

An Appraisal of Teachers' Guide on MTB MLE

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Review of the Teachers' Guide

- The guide promotes teaching in the children's first language – the language they learned first and understand best
- Vital features of the guide are:
 - Familiarizes readers with the MTB MLE approach towards learning and its benefits
 - Makes the case that students' languages are resources, not problems
 - Emphasizes the invaluable role of the teacher in literacy and their cognitive development in early literacy
 - Presents a variety of strategies, methods, teaching and assessment activities and ideas
 - Connects the multilingual school with the home and the community

Review of the Teachers' Guide

- The guide is comprehensive in which the principles of MTB MLE are carefully explained and embedded in the material
 - Pedagogically sound and appropriate – it contains questions and answers, pre-reading questions at the beginning of each chapter and a reflection section at the end
 - Gives a solid knowledge of MTB MLE, its benefits in promoting a more equitable, inclusive and quality education
 - Provides understanding of the nature of multilingualism in Africa and some critical challenges in developing MTB MLE

Review of the Teachers' Guide

- The relations between the communities, parents and the multilingual school is well considered.
- The guide recognizes that
 - Parents are the first and most natural language teachers
 - Parents and communities are rich resources of language knowledge

Review of the Teachers' Guide

- The indispensable role of the teachers in multilingual classrooms is well reflected
 - MTB MLE is not always well understood by teachers
 - Outlines the responsibilities of a teacher during pre-teaching and in a classroom situation
- The guide can also be improved by expanding and elaborating on some points such as
 - A more detailed account of the African experiences
 - Challenges of language development issues

Facts on Global and Regional trends

- According to UNESCO's report (2016, p.1), "40% of the global population does not have access to education in a language they speak or understand"
- Lack of inclusive language-in-education policies affects a large proportion of children in multilingual contexts. One third of the global population lacks access to education in the medium of their primary language (Walter 2004, p. 113)
- This disproportionately affects those in low-income countries with approximately 90% of those who do not receive education in their L1 live in economically least and less developed countries (Walter 2004, p. 113)

Review of the Teachers' Guide

- MTB MLE is viewed as an essential step in achieving inclusive and quality education for all as outlined in SDG4
 - ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.
- As inclusive and quality education is viewed as a key foundation in achieving all 17 SDGS, MTB MLE is key to achieving sustainable development (UN 2012, Vuzo 2018)
- MTB MLE can also increase appreciation and engagement with one's own culture and foster respect and understanding towards other cultures (UNESCO 2018) and contributes to social cohesion

Highlights on the Ethiopian Experience

- The model is mother-tongue-based education
- Multilingual and multicultural State
- The state gives equal recognition to all languages and cultures
- Article 8 of the Ethiopian Language Policy stipulates that *“The medium of instruction at kindergartens and elementary schools shall be a mother tongue”*

Highlights on the Ethiopian Experience

On the training of MT teachers, Article 8 of the Ethiopian Language policy further states,

The training of teachers of indigenous languages shall apply effective and modern language teaching methods; the language in which they are being trained shall be the same as that which is determined to be used as the medium of instruction or offered as a learning subject, for the given level of education; and the number of language teachers shall be sufficient enough to meet the demands, and their professional quality up to the standards of that required at the given level of education.

Highlights on the Ethiopian Experience

- **36 Languages**

- Widely used for educational purposes
- Usually have an institutional body responsible for their elaboration and standardization
- Most of them are MOI in primary education (until grade 4) and then taught as a subject in secondary education
- Teachers are trained in special colleges at regional or district level
- Some of the major languages are taught at BA and MA levels at various universities
- For two major cross-regional languages, Amharic and Afan Oromo, PhD programs established

Opportunities and achievements of MTB MLE

- Increased access to basic education
- Increased learning performances
- Protection of the basic human rights to education
- MTB MLE became an increasingly significant act to recover, preserve and develop endangered languages and to protect cultural identity

Challenges

- Lack of capacity for the smaller languages: Human and material
- Lack of coordination: Stakeholders and Research Institutions
- Wrong implementation of policy: Opacity between Federal local actors

- As a solution: National Language Policy for Capacity Building at all levels developed and approved by the Council of Ministers in February 2020