input
 - Create timelines to analyze interactions and trajectories of input

Theoretical background

Our aim: Connect research on language policy with research on language-in-education policy change

Language policy and planning: micro/meso/macro-levels

- Bernard Spolsky, Björn Jernudd, Gregory Glasgow & Jeremie Bouchard

Languages in education: implementational spaces

- Nancy Hornberger, Tom Ricento, Tony Liddicoat, Marilyn Martin-Jones, Joe Lo Bianco

Languages in educational development: individual, local and institutional agency

- Feliciano Chimbutane, Kerry Taylor-Leech, Pai Obanya, Kathleen Heugh, Gregory Glasgow & Jeremie Bouchard

Three Levels of Actors and Actions

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

- *Actors/action from **above***
- *Actors/action from **below***
- *Actors/action from **the side***

Actors and Actions from above

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Actors from above

- *central governmental entities,*
- *Ministry of Education officials,*
- *legislative bodies,*
- *presidential offices, or ruling party headquarters*

Actions from above

- *official written education policy statements,*
- *national curriculum decisions,*
- *education sector strategic plans,*
- *constitutional articles or amendments, and public laws*

Actors and Actions from below

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Actors from below (local civil society actors)

- *local CSO and NGOs, such as parent-teacher organizations, women's groups, and village committees*
- *local religious groups,*
- *cultural councils and ethnolinguistic associations*

Actions from below

- *community education programs (even in a single school)*
- *Indigenous rights and political organizing,*
- *faith-based linguistic and educational work,*
- *non-formal education relating to literacy in non-dominant languages (NDL) at the grassroots*

Note: Actors from below often share non-dominant languages (NDL), local cultural backgrounds and identities

Actors and Actions from the side

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Actors from the side (between the other levels, bringing technical skills and resources)

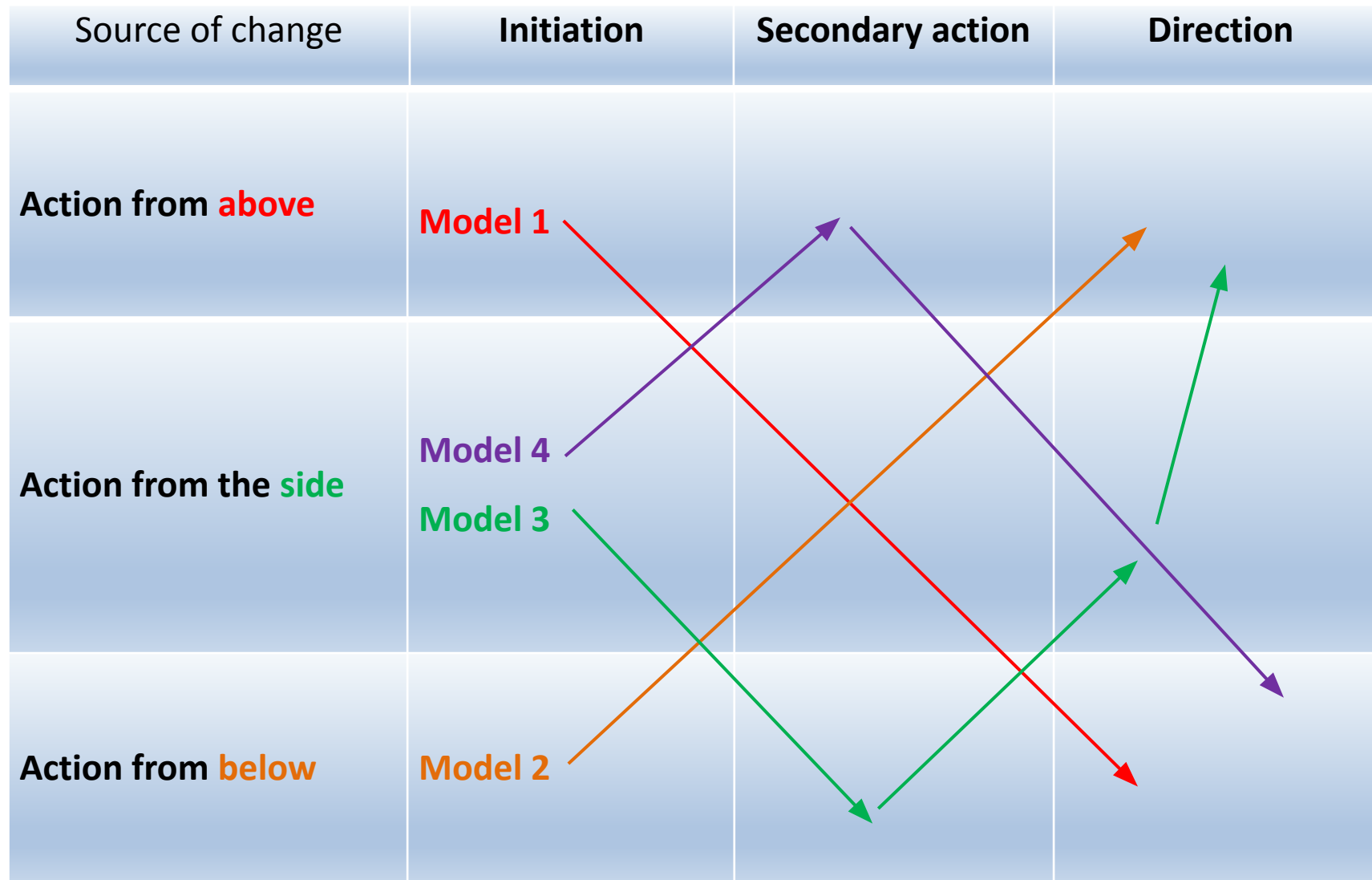
- *local academics, particularly linguists and educators,*
- *mid-level education officers,*
- *local and international staff of:*
 - *INGOs,*
 - *UN & other multilateral agencies,*
 - *donor-sponsored international development programs & projects*

Actions from the side

- *pilot programs or experiments,*
- *“language”/linguistic development, such as orthographies*
- *curriculum and materials production and elaboration,*
- *technical assistance and funding coordination,*
- *general support to NDL community and school management committees*

Policy change trajectories

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

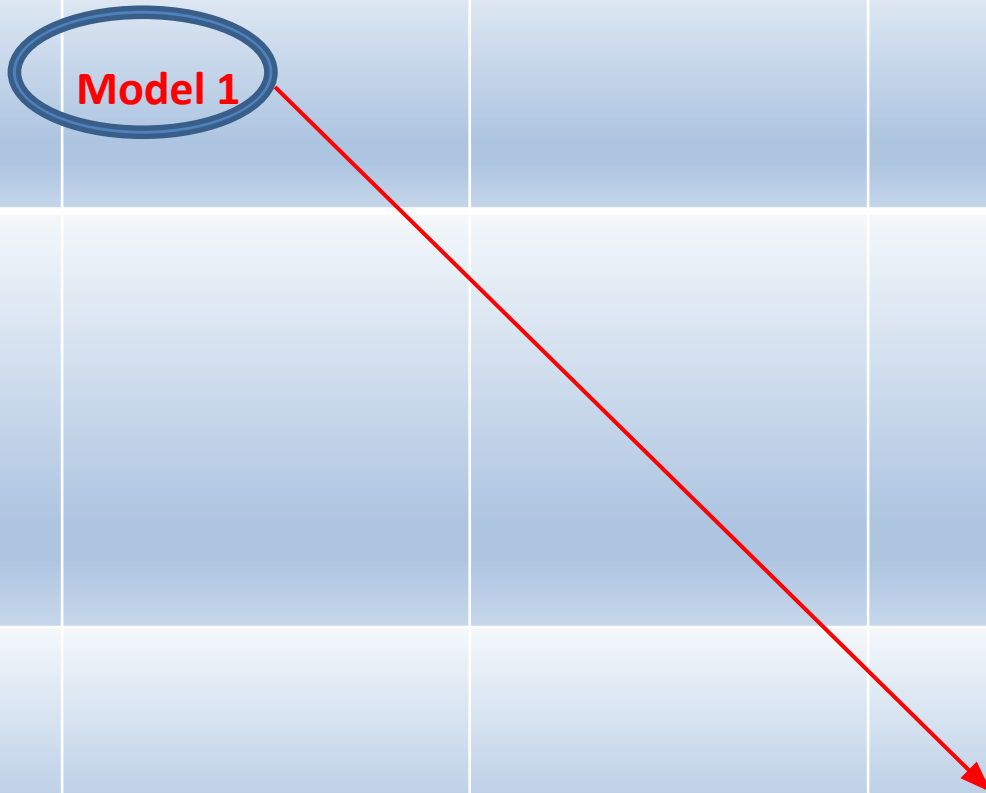


Policy change trajectories

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Source of change	Initiation	Secondary action	Direction
Action from above	Model 1		
Action from the side			
Action from below			

“Top-down”



Model 1: Change from above to the side and below (“top-down”)

Initial phase:

- **Government** passes written policy supporting NDLs in education
- Policy may be rhetoric without a realistic implementation plan.
- If policy is imposed from above on schools, NDL communities themselves may challenge it.

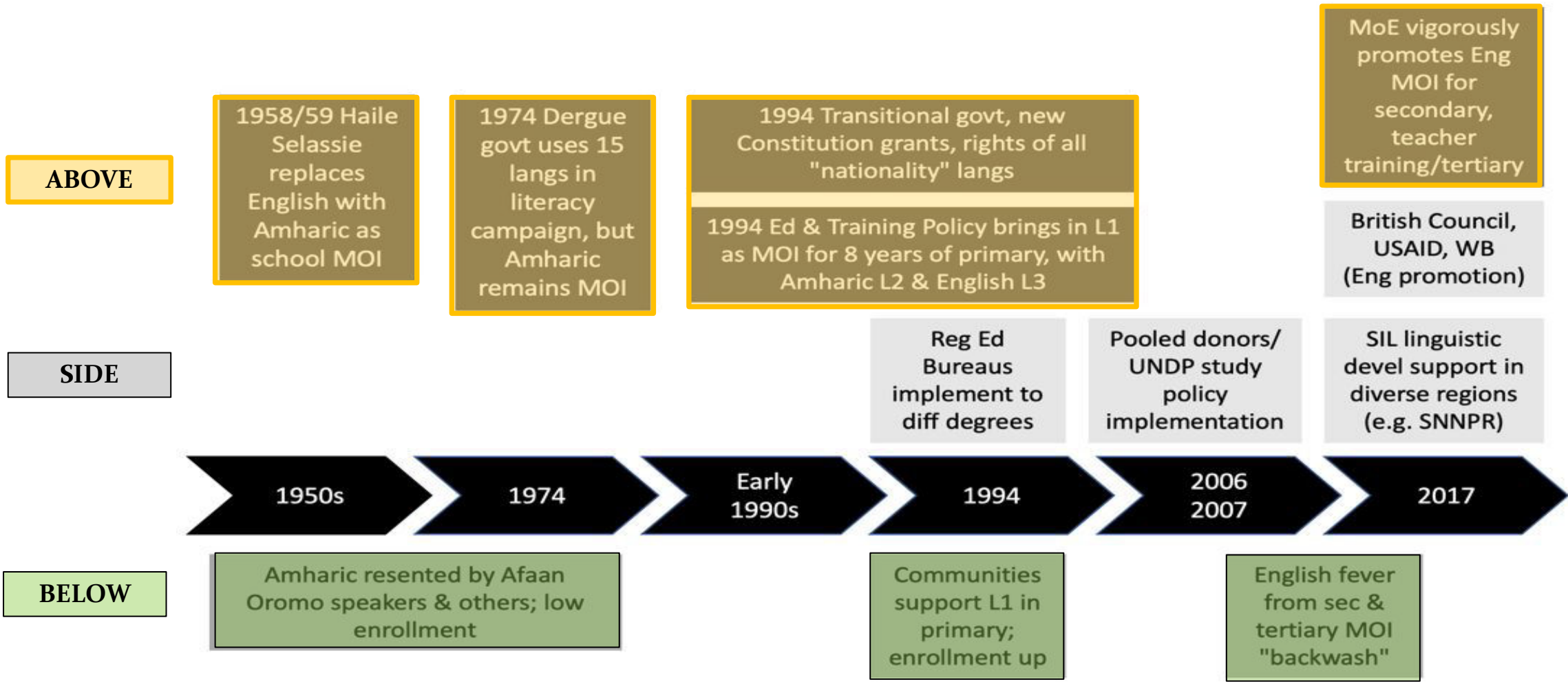
Intermediate phases:

- **Side actors** see the need to put policy into practice or engage to address challenges.
- Side support demonstrates feasibility/effectiveness of MLE (this may take time).
- Side facilitates involvement of actors **from below**.

Possible future direction:

- If all three levels are activated and integrated, sustainable change is possible.
- If actions are still mainly from above, or if policy is not matched with resources, momentum may be lost at the other levels resulting in little or no change in practice.

Language-in-education policy analysis: Ethiopia



Identifying "seminal points"

(Benson 2021)

Policy change trajectories

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Source of change	Initiation	Secondary action	Direction
Action from above			
Action from the side			
Action from below	Model 2		

“Bottom-up”

Model 2: Change from below to the side and above (“bottom-up”)

Initial phase:

- **NDL communities** initiate activities using NDLs in education
- After some time, they join with **side partners** for technical and/or financial support.
- Written policies may or may not exist, but the use of NDLs is not prohibited.

Intermediate phases:

- **Below-side actor alliances** form, expanding implementational activities, and improving the quality of practice.
- Actors from below and side engage **actors from above** to pass more enabling policies and find more resources.

Possible future direction:

- NDL communities still play a major role in implementation.
- Government may support MLE via decentralized implementation.
- The use of NDLs in education may slowly be institutionalized and “nationalized.”

Policy change trajectories

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Source of change	Initiation	Secondary action	Direction
Action from above			
Action from the side	Model 4		
Action from below			

The diagram illustrates a policy change trajectory. It starts at 'Model 4' in the 'Action from the side' row. A purple arrow points from 'Model 4' to the 'Action from above' row, and another purple arrow points from the 'Action from above' row to the 'Action from below' row.

“Advocacy”

Model 4: Change from the side to above, and then to below (“advocacy”)

Initial phase:

- **Side actors** advocate for MLE with **policymakers** based on access/quality arguments.
- Written policies may support only dominant languages in education.
- Side actors initiate small-scale **pilot activities** using NDLS.

Intermediate phases:

- Side actors continue piloting MLE for some time.
- Advocacy continues, focused on policymakers, gradually gaining support.
- Effectiveness convinces more **grassroots actors** to become engaged, and more **actors from above** to become more supportive.

Possible future direction:

- Side actors continue as major implementers.
- Actors from the side and above may become integrated.
- New NDL communities may be included based on government framework/guidelines.
- Existing policies may be strengthened.

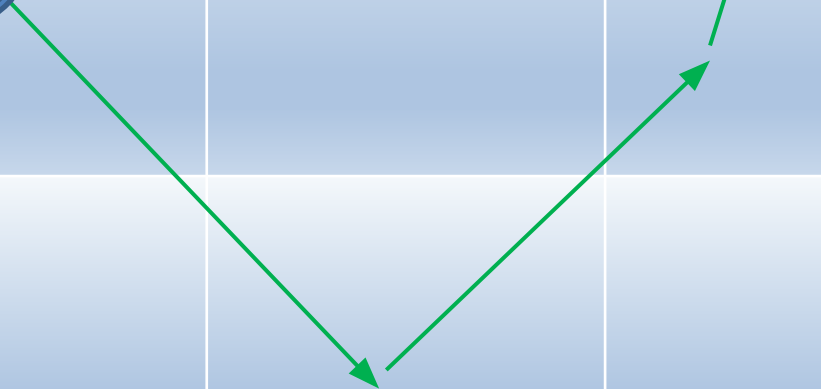
Policy change trajectories

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Source of change	Initiation	Secondary action	Direction
Action from above			
Action from the side	Model 3		
Action from below			

“Piloting”

Model 3



Model 3: Change from the side with below to above (“piloting”)

Initial phase:

- **Side actors** initiate small-scale pilot activities using NDLs.
- Early on, they partner with **NDL communities** for linguistic and community support.
- Written policies may or may not exist, but the use of NDLs is **not prohibited**.

Intermediate phases:

- Side actors continue piloting MLE for some time.
- As activities expand, new NDL communities join.
- Pressure from the side and demand from below leads **actors from above** to adopt supportive policies and allocate more resources.

Possible future direction:

- Side actors continue as major implementers.
- Actors from side and below may become integrated.
- Actors from above may eventually accept more leading roles in bringing NDLs into education.
- Existing policies may be strengthened.

Language-in-education policy analysis: Philippines (Dekker, 2021)

New American Colonizers establish public education for all in English only

DepEd initiated compromise to use L1 as supplement for English

DepEd included local languages for Grade 1 & 2 as a result of local studies.

DepEd initiated BE in Tagalog & English to create space for Philippine language and develop unity around one identity.

DepEd initiated EO #74 for MTB MLE as a result of local studies & advocacy.

Republic Act 10533 Solidified official commitment to MTB MLE

ABOVE

Politicians advocate for RA 10533 to ensure sustainability of EO #74

Local scholars decry English language dominance and advocate for MTB MLE

SIDE

Academe advocate for use of local languages in school

High level govt officials, NGOs, INGOs, advocate for MTB MLE

Multiple local language pilot programs initiated with great success.

Elite argue against MTB MLE.

1900

1939

1948 on

1957

1974

2009

2013

BELOW

Pilot programs explore value of MTB MLE while societal ideologies support English only ed.

Parents, teachers and principals embrace and resist MTB MLE Policy based on ideologies, training opportunities, and materials.

A sunset scene with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm orange and yellow glow across the sky. The sun is partially obscured by a layer of clouds. Below the horizon, there are several layers of dark, silhouetted mountains, creating a sense of depth and tranquility. The overall mood is peaceful and grateful.

ขอบคุณครับ

Kiitos!

Thank you!

Case studies from:

- ❑ **Myanmar** by Non Sorn & Sam Marip
- ❑ **The Philippines** by Maria Mercedes Arzadon
- ❑ **Thailand** by Kirk Person

Myanmar

Non Sorn &
Sam Marip



**THE DUAL ROLE OF
EBEPS AS ABOVE
AND BELOW ACTORS
IN THE QUEST FOR
MTB-MLE IN
MYANMAR**

7th Myanmar
Conference

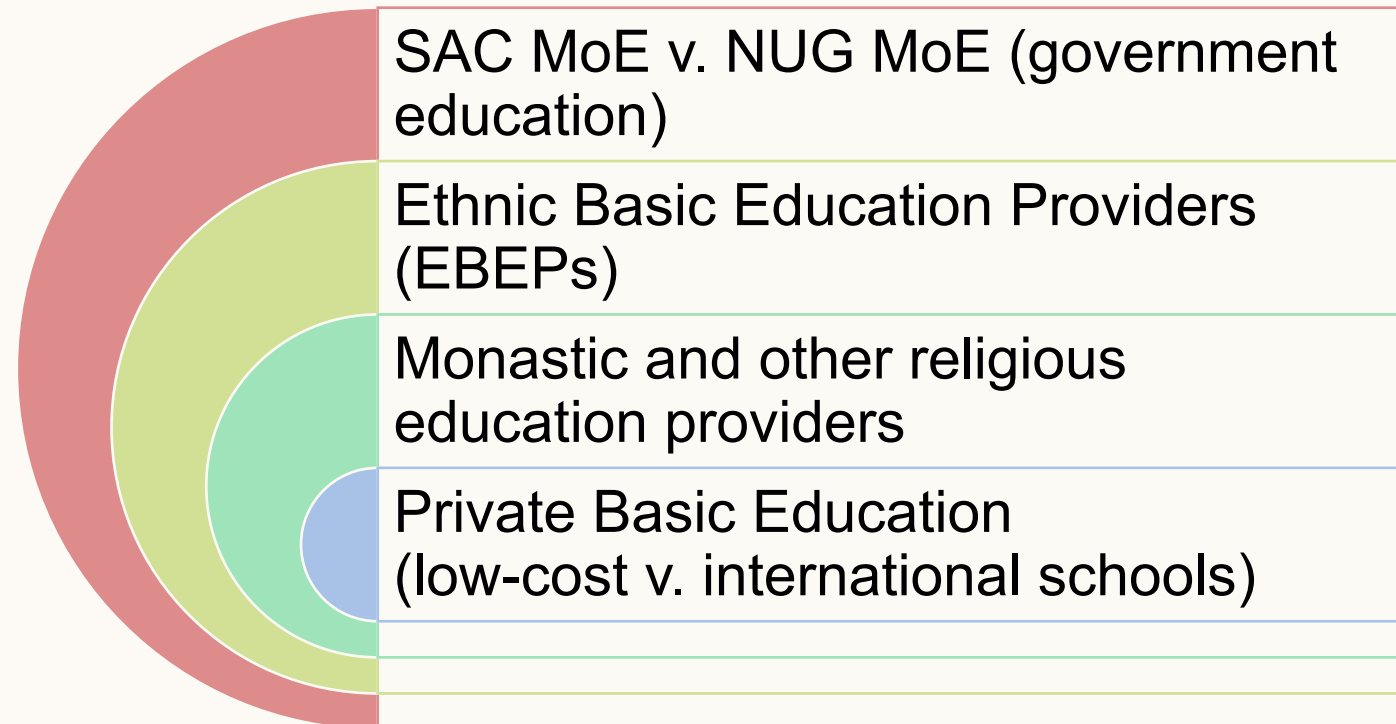
4-5 October 2023

OVERVIEW

- Introduction to Languages-in-Education Landscape in Myanmar and Ethnic Basic Education Providers
- Languages-in-Education: action from above, below, or side?
Mon and Kachin Case Studies

EDUCATION PROVIDER LANDSCAPE IN MYANMAR

Education landscape split further due to the 2021 coup d'etat:



GOVERNMENT-LED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

- SAC and NUG MoE Programs: Top-Down Policy & Implementation
- Burmese to English bilingual transition model (not fully implemented)
- National languages not included as a medium of instruction at national basic education schools
- Local Curriculum Programme with some national languages as subject
- Recent revision by SAC to National Education Law in October 2022 removing provision to include ethnic language as a classroom language alongside Burmese

WHO ARE ETHNIC BASIC EDUCATION PROVIDERS?

Education providers in ethnic states and areas led by ethnic communities

- Often governed by ethnic resistance organizations (EROs)
- Two of the largest EBEPs are the Kachin Education Department (**KED**) and Mon National Education Committee (**MNEC**).
- Model of MTB-MLE dependent on organization: ethnic language (e.g., Mon or Jinghpaw) + Burmese + English
- Variety of curricula: some have EBEP-own curriculum or hybrid MoE/EBEP curriculum that will use mother tongue as main medium of instruction
- EBEPs serve over 100,000 students across ethnic areas

EBEPS AS BOTTOM-UP ACTORS

Led & influenced by ethnic communities

Start with communities to create new languages-in-education programs where Ethnic languages and culture are centered.

Lead advocacy with communities for MTB-MLE with ethnic languages as it is still not widespread

After starting with community, promote MLE advocacy towards the top

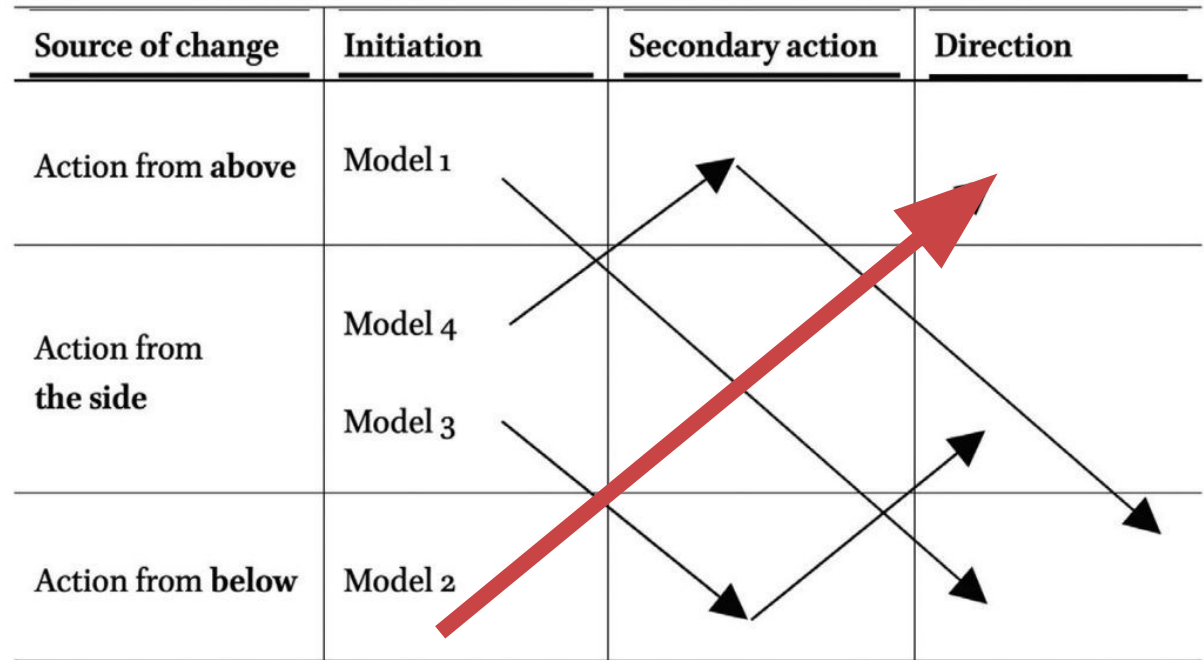



FIGURE 1.2 Change trajectories by where they originate and where they are headed

Figure from Kosonen & Benson (2021)



**Ethnic Basic
Education Providers
and their role in
leading non-dominant
language inclusion in
Education:**

**Mon and Kachin
Case Studies**

EVOLUTION OF MON EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF PROLONGED CONFLICT

- First established in 1972 as an education department of the New Mon State Party (NMSP), long-standing Mon ERO based in SE Myanmar
 - Mon National Education Committee (MNEC) as a steering committee formed in 1992, and became a member of NEC (later National Health and Education Committee – NHEC)
- Bilateral ceasefire agreement with the military in 1995, which also includes agreement related to education (students allowed to take matriculation exams, transfer to MoE schools, etc.)
 - Signed NCA (Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement) in early 2018

EVOLUTION OF MON EDUCATION IN THE CONTEXT OF PROLONGED CONFLICT CONT.

- Before 2014, MNEC steering committee members were all from NMSP,
 - in 2014 a “hybrid” approach adopted to also include religious leaders, CSOs, and wider Mon communities
- Until recently, supported select MoE (post-) primary schools to teach Mon literacy and history
- Uses own curriculum to teach most of primary education Mon MT-based, and a few subjects (Mon language and history) at secondary level
 - Uses MoE textbooks to teach Burmese in primary schools, and almost all of secondary curriculum; English taught as a subject across all levels
- As of 2022, serving over 13,000 students across SE Myanmar, 1.5% non-Mon students

THE ROLE OF MNEC IN MON SOCIETY



BOTTOM-UP

- MNEC with the community organizes/establishes Mon MTB-MLE schools responding to
 - effects of intense armed conflicts on education in Mon areas (displacements, investment/access declining, prevalent economic hardships)
 - increasingly centralized, assimilationist national education (little to no teaching of/in Mon in MoE schools)
- Engages/collaborates with other EBEPs, and other side actors for recognition, funding, systems strengthening and overall MTB-MLE advocacy with wider communities and to NMSP and MoE
 - MPs, religious organizations, CSOs, (inter)national specialists, UN organizations/INGOs

THE ROLE OF MNEC IN MON SOCIETY

- Provides “de facto” protection and allowances for teacher’s cost of living in certain areas
- Formulates policy frameworks and implementation plans for language progression, curriculum, assessment, and teacher training, and overall strategic planning and operations (incl. MTB-MLE capacity building thru a BBCD program)
- Assigns both NMSP and non-NMSP members in different positions across its ed dept and district/township offices
- Employs “de facto” standard Mon as a base for MNEC education
 - literary/formal form over colloquial/informal speech
 - linguistic diversity in the classroom managed informally – awareness increased among teachers with the development and introduction of inclusive education guidelines for MNEC schools in recent years



TOP-DOWN

THE KACHIN EDUCATION LANDSCAPE 37

Ethnic Revolutionary Organization	Religious Institutions	Civil Society Organizations
<p>Kachin Independent Organization Education Department – KED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established in 1992 however KIO has been providing Education service since 1964 - Currently running about 200 schools - Started its own new curriculum (MTB-MLE) 	<p>Sam Mung Jinghpaw Wunpawng Hkalup Hpung Ninghtawn (SJM – CBE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Kachin Baptist Association of Shan State (SJM) began its Church Based Education program in 2013 - Developed MTB-MLE primary curriculum 	<p>Ningshawng Social Institute (NSI)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a branch of Kachin Education Foundation, founded in 2013 - started providing educational service for community/church-based education (CBE) schools in Kachin State since 2015 (30 schools)

Kachin Education Consortium (KEC):

- KED, SJM-CBE, NSI + two NGOs (NYEIN Foundation & Metta Development Foundation)
- Formed in 2016 to strengthen MTB_MLE in the Kachin Regions (Kachin State and Northern Shan State)

THE ROLE OF KED IN KACHIN SOCIETY

Actors From Above: KED

- KED conducts *Actions From Above* to implement MTB-MLE in the areas they control with the support from civil society (also a member of KEC)
- Developing a new curriculum (with BBCD team of KEC) using MTB-MLE approach with the aim to completely abandon MOE curriculum which is heavily Burmanized and opposed to MTB-MLE approach
- Decided Jinghpaw as L1 for the current version of curriculum and Developed its own MTB-MLE language progression plan incorporating Burmese as L2 and English as L3 while providing space for other Kachin languages and foreign languages such as Chinese
- Currently starting its pilot schools for the new MTB-MLE curriculum for lower primary level and planning to use it in its all 200+ schools the following year
- Starting to integrate MTB-MLE curriculum in its Institute of Education (teacher training: pre-service)

TOP-DOWN ACTORS

Source of change	Initiation	Secondary action	Direction
Action from above	Model 1		
Action from the side	Model 4 Model 3		
Action from below	Model 2		

FIGURE 1.2 Change trajectories by where they originate and where they are headed

Figure from Kosonen & Benson (2021)

The Dual Role of EBEPs as Above and Below Actors in the Quest for MTB-MLE in Myanmar

Ethnic communities are diverse— not a monolith

Some EBEPs like **KED** function as the education department of their ERO. Decision making from the ERO leaders (sometimes military non-educators) to the community

Other EBEPs like **MNEC** function as the education department but in a hybrid-approach, semi-led by the ERO as well as other CSOs and the wider Mon communities

The main languages of instruction for EBEP schools are often the dominant ethnic language in the community

Language standardization of variants

EBEPS AS ACTORS FROM THE SIDE

- Some EBEP staff play two roles: working with the EBEP and with other INGOs and CSOs
- Influence national policy through Mon and Kachin experts and educators
- Like other EBEPs, MNEC and KED collaborate with other EBEPs, CSOs, and faith-based organizations (monasteries/monks and churches) to strengthen their systems

APPLYING KOSONEN & BENSON (2021) THEORETICAL MODELS OF LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY CHANGE TRAJECTORIES

MTB-MLE technical assistance and advocacy from the **side** follow both **Model 4** and **Model 3**

MTB-MLE programming with EBEPs must target both the top and bottom

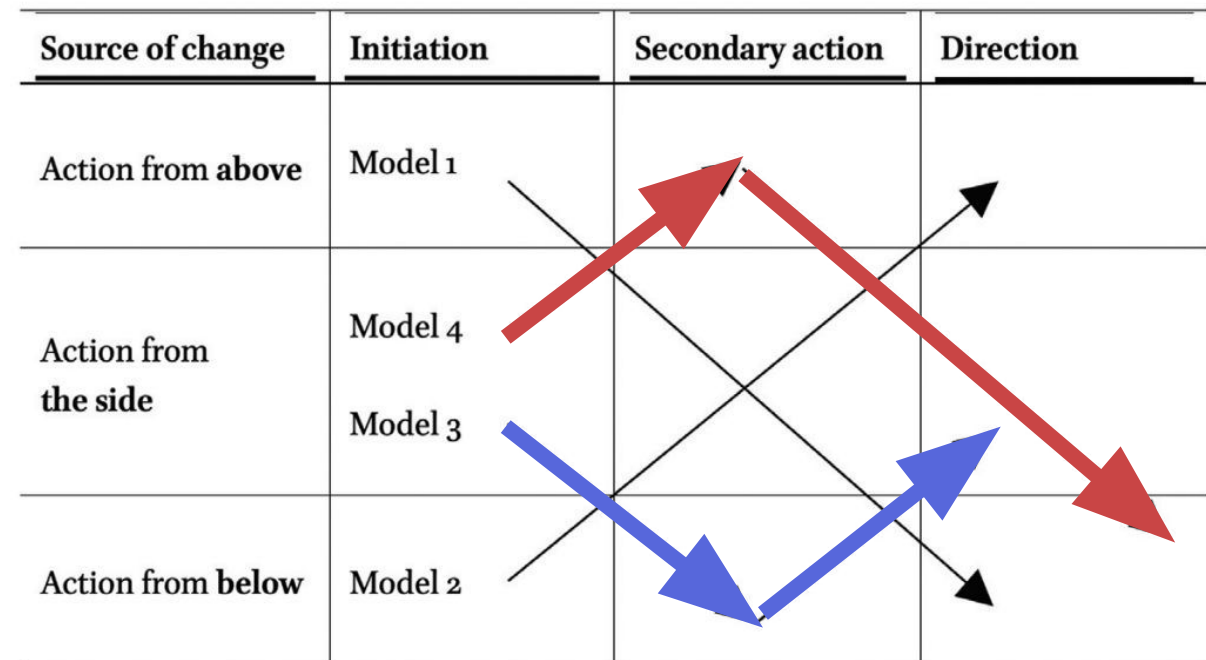
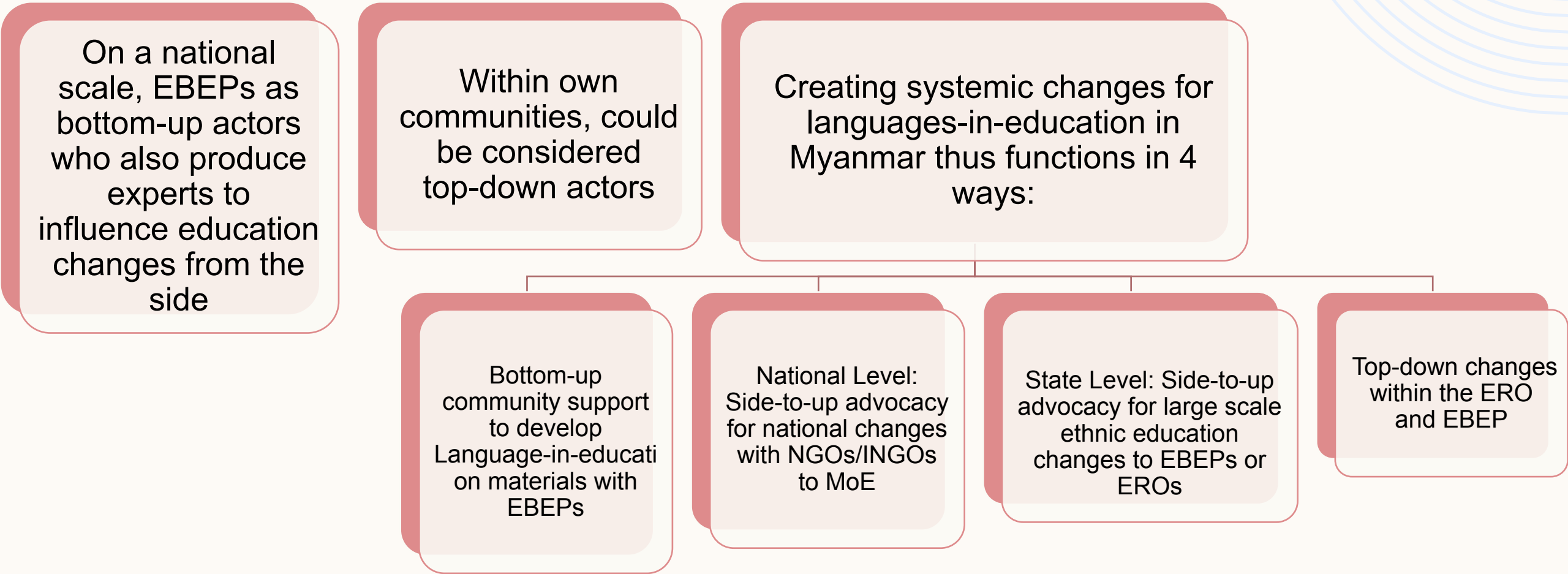


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Figure from Kosonen & Benson (2021)

CONCLUSIONS

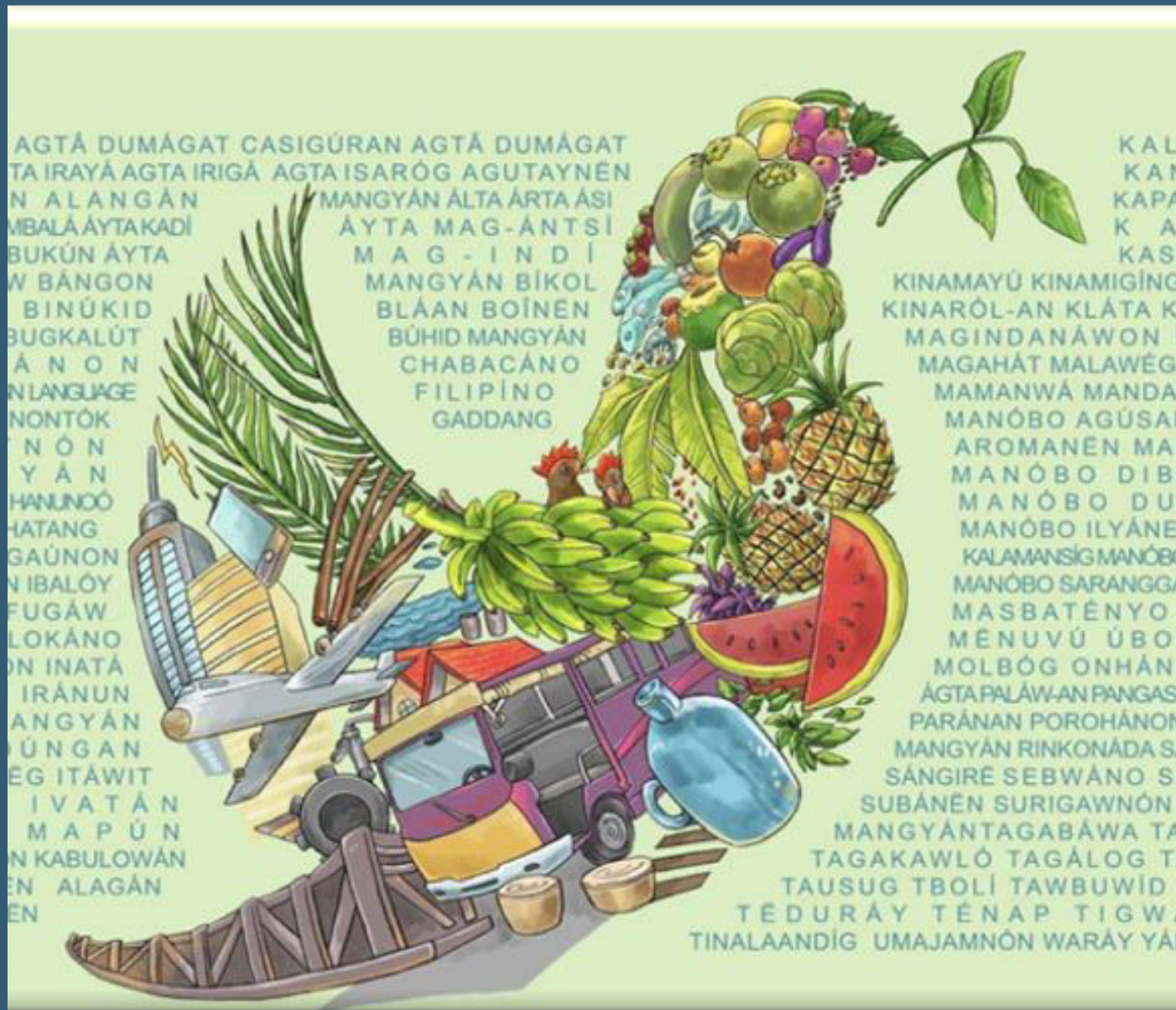


THANK YOU

The Philippines

Maria Mercedes Arzadon





LANGUAGE-IN-EDUCATION POLICY CHANGE TOWARDS MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION (PHILIPPINES)

Maria Mercedes Arzadon, PhD

*College of Education
University of the Philippines*

170+ Talaytayan MLE



PHILIPPINES

Population
114.5 M
15-20% Indigenous
People

Official Languages
Filipino & English

Living languages **182**
(Ethnologue)

Basic Literacy
94%

1521 – Colonized by the
Spaniards
1900 – Americans
1941 – Japanese
1945 – Independence

50,000+
primary schools

Language in Education: Policies & Proponents

1898 The 1st Philippine Republic: Gradual removal of Spanish

1900 English Only (US govt)

Educational Survey of 1925 – Underachievement is due to the English Only Policy

1940 Tagalog to be taught in schools (Philippine Legislative)

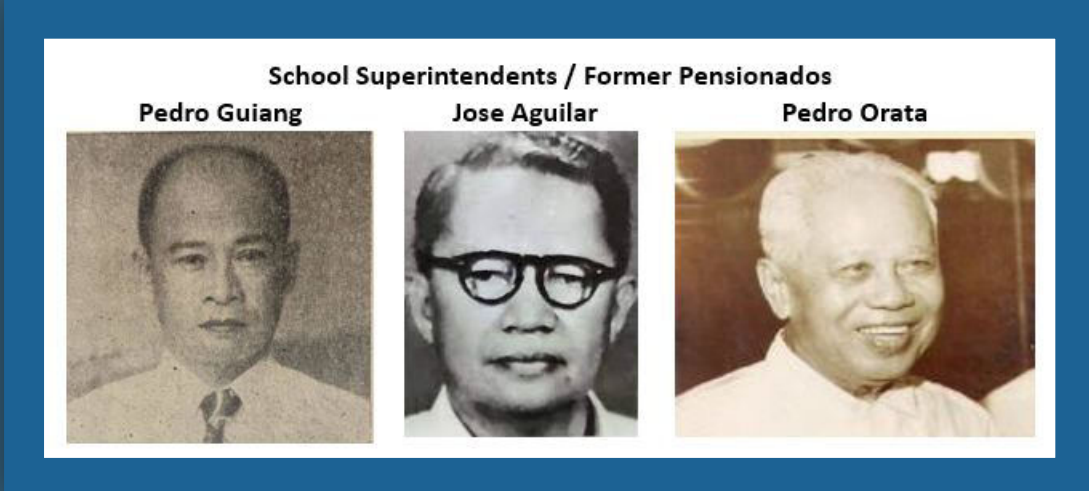
1930s to 1974 Vernacular Language Education thru the Community School Movement

NGOs; indigenous communities; faith-based groups

1980s Community-based L1 education initiatives

Academics, lawmakers, NGOs, IPs, Ministry of Education, government bodies

2009 to present MTB-MLE Indigenous Ed Matatag Curriculum



MTB-MLE POLICIES

Policies #	MTB-MLE Related Content
DO 60 s.2008	Teach English by using the child's mother tongue
DO 74 s. 2009	Institutionalization of MTB-MLE
DO 76 s.2011	Learning Resources Management System
DO 62 s. 2011; 32 s2015	Creation of the Indigenous Peoples Education Office (IPSEO)
DO 90 s. 2011	Guidelines for funding and materials development
DO 16 s.2012; 28 s.2013	List of 19 languages to be used as medium of instruction and MT subject
DO 7 s.2015	Teacher hiring qualification – can speak the community language
DO 12 s.2015	Learning Action Cells for Teaching Early Literacy and Numeracy
DO 55 s.2015	Language mapping
DO 42, s. 2017	MLE and Indigenous Education as part of the Standards for Teacher Quality
CMO 74, 76 s 2017-	MTB-MLE and Indigenous Education courses in higher education
DO 21 s.2019	4 Minimal requirements in adding languages as medium of instruction

**PHILIPPINE
LANGUAGES
USED IN
SCHOOLS**

**19 + 100
MORE**

Existing: Akeanon, Bikol, Chavacano, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Ivatan, Kapampangan, Kinaray-a, Maguindanaon, Maranao, Pangasinense, Sambal, Sunugbuanong Binisaya, Surigaonon, Tagalog, Tausug, Waray, Yakan, Ibanag.

Being developed: Filipino Sign Language; Dumaget Bulos; Onhan; Inati; Central Subanen; Ata Manobo; Blaan; Dumaget Kabulloan; Ini; Panay Bukidnon; Western Subanen; Tboli; Hiliga-Ayta Ambala; Asi; Sama Dilaut; Teduray; Ayta-Mag-antsi; Ayta-Mag-indi; Ayta Magbukun; Sambal Botolan; Agta Casiguran; Ibaloy; Kankanaey; Finontok; Kalanguya; Karao; Faratok; Ferwang; Maeng; Muyadan; Vanaw; Cuyunen; Minamanwa; Binanwaon; Kinamayu; Binukid; Inuyayamamnon; Tinigwahanon; Minatigsalog; Minanubu; Hinigaonon; Ata; Bagobo Klata; Bagobo Tagabawa; Obu Manuvu; Mandaya (Areola, 2021)

CAPACITY BUILDING

- Conferences,
- Seminar-workshops
- Learning Action Cells
- Mentoring
- Learning by doing
- Narrating personal and social transformations





- Local/community-based production of multilingual materials, especially storybooks (teachers, local artists, printers)
- L1 & bridging primers
- Local literacy practices
- Online repositories
- Incentive systems



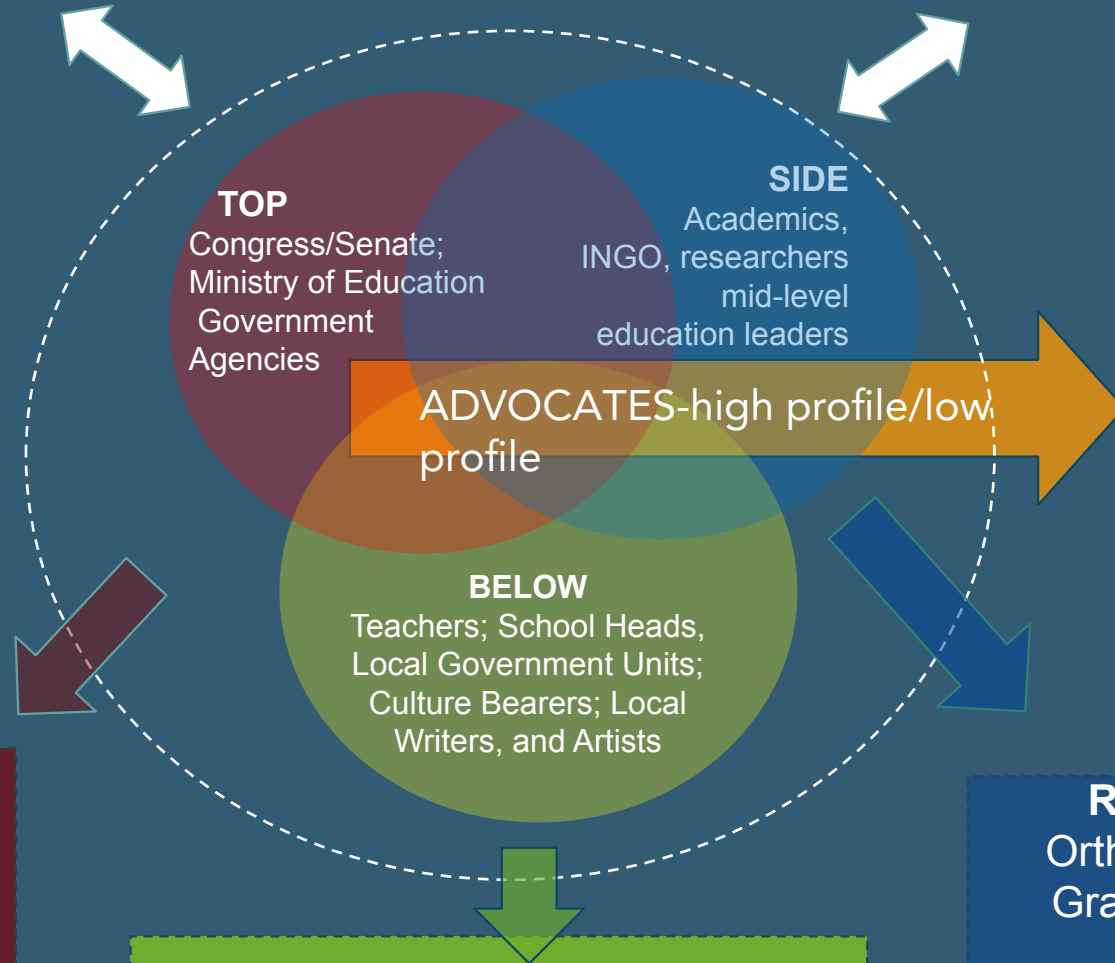
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S INITIATIVES

- MLE for literacy, identity affirmation, and language revitalization
- Exemplary case: Blaan Indigenous People
- Kindergarten to Grade 10 – regular blocks of time for learning Blaan language and culture from culture bearers



Enabling / Disabling Structures
language ideologies, global standards, market, identity politics

MLE Actors, Actions and Enabling and Disabling Structures



Sustainable, resilient, flexible policies and practices
Inter-sectoral mobilization
Long-term planning
Communications strategy

Policies and Standards
Statement of Support
Curriculum, Hiring,
Training, Resources

School-Community Initiatives
mentoring, literacy practices, local knowledge & folklore; contextualization, cultural activities, local media, trade and governance

Research & Resources
Orthographies, Dictionaries,
Grammar Guides, Learning
Resources
Monitoring and Evaluation

12 YEARS AFTER

**Group asks Marcos:
Reconsider English language
as the medium of instruction
in basic education**



[READ FULL DETAILS HERE!](#)



LAWMAKER PRODS DEPED: SUSPEND MOTHER TONGUE POLICY

BAGUIO City Rep. Mark Go has filed a bill seeking to suspend the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based-Multilingual Education Policy.

DANG SAMSON GARCIA / 5 SEPTEMBER 2022



MARK GO
BAGUIO CITY REPRESENTATIVE

DepEd Adjusts K to 10 Curriculum, Excludes Mother Tongue as a Separate Subject

by Janice / August 11, 2023

On Thursday, Aug. 10, the [Department of Education \(DepEd\)](#) announced a significant revision to its K to 10 curriculum. The mother tongue, once regarded as a separate learning area or subject, has been removed in the newly introduced educational framework.

During the press briefing that followed the curriculum's official launch, DepEd Undersecretary and Spokesperson Michael Poa clarified, "What we removed was mother tongue as a subject but not mother tongue as a medium of instruction pursuant to the K to 12 law."

CURRICULAR CHANGES

2012 CURRICULUM

- Mother tongue is the main medium of instruction from K to Gr 3; mother language transition from Grade 4 to 6
- Grades 1-3 subjects: Mother Tongue, Filipino and English

2024 CURRICULUM

- Emphasis on the goal: Learners develop oracy and basic literacy in L1, Filipino, and English;
- Grade 1 subjects: Language, Reading and Literacy based on the learners' L1
- Grade 2 onwards: Filipino and English; L1 as support language

SENATOR WANTS TO REDEFINE APPLICATION OF MOTHER TONGUE AS MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION

September 30, 2023 • 1 min read



By Dang Samson Garcia

Senate Bill 2457 “Redefining the Application of MTB-MLE”

- “faithful implementation of MTB-MLE”
- MLE only for monolingual classes from K - Grade 3, informed by language mapping
- must benefit the ethnic minority groups

POLICY CHANGE TRAJECTORIES

INITIAL PHASE (PILOT MLE SCHOOLS)

- Side actors plan for small-scale pilot MLE in selected districts; the use of NDL is not prohibited;
- Extensive preparation and social marketing
- Positive results – improved learning outcomes, interest from various actors

INTERMEDIATE PHASE (LARGE SCALE MLE)

- Side actors work with top elected actors in creating policy statements for MLE
- Large-scale, nationwide and top-down implementation
- Providing enormous logistical support for the 50,000+ schools, especially in linguistically diverse communities

POLICY CHANGE TRAJECTORIES

CONSEQUENCES OF LARGE SCALE IMPLEMENTATION

- Mixed results depending on contextual factors: local leadership, advocacy, resources for L1
- Criticisms due to unmet expectations to produce immediate positive results, especially in English-medium international assessments
- Growing number of advocates from the top, side, and below actors
- Top actors: “suspend or remove the MLE policy”
- Advocates from top, side and below: “improve, not remove!”

POSSIBLE FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- More flexible, contextualized and calibrated MLE implementation
- Strengthening the utilization of L1 as support language while using L2
- Rationalization of L1 in various areas (teacher education, social science, cultural enterprise, governance, environment, arts, media, tourism)

Insights

- The initiative from the top can be a game-changer due to the top's tendency to push for large-scale and top-down (enforced) implementation, and it can be:
 - *beneficial - provision of resources, social transformations, impact to other sectors (higher education, tourism, media), localized applications, recruit more advocates*
 - *disadvantageous - sustainability is at risk due to periodic changes in top leadership; unwieldy; MLE is often blamed for every education problem; side and bottom actors can turn complacent*
- Strategic actions for MLE emanate from an expanding community of low profile and high profile advocates from the top, side, and below
- Need for long-term planning for responsive and resilient MLE that can withstand changes in top leadership

Namwaw

Dios ti agngina

Maraming salamat

Thank you

mearzadon@up.edu.ph

Thailand

Kirk Person





Why the top needs the side:

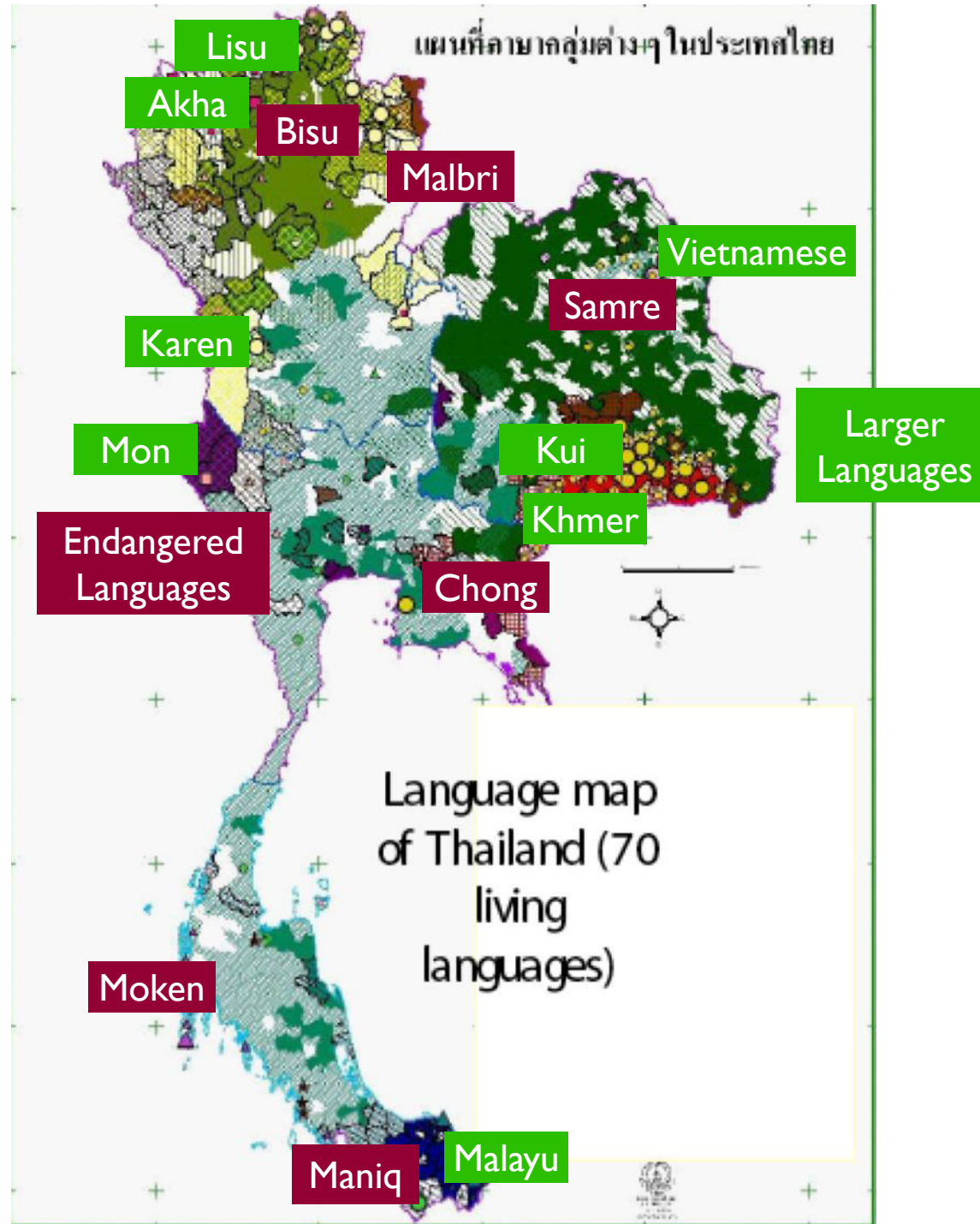
The interplay of state and non-state actors in bringing non-dominant languages into Thai classrooms

Kirk R. Person, SIL International

kirk_person@sil.org

“A multilingual country
that believes itself to be
monolingual”

*Dr. Suwilai Premsrirat
Mahidol University*



Historical Background

- Language not mentioned in recent constitutions
- 24 June 1940 Field Marshal Plaek Pibunsongkram declared Thai the national language (State Convention #9) as part of a large project of “Thaiization”
 - *“Thai people must extol, honor and respect the Thai language, and must feel honored to speak it.”*
 - *“Everyone must hold it to be true that all born as Thai people have the same Thai blood and speak the same Thai language. Place of birth or accent makes no difference.”*





Chinese

- Large migrant population
- 271 schools in urban areas
- Many schools closed, those that survived saw hours of Chinese language study limited to 10/week (1962)
- Families employed private tutors



Patani Malay

- Anglo-Siamese Treaty of 1909
- 1947 “Seven Requests” include Malay as LOI, language of government alongside Thai
- Government refuses, Malay using Jawi script taught in private Islamic schools



Northern Ethnic Minority Groups

- Increased migration from China, Myanmar, Laos mid 20th century
- Christian missionaries launched community literacy programs in multiple languages
- Expansion of government schools focused on Thai language learning



Regional Thai languages

- Lanna script in northwest (preserved in religious domain)
- Issan in northeast
- Tay in south

Groups most impacted by linguistic assimilation policies

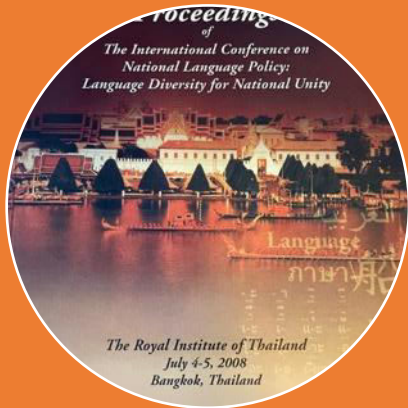
Drafting the National Language Policy (NLP) (2006-2010)

Influenced by Australian National Policy on Languages (1987)

Royal Institute NLP Drafting Committee, with 6 subcommittees:

- Thai for Thai Students and Thai Nationals
- Regional Languages (including ethnic minority languages)
- Languages of Commerce, Neighboring Languages, and Working Languages
- Teaching Thai to Migrants Seeking Employment in Thailand
- Language Needs of the Visually and Hearing Impaired
- Translation, Interpretation, and Localization Standards

Multiple meetings, seminars, conferences involving academics, community members, international experts, Ministries of Culture/Education/Foreign Affairs, National Security Council. Led by the late Dr. Udom Warotamasikkhadit of the Royal Institute (now Royal Society)



Academic Interest

- Endangered language revitalization (1990s)
- UN-related conferences
- Power of Language Conference (2006) (Malones, Kosonen)+ separate David Bradley input to Dr. Udom Waromakasadit of The Royal Institute
- MOE, Mahidol University, Thailand Research Fund, Royal Institute



Political Situation

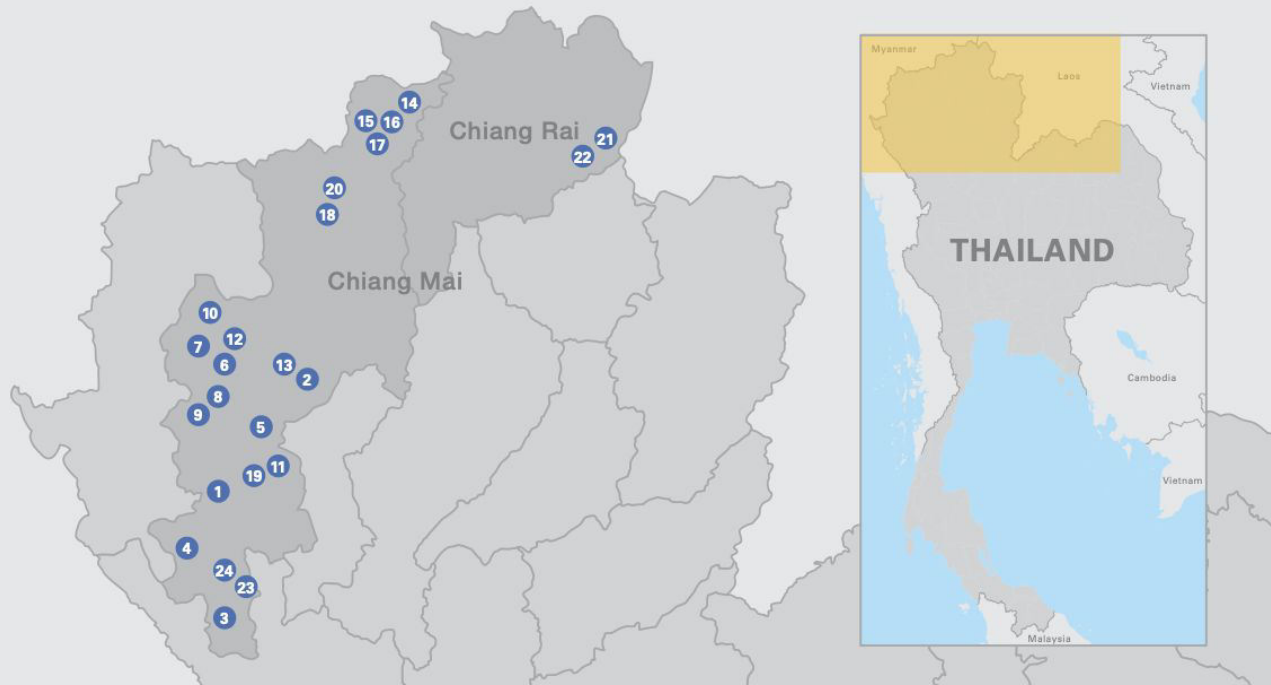
- Violence in the Deep South (2004 onward)
 - National Security Council, MOE recommend “bilingual education”
- International pressure on MOE to address statelessness (ethnic minority/migrant children) and out-of-school children
- English, Chinese for economy



Pilot Projects

- Om Koi Pwo Karen-Thai MLE (2003)
 - MOE (Non-formal Ed), UNESCO, SIL, Payap University
- Patani Malay-Thai MTB-MLE in South (2006)
 - MOE, Mahidol University, UNICEF, Thailand Research Fund
- Hmong, Mon, Karen MTB-MLE in North (2008)
 - FAL, PCF

Motivation for, input to policy change



New Dawn Over the Mountains:
Improving Access and Equity through Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education for Thailand's Ethnic Children

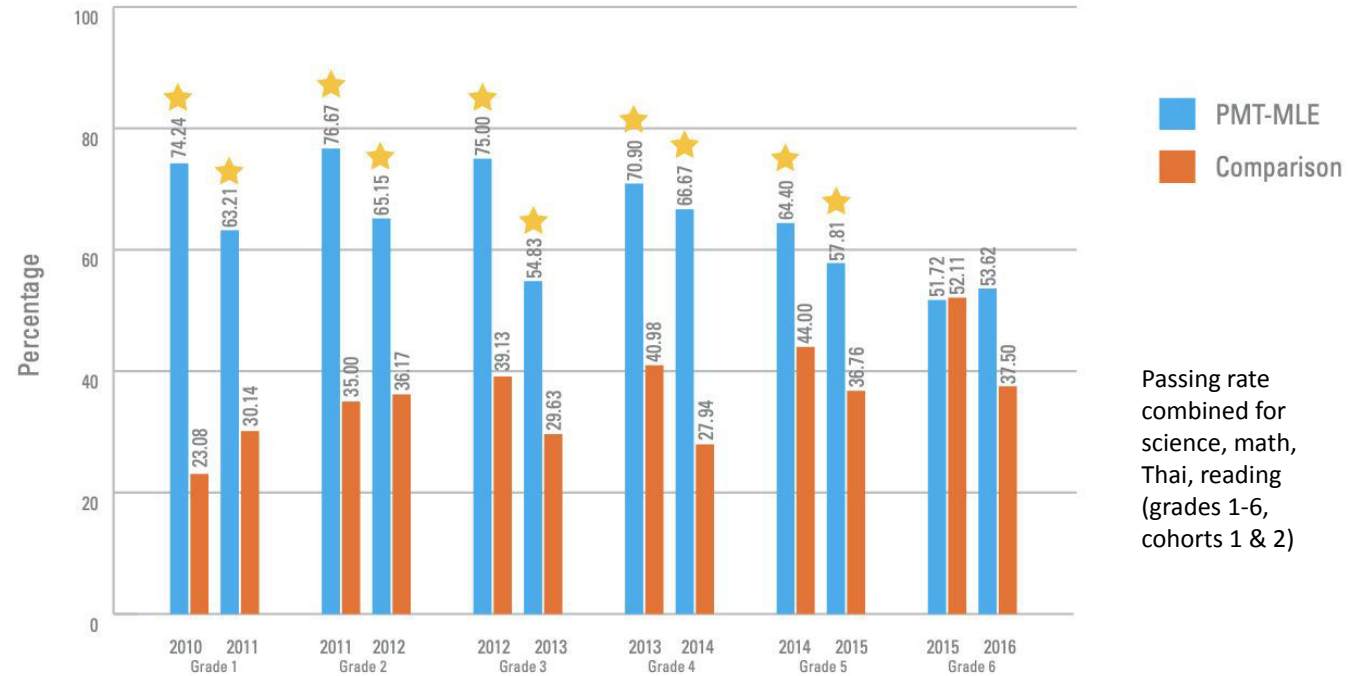
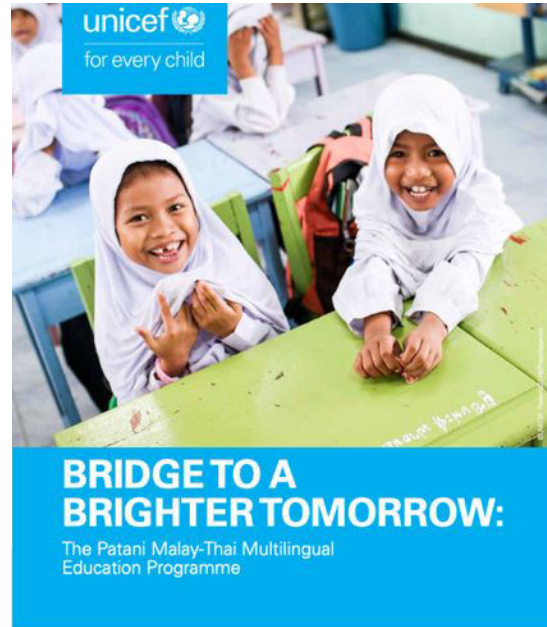
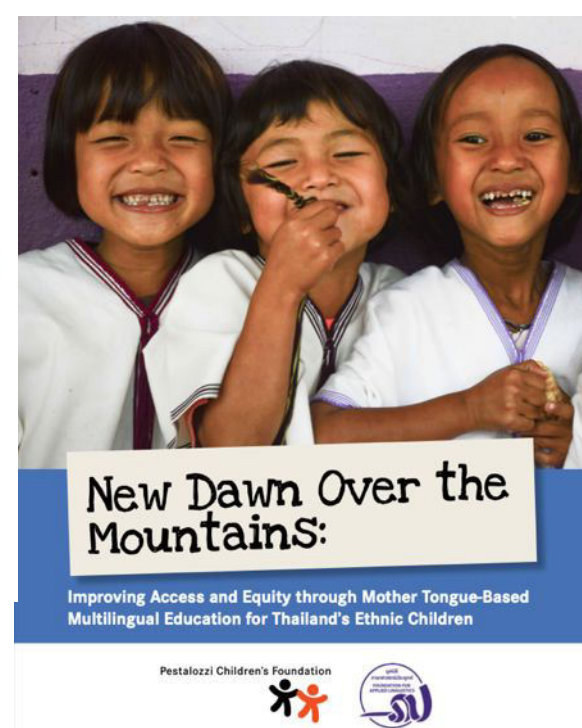
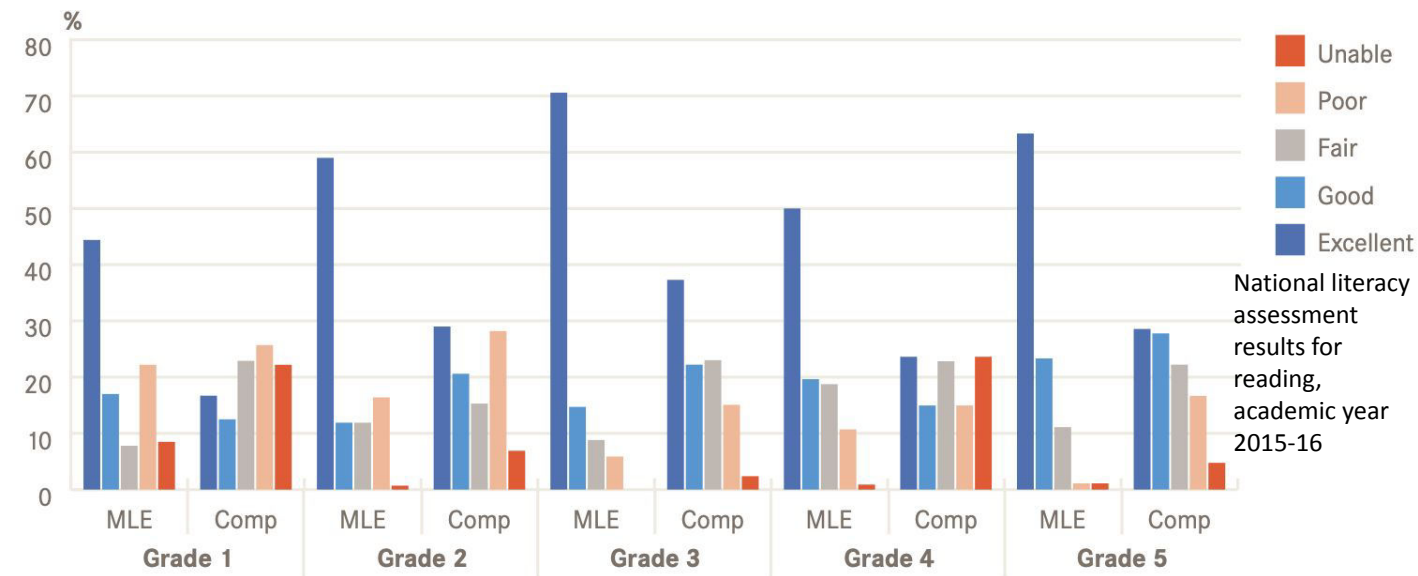
Pestalozzi Children's Foundation



BRIDGE TO A BRIGHTER TOMORROW:
The Patani Malay-Thai Multilingual Education Programme

unicef for every child





UNESCO KING SEJONG LITERACY PRIZE
International Literacy Day
8 September 2016



1945-2015



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

• Organisation
• des Nations Unies
• pour l'éducation,
• la science et la culture

RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF LANGUAGES AND CULTURES OF ASIA
THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND

Approving the NLP

- 2010: Prime Minister Abhisit approves, but no implementation plan
- 2012: Prime Minister Yingluck approves, creates implementation planning committee
- 2012-19: Political uncertainty, sporadic work with UNICEF help (2019)
- 2020: Implementation planning committee forwards to the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESB); revisions
- 29 June 2021: Cabinet approves “National Language Policy Action Plan”
 - BUT the approval is for current 5-year plan, expiring 2024

จึงเรียนมาเพื่อโปรดพิจารณา หากเห็นชอบขอได้โปรดสั่งการให้ราชบัณฑิตยสถาน
ดำเนินการจัดทำแผนยุทธศาสตร์ตามนโยบายภาษาแห่งชาติต่อไป.

พิมพ์ฉันทน์
(นายอภิสิทธิ์ เวชชาชีวะ)
นายกรัฐมนตรี
๗ ก.พ. ๕๖

นางสาวกานทิ สุชัยยะ
(นางสาวกานทิ สุชัยยะ)
เลขาธิการราชบัณฑิตยสถาน

พลเอก ประยุทธ์ จันทร์โอชา
(พลเอก ประยุทธ์ จันทร์โอชา)
รองนายกรัฐมนตรี

ลงนามแล้ว
(นางสาวยิ่งลักษณ์ ชินวัตร)
นายกรัฐมนตรี
๒๓ ก.พ. ๕๖

Cabinet NLP Resolution Quotes

- “At the heart of the National Language Policy is the idea that learning development can be accomplished by promoting the study and use of the **mother tongue** as a strong foundation, linked to the study and use of the Thai language....”
- One Goal: “promoting the use of **local language(s)** in education alongside the Thai language.”
- One Indicator: “Increase in the percentage of educational institutions using [a] **local language** along with Thai language as a medium of instruction.”

Secretariat of the Cabinet. (2021) มติคณะรัฐมนตรีเรื่อง แผนปฏิบัติการด้านนโยบายภาษาแห่งชาติ (พ.ศ. 2564-2565) นร 04 (29 มิถุนายน 2564) Cabinet Resolution on the National Language Policy Action Plan (B.E. 2564-2565) Nor Ror 04 (29 June 2021)

https://resolution.soc.go.th/PDF_UPLOAD/2564/P_404048_19.pdf. Accessed September 29, 2021



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CLOSING THE LEARNING GAP IN MAE HONG SON

The Case for Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education

Annex E: Thailand's New National Language Policy Action Plan

Today (29 June 2021) at 9:00 a.m., General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, presided over a cabinet meeting via video conference system at the PMOC room, 2nd floor, Thai Khu Fah Building, Government House. The following is a summary of the major points discussed:

17. Subject: Request for Approval (draft) National Language Policy Action Plan 2021 – 2022 (B.E. 2564-2565)

The cabinet adopted the proposal of the Office of the Royal Society (ORST) for the national language policy action plan for 2021-2022 (B.E. 2564-2565) by accepting the agencies' recommendations to consider implementing and expediting the draft plan in order to achieve the outcome results as soon as reasonably practicable.

Gist

ORST reported that:

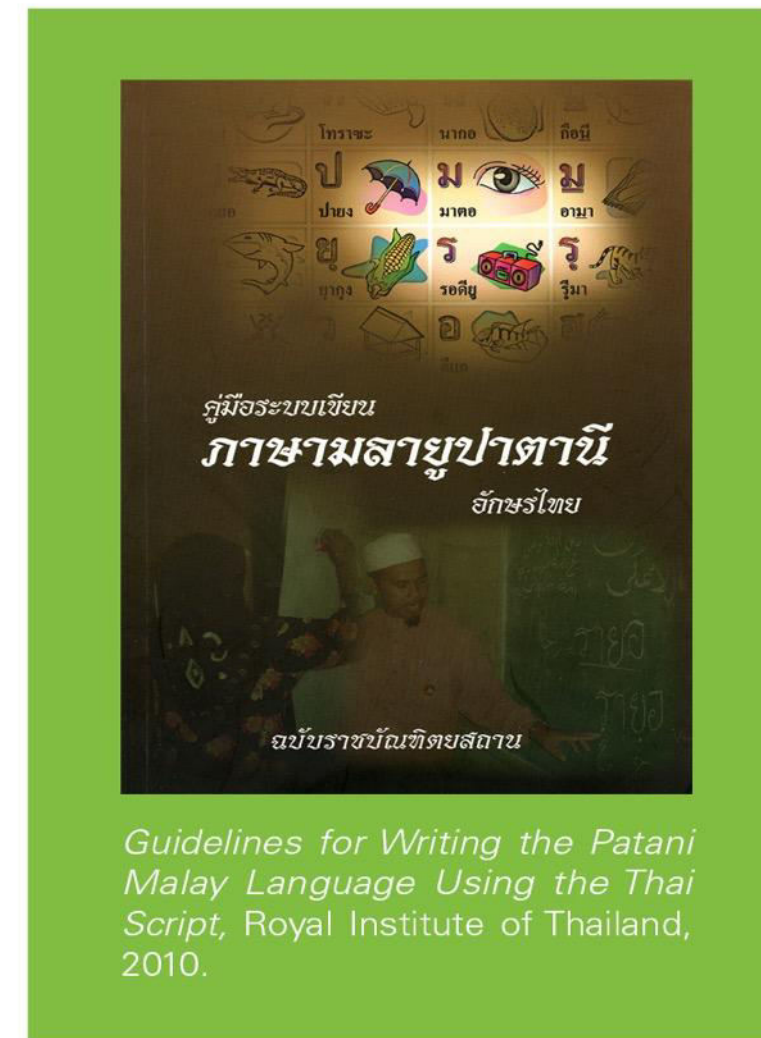
1. ORST has prepared (drafted) the National Language Policy Action Plan (2018-2021) and submitted it to the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) for consideration in accordance with the Cabinet resolutions on 4 December 2017, 15 December 2020 and 27 December 2021, respectively. The following is a synopsis of previous implementation efforts and progress:
 - 1.1 At the meeting of the ORST No. 2/2020 dated 11 March 2020, the (draft) National Language Policy Strategy 2018 – 2021 (B.E. 2561-2564) was approved.
 - 1.2 ORST has proposed the (draft) National Language Policy Strategy 2018 – 2021 (B.E. 2561-2564) to the NESDC, which convened a meeting No. 10/2563 dated 7 October 2020. The members of the NESDC meeting considered and approved the (draft) National Language Policy Strategy 2018 – 2021 (B.E. 2561-2564) with recommendations to ORST to further improve various issues, including
 - (1) The determination of the vision of the National Language Policy should be clear as to whether Thailand will be developed into a bilingual country
 - (2) The title of the document should be adjusted to (draft) Action Plan on ... and the duration of the Action Plan to end in the year 2022 in accordance with the timeline of the Thailand's Master Plans under the 20-Year National Strategy (3) There should be an additional focus on the issue of improving Thai language proficiency across multiple dimensions, with a focus on functional literacy rather than general literacy.
 - (4) It is recommended that the Thai language be able to adapt to the rapidly changing context by adding definitions of modern terminology.
 - (5) Guidelines for learning Thai and local languages should be flexible in accordance with the local context and the needs of the learners.
 - (6) The conservation and knowledge of local languages, along with pride in local languages, should be promoted through a variety of media such as films, dramas, television programs, etc.



Ministry of Education has also modified policies

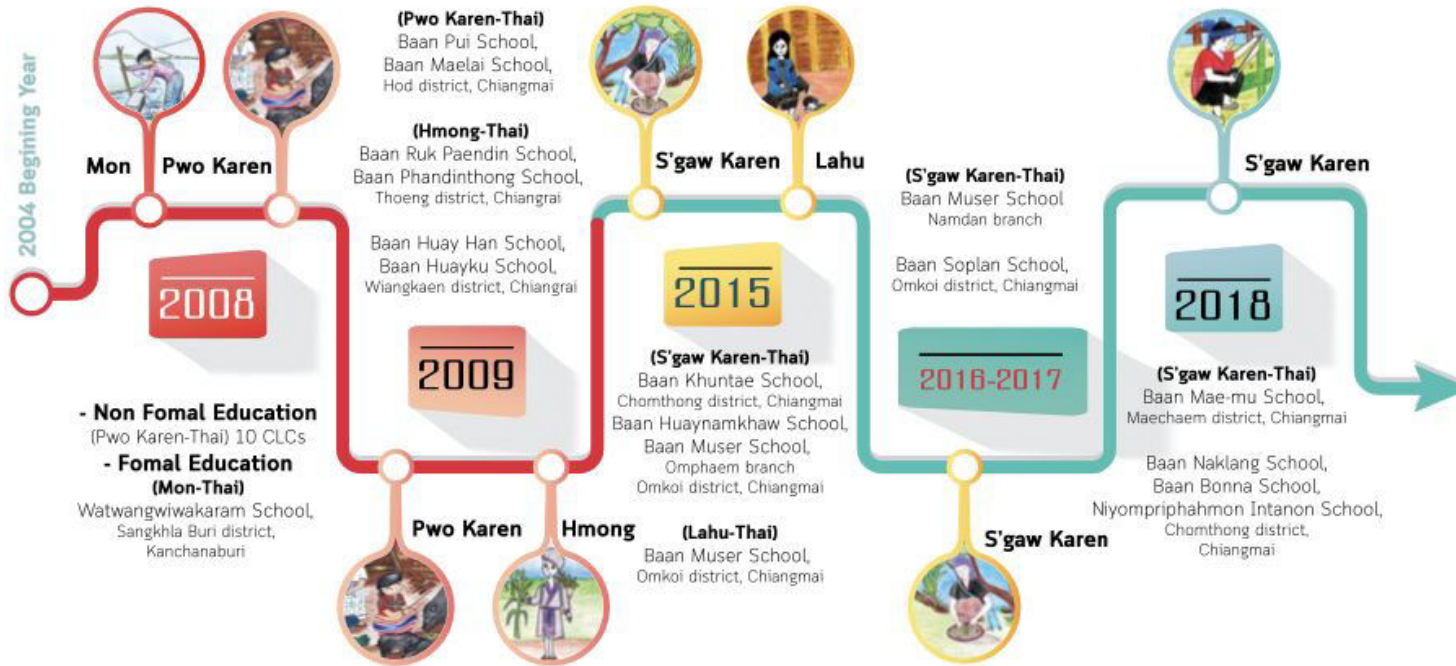
- **National Education Plan (2017–2036):** “teaching and learning by integrating the curriculum in accordance with **local languages**, cultures, and local society...[so that] people in all ages in special areas to read and write Thai and **local languages** ...” (Office of the Education Council 2017)
- **Policy and Focus of the Ministry of Education (2020):** “[primary schools should help students learn] **local languages (mother tongues)** for communication” (MoE 2019).
- **Chiang Mai Education Sandbox Innovation Zone (2018):** Provincial education officials can choose appropriate approaches (MLE or TSL): roughly 100 schools currently involved
- ...and Royal Society has approved 10 Thai-based minority language orthographies

WRITING PATANI MALAY



Patani Malay (left) and Thai alphabet posters, with identical letters circled (Burarungrot 2016: 106)

Development of FAL MTB-MLE



Model	MOE	MHS UNICEF	Languages
1 (K1-P3) "Full" MTB-MLE + TSL	26		Hmong, Pwo Karen, Sgaw Karen, Yellow Lahu, Black Lahu
2 (K1-2) "Partial" MTB-MLE + TSL	5		Sgaw Karen
3 (K1) oral MT only + TSL	10	15	Sgaw Karen
4 TSL	37	10	Multiple
	78	25	103 schools



HOME GROWN TEACHER SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Provide educational opportunities for students in remote areas to become new generation teachers and return to develop their hometown schools with the help of 6 organizations namely ME, VE, ESA, OTEPC, OTEP and EEF.

[Home](#) » [Portfolio](#) » Homegrown Teacher Scholarship Program

OBJECTIVES OF THE PROGRAM



1 Create opportunities for 1,500 new teachers to meet the demand of community schools.



2 Promote coordination between teachers and the organizations.



3 Prepare teachers to be ready for assignments in remote areas.



4 Create a knowledge exchange network to enhance the educational quality of the country.



Hill-tribe schools



Border schools



Island schools



Risk-prone area schools

EXIT
ทางออก



การอบรมเชิงปฏิบัติการ “การศึกษาแบบทวิ-พหุภาษาโดยอาศัยภาษาแม่เป็นฐาน”

(Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education : MTBMLE Training)

ระหว่างวันที่ 25-28 กุมภาพันธ์ 2566

ณ โรงแรมไอเชาะ ขอนแก่น



D-MTB-MLE-TT

(Digitalized Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education Teacher Training)

โครงการการพัฒนาหลักสูตรดิจิทัลการฝึกอบรมครู
เพื่อการจัดการศึกษาตามแนวทางทวิ/พหุภาษา
โดยใช้ภาษาแม่เป็นฐาน

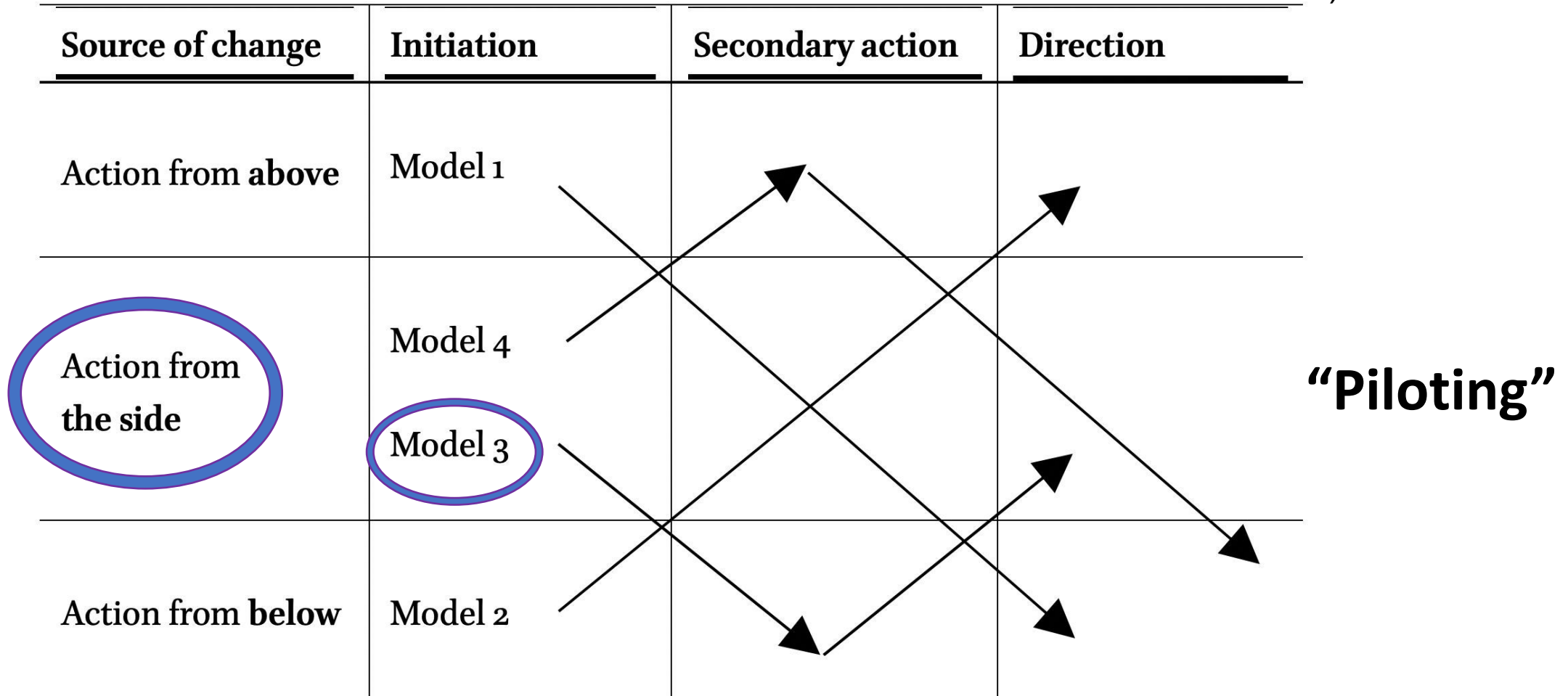


Pestalozzi Children's Foundation



Policy change trajectories

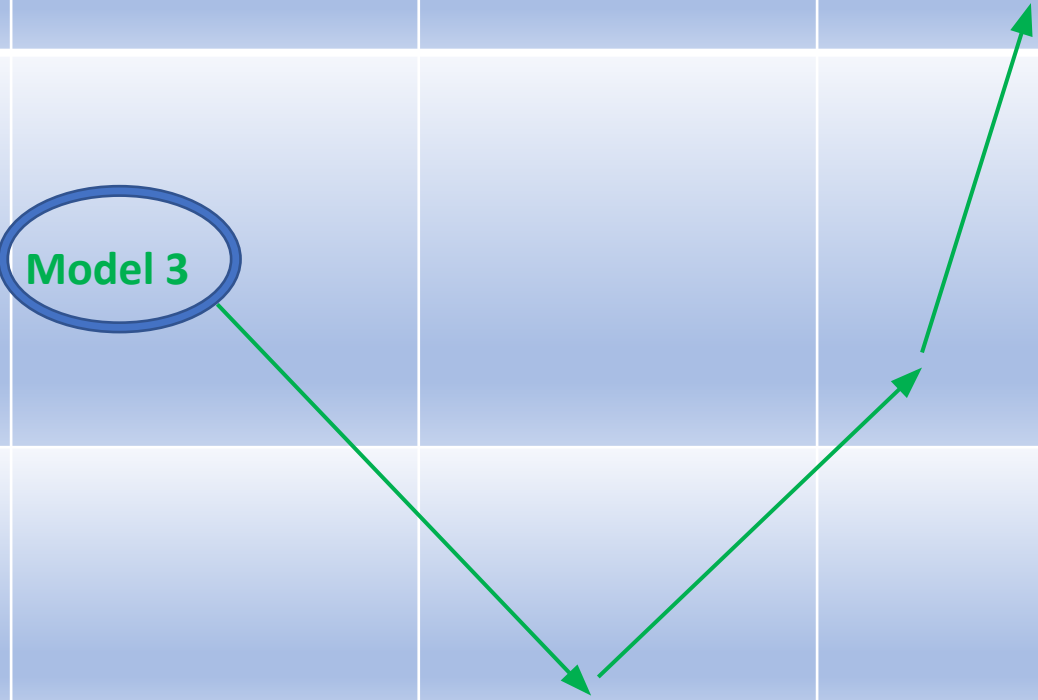
(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)



Policy change trajectories

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Source of change	Initiation	Secondary action	Direction
Action from above			
Action from the side	Model 3		
Action from below			



“Piloting”

Model 3: Change from the side with below to above (“piloting”)

Initial phase:

- **Side actors** initiate small-scale pilot activities using NDLS.
- Early on, they partner with **NDL communities** for linguistic and community support.
- Written policies may or may not exist, but the **use of NDLS is not prohibited.**

Intermediate phases:

- Side actors continue piloting MLE for some time.
- As activities expand, new NDL communities join.
- Pressure from the side and demand from below leads **actors from above** to adopt supportive policies and allocate more resources.

Possible future direction:

- Side actors continue as major implementers.
- Actors from the side and below may become integrated.
- Actors from above may eventually accept more leading roles in bringing NDLS into education.
- Existing policies may be strengthened.

(Kosonen & Benson, 2021)

Thailand

Survey Findings Report

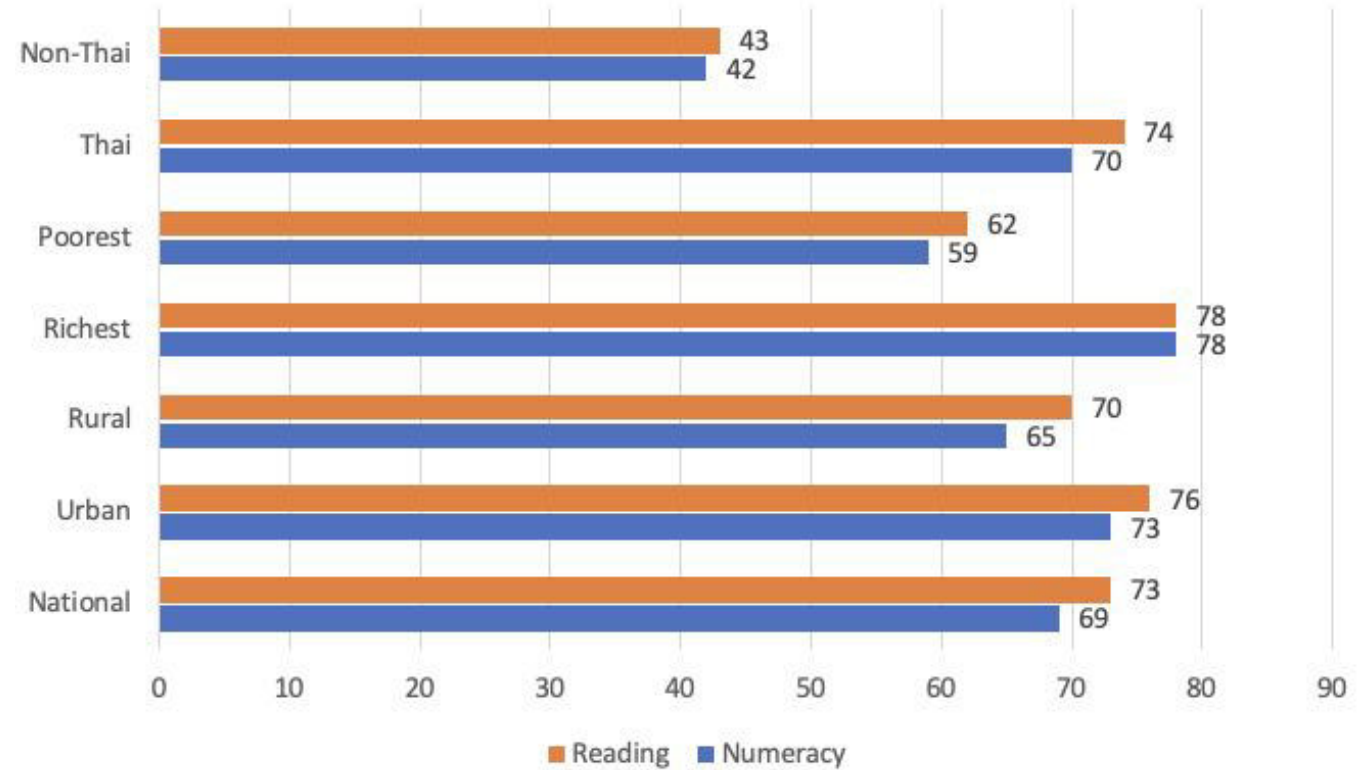
Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey
2019



NSO
National Statistical Office



UNICEF
United Nations Children's Fund



Share of children aged 7 to 14 with foundational reading and numeracy skills (National Statistical Office and UNICEF, 2019)

Next steps

- Government must take more initiative to implement their own policies
 - Facilitate school-based language surveys/maps (linguistic resources of students, teachers)
 - Disaggregate Education data at all levels by home language (as in UNICEF MICS survey)
 - Fund MLE scale-up, including non-conventional paths for NDL speakers to become teachers
- Sides must continue to
 - Lend academic credibility to language revitalization and MLE programs, including cooperation with local universities, organizations
 - Setting the record straight on language acquisition (including and especially English)



Kosonen & Person, 2023

Kosonen, Kimmo & Person, Kirk R. (2023)

What strategies can be used to assist language-in-education policymakers to promote policies that support the use of non-dominant languages in education?

In Trudell, B. and Dekker, D. (Eds.) (2023)

Good Answers to Tough Questions in Multilingual Education, volume 2.

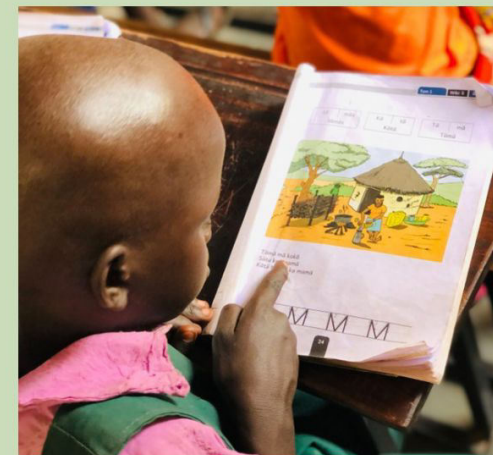
Dallas: SIL International.



Barbara Trudell and
Diane Dekker,
editors



**Good Answers to Tough Questions
in L1-based Multilingual Education
Volume 2**



A scenic background image of a sunset over a mountain range. The sun is a bright yellow circle on the left side of the frame, partially obscured by thin, wispy clouds. The sky transitions from a deep orange near the horizon to a lighter, hazy yellow at the top. The mountains in the foreground and middle ground are silhouetted against the bright sky, creating a sense of depth and tranquility.

ขอบคุณครับ

Thank you!

kirk_person@sil.org

Discussion

Carol Benson

Challenges: Above only or mainly

- There is *no* NDL community ownership;
 - communities themselves may reject change as being discriminatory and preventing access to dominant languages.
- The policy is seen as just *another political move* that comes and goes;
 - school-based actors may exercise their agency not to implement it in the classroom.
- Technical and financial *resources* are *not mobilized*, limiting implementation.

Challenges: Side only or mainly

- Political and/or *state support* is weak or non-existent;
 - activities may be limited to sub-national spaces and kept dependent on external funding.
- Efforts are seen as *academic* or *foreign ideas* external to NDL communities or even anti-government;
 - this may reduce engagement of other actors.
- Community activities are limited to support of *pilot projects* and may be dropped if funding runs out.

Challenges: Below only or mainly

- *Policy support* is non-existent;
 - activities are limited to local spaces and can only continue if they are not politically threatening.
- *Technical resources* are limited, isolating local actors from useful inputs.
- *Financial resources* are limited;
 - activities may depend on the availability of volunteers, whose own time and resources are restricted.

A sunset scene with a bright sun low on the horizon, casting a warm orange and yellow glow across the sky. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. Below the horizon, there are several layers of dark, silhouetted mountain ranges, creating a sense of depth and tranquility.

ขอบคุณครับ

Thank you!