Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education: Including the Excluded
Community Members Booklet
Advocacy kit for promoting multilingual education: Including the excluded.
5 booklets.

[content: Overview of the kit; Language in education policy and practice in Asia and the Pacific; Policy makers booklet; Programme implementers booklet; Community members booklet]

1. Multilingualism. 2. Education policy. 3. Language of instruction. 4. Mother tongue.

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Introduction

For many children from minority language communities, school is an unfamiliar place that teaches unfamiliar concepts in an unfamiliar language. The children's own knowledge and experience – learned from their parents and others in their home community – have no place in the formal school system. If the parents do not speak the official school language, they are effectively excluded from participating in their children's education. One parent described his community's experience with “mainstream” (dominant language) schools in Papua New Guinea:

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

This booklet describes learner-centered and community-centered education programmes in which children begin their education in their home language and also learn the official school language (and other languages, as required). In these programmes, the knowledge and experience the children have learned from their parents and communities are honored and form the foundation for further learning. These programmes, known as “Mother Tongue-based Multilingual Education” (MLE) programmes, are meant specifically for communities in which learners do not speak the language of formal schooling. Their purpose is to help learners achieve their educational goals without forcing them to sacrifice their home language and culture in the process.

The booklet is organized around a set of questions that are often asked by parents, teachers, administrators and other community members regarding MLE – why is it needed, how does it work, how does it benefit the learners, and what needs to be done to implement it?

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Questions and Responses:
Language and Education in Minority Language Communities

Q1: What is the educational situation for many children from minority language communities?

When children begin school they must learn many new things. They must

- Learn about proper school behavior;
- Learn to read and write;
- Learn new information and concepts in math, science, social studies and other subjects; and
- Demonstrate that they understand and can use the new information and concepts.

Children who do not speak the official school language when they begin school face special challenges:

- They must learn the official school language. At the same time, they must try to understand the new things that the teacher is teaching them in the new language.

- They must try to understand the lessons in the textbooks, which are written in the official school language. If they do not yet understand the language well enough to grasp the meaning of the lessons, they are forced to memorize words, phrases and even whole sentences as the teacher reads. Memorization, however, is not the same as understanding, and so they fall farther and farther behind academically.

- They must be able to write in the new language. If they do not understand the language well, they are forced to copy letters, words and sentences from the chalkboard or from a book, but that does not help them learn to express their thoughts in written form.

An education official in India has described this problem in a classroom that he visited:

_The children seemed totally disinterested in the teacher’s monologue. They stared vacantly at the teacher and sometimes at the blackboard where some [letters] had been written. Clearly aware that the children could not understand what he was saying, the teacher proceeded to provide even more detailed explanation in a much louder voice._

_Later, tired of speaking and realizing that the young children were completely lost, he asked them to start copying the [letters] from the blackboard. “My children are very good at copying from the blackboard. By the time they reach Grade 5, they can copy all the answers and memorize them. But only two of the Grade 5 students can actually speak [the school language],” said the teacher._

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A teacher in Papua New Guinea has described the confusion, and even fear, felt by young learners when they do not understand the official school language:

> During my teaching times, I saw that a lot of children were kind of confused. They were just coming out of the village where their mother and father spoke to them in their home language. And then, here I was, standing like a giant over these small young children and talking to them in a strange language. I was frightening them, rather than encouraging them to learn something...³

Of course, some children from minority language communities do eventually learn the official school language very well. Some do complete their education and integrate successfully with mainstream society. But what happens to their relationship with their community? The sad truth is that when the dominant language is the only language used in the classroom and when lessons focus only on the dominant society, minority children may forget their

own language and lose their knowledge, love and respect for their own culture and home community.

To summarize, minority language learners who must attend schools that use a language they do not know face a host of educational, social and other problems. These include:

- High repetition and dropout rates because they cannot learn in a language they do not understand;
- Loss of confidence in themselves as learners because they do not achieve according to their teachers’ or parents’ expectations;
- Loss of their language, loss of their love for their heritage culture and loss of respect for their home community because the message they get in school is that only the dominant language, culture and society are important;
- Failure to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to get a good job; and
- Failure to acquire the knowledge and confidence to take an active part in the political development of their community and nation. As the Department of Education in PNG has noted:

> [T]he education which the vast majority of children who do not enter the formal employment sector receive alienates them from the way of life of the people and does little to equip them with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to contribute positively to community or national development. [4]

Q2: How does a Mother Tongue-based MLE programme help children do better in school?

Good education in any language is guided by two basic principles:

1. Learning involves meaning: We might be able to memorize, but we cannot really learn something that does not make sense to us.

2. Learning involves going from the known to the unknown: We learn best when we use what we already know to help us understand and use new ideas and information.

Small children experience meaningful learning long before they begin school. They learn about relationships as they interact with their parents and others in the community. They learn about nature and the environment from the world around them. They sort and classify things and compare weights and distances as they go about their everyday activities. They evaluate the things that people say and do according to their understanding of what is good and bad, useful and harmful, appropriate and inappropriate. This wealth of knowledge and experience forms the foundation for learning throughout life.

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The same is true for language. Long before they begin school, children use their home language as a tool for communication and learning:

- They listen to their parents and elders;
- They ask questions about things they do not understand and listen to responses;
- They follow instructions;
- They talk about their ideas;
- They describe what they see and explain what they think;
- They count objects and do simple calculations; and
- They argue with their friends (and sometimes with their parents).

Through these interactions, children gain fluency and confidence in using their home language meaningfully for a variety of purposes. They bring this knowledge about their language with them when they begin school.
Using what the learners already know…

Good schools and good teachers recognize that the children’s home language, knowledge and experience are all valuable resources for learning. They use the children’s language for teaching, especially in the early grades, so that the children can make sense of the lessons. They use locally familiar examples to introduce new concepts so that the children can use their knowledge and experience to help them understand the concepts. They provide early reading materials in the children’s language, about people, places and activities that are familiar to them so the children find that reading is meaningful and exciting. They encourage children to write creatively in their own language about things they know and think about to help them gain confidence in their ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas in written form. All of these activities help the children to build a strong educational foundation that leads to successful life-long learning.

Here is what educational researchers say about the value of building a strong foundation in the home language:

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

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In other words, starting in the home language is not a waste of time. It does not take away from the children’s ability to learn the new language. In fact, it is the children’s most important resource for learning the new language.

... to learn what is new

As children gain fluency in using their home language in the classroom, they also begin learning the official school language – first listening and speaking, then reading and writing. This process builds on another educational principle: *We only learn to read and write one time.* The children have already learned to read and write in their home language. They have begun building fluency in hearing and speaking the official school language. This prepares them to learn to read and write the official language more easily and with greater confidence.

In a good MLE programme, the children continue to use both languages – hearing and speaking and reading and writing – for communication and for learning, ideally at least through primary school.

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

Q3: What do parents and teachers think about using the home language in the classroom?

Mother Tongue-based MLE programmes have been established in many minority language communities around the world. Most teachers, principals and parents of children in those programmes have found that students who begin learning in their home language:

- Have more confidence in themselves as learners;
- Participate more actively in classroom discussions;
- Ask more questions;
- Demonstrate a deeper understanding of the subjects;
- Learn to read more easily and understand what they read;
- Learn to write more easily and express themselves better in written form; and
- Learn the school language – oral and written – more easily and with greater comprehension.

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A district education division supervisor has described the difference she observed when she visited classes:

Before, the children just sat in class, but they didn’t say anything. They didn’t even know how to answer the teacher’s questions. Now they always have their hands up! They have so much to say. Now this is an active, excited group of children.\(^7\)

Parents are also happy because good MLE programmes strengthen children’s love and respect for their heritage language and culture. As a parent from PNG has explained:

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 home language. Not just the things he can see, but things he thinks about, too. And he writes about this place. He writes about helping his mother carry water, about digging sweet potatoes, 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.\(^8\)

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\(^7\) Personal communication from a teacher in the Regional Lingua Franca Programme in the Philippines to Susan Malone, SIL International, in 2001.

Q4: What can we do to establish a Mother Tongue-based MLE programme in our community?

Successful Mother Tongue-based MLE programmes require cooperation and support from many people. Most important is that the community members want the programme and are prepared to take ownership of it. Support from school principals, teachers and other education officials is also necessary if the programme is to grow and be maintained.

The following section offers suggestions for communities that want to start a strong MLE programme. Some of the activities described below will continue through the life of the programme; others will last for a shorter period of time. In some places, a particular activity may already have taken place (for example, a language might already have a writing system). In other places, nothing has been done yet, and the community needs to start at the very beginning with its partners.

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**Components of Mother Tongue-based MLE programmes**

- Build a supportive political environment
- Encourage support from outside agencies and organizations
- Evaluate and document progress
- Collect information for planning
- Raise awareness; mobilize partners
- Establish a writing system for the language
- Develop teaching and learning materials
- Recruit and train people to work in the programmes
- Create reading materials in the language

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**Build a supportive political environment.** Policymakers and other authorities must be mobilized to establish political (and financial) support for Mother Tongue-based MLE programmes. Before they can do that, they need to understand the purposes and benefits of the programmes. Language communities and their support networks can take the first step in building a supportive political environment by starting their own small-scale programmes outside the formal education system, such as pre-primary and after-school

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classes. They can do this without waiting for formal policies to be in place. The success of these individual programmes can make a powerful statement about the value of MLE and help to encourage others to begin building the necessary political support.

Although members of a minority language community may not have access to high-level government officials or have a voice in developing policies they can develop cooperative relationships with other language groups, government agencies, NGOs and others. Working together, these groups have a much stronger voice then they would have on their own. Building relationships, therefore, should be an early and on-going priority for bringing about and sustaining changes “at the top”.

**Collect information for planning the programme.** Strong and sustained MLE programmes respond to the needs and goals identified by people in the community – especially learners and/or their parents. A priority for planners is to learn from parents and other people in the community about the current education situation, asking them to describe their educational goals for their children and to identify strengths and weaknesses in the current system. Wise planners also gather information about resources within the community that could be used in the MLE programme (e.g. suitable buildings, people with good language skills, relevant written materials in the language) and about factors that might hinder programme implementation and sustainability. The process of collecting information provides programme leaders with an excellent opportunity to raise awareness about the
programme (see next activity). Research, along with awareness-raising and mobilization, should continue as the programme expands to additional communities.

**Raise awareness; mobilize partners.** Many parents think that, in order to become fluent in the official school language, their children need to learn the new language as quickly as possible and use it as much as possible. They are afraid that any time spent using the children’s home language in school means less time, and even less success in learning the second language. But educational research has shown that just the opposite is true. Building a strong educational foundation in the first language helps children learn the second language more easily.

Parents need to understand the benefits of using the children’s first language in school so they will feel more confident about enrolling their children in the programme. Other community members need information and encouragement so they will take active roles in supporting the programme (e.g. maintaining classrooms, helping to teach classes, creating reading materials). Support from local and district education officials will also be necessary if the programme is to be successful and sustained. Awareness-raising and mobilization activities should provide parents and other potential partners within and outside the community with information about the programme and encourage them to be actively involved in planning, implementing, and maintaining the programme.

**Establish a writing system for the language.** If the local language has not yet been put into written form, the community will need to select the symbols or letters for their writing
system. A linguist who is familiar with the language can help mother tongue speakers make decisions about which symbols or letters to use. Once the community has created a tentative writing system, they need to test their choices and make revisions, as necessary.

The idea of developing a writing system for a previously unwritten language may sound like a difficult task, but in past decades many language communities have done it with great success. Once the writing system has been developed, the community can begin creating written literature and preparing materials for the MLE programme.

**Develop teaching and learning materials.** Teaching and learning materials for an MLE programme should: 1) provide learners with the knowledge, skills and confidence to achieve their educational goals; and 2) continue building on their love and respect for their heritage language and culture.

In strong MLE programmes, local and district education officials, including teachers and principals, work together to develop educationally sound teaching and learning materials. They know the expectations for learners in each grade of primary school and can identify the basic competencies that the children must achieve by the time they enter the mainstream system. The role of the community is to ensure that the teaching and learning materials build on the language, knowledge and experience the children already have when they begin the programme. Community members also help to ensure that the programme maintains a strong heritage language and culture component.

**Create reading materials in the community language.** Children in the MLE programme will need a variety of reading materials in their own language and later in the new language. Early reading materials should be in the children’s home language, written by mother tongue speakers about familiar people, places and activities. When the children start reading in the new language, they will need reading materials – from short and simple to longer and more complex – in that language, as well.

Experience in language communities throughout Asia and the Pacific have shown that fluent mother tongue speakers can produce an enormous variety of reading materials in their languages. Here are some examples of the kinds of materials they can develop:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original stories</th>
<th>Instructions &amp; directions</th>
<th>Religious &amp; moral teachings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Songs &amp; poetry</td>
<td>Dramas &amp; skits</td>
<td>Simple dictionaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographies &amp; histories</td>
<td>Alphabet books</td>
<td>Activity books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folktales &amp; legends</td>
<td>Simple dictionaries</td>
<td>Games</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jokes, riddles &amp; wise sayings</td>
<td>Planning books</td>
<td>Signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel &amp; geographic information</td>
<td>Health &amp; other information</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News sheets &amp; newsletters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Experience in many language communities has also shown that brightly colored, expensive reading materials are not required, especially for new readers. In most cases, neatly produced booklets with black-and-white line drawings are acceptable if resources are limited, especially when the stories are interesting to the readers and appropriate to their reading ability. The most important points to remember in producing reading materials for new readers are that: 1) the content should be interesting to them, 2) the language should be clear and understandable, and 3) the illustrations should help them to understand the text.

**Recruit and train people to work in the programme.** The table on the following page lists the staff needed for an MLE programme, along with suggestions for their responsibilities and qualifications.

Whether the teachers and other staff are volunteers or are paid a salary, they will require the encouragement and support of the entire community, including parents. An important early activity is to establish a committee of local leaders who will help with selecting staff and will see that members receive the support they need to do their work well.
Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education

**Evaluate and document progress.** If the MLE programme is established within the formal education system, education officials will be responsible for assessing students’ academic progress. However, evaluations of MLE programmes should also assess the community members’ satisfaction with the programme in meeting their own cultural and educational goals. When members of the local community participate in documenting and evaluating their own programme, reports will more likely reflect the value of the programme to the community, itself.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Main responsibilities</th>
<th>General qualifications</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers (May need two, one for local language and one for official language)</td>
<td>Teach classes (local and official languages) Assess learners’ progress Maintain records of attendance, progress Interact with parents, other community members</td>
<td>Speak, read and write both languages competently Understand and appreciate the local culture Have clear and legible handwriting Be selected and approved by the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writers, artists, editors</td>
<td>Writers: Write, adapt, and translate reading materials in the L1 and L2 Artists: Illustrate the materials Editors (and writers): Check the materials for clarity, language, punctuation and spelling Evaluation team: Check the materials locally and revise them as necessary</td>
<td>Speak, read and write the L1 competently Understand and appreciate the local culture Be recognized in the community as good storyteller and/or artist Be literate in the L2 and able to adapt materials from the L2 into the L1 or vice-versa Draw pictures that reflect the local culture and society (artists) Understand L1 grammar and punctuation rules (editors) Be selected and approved by the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor / trainer</td>
<td>Visit classes regularly; identify teachers’ strengths and weaknesses; help teachers when they have problems Assess learners’ progress Make sure accurate records are kept Seek community input in programme management and assessment of progress Conduct pre-service and in-service training for teachers Ensure that adequate classroom supplies are on hand</td>
<td>Speak, read and write the L1 and L2 competently Be knowledgeable about the history and culture of the language group Be able to interact with government officers, school officials and NGO leaders Be able to communicate abstract ideas and model good teaching techniques (trainer) Have experience in teaching the L1 (trainer, supervisor) Be able to communicate abstract ideas and model good teaching techniques (trainer) Be selected and approved by the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisory committee</td>
<td>Serve as advisors to programme leaders Help organize recruitment efforts Liaise between staff and community; communicate the goals, objectives and activities of the programme to the community Encourage the community to help maintain the classrooms and classroom materials If possible, raise funds to support the programme Ensure accountability in the use of funding and other resources</td>
<td>Understand the purpose and goals of the programme Be committed to the programme and willing to work together for its success Be selected and approved by the community</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Support from outside agencies and organizations. Successful MLE programmes require cooperation and support, including financial support, from both within and outside the language community. Only mother tongue speakers of the language can produce the reading materials, teach the classes and judge the programme’s success in meeting community goals. Outsiders can help in other specific aspects of the programme such as developing the writing system, developing the curriculum, training teachers, evaluating the programme and finding on-going funding sources. Developing linkages with as many outside agencies as possible will be another important task for programme leaders.

Q5: Can it be done? Can communities, with help from supportive partners, establish and sustain their own MLE programmes?

The experience of one language group in PNG may help to answer that question:  

*In the mid-1980s, the 30,000 Kaugel people were concerned because their children, most of whom spoke only their own Kaugel language, were doing poorly in the governmental English-only education system.*
To prepare their children more adequately for formal education, local leaders, with early support from an NGO operating in their area, decided to establish a First Language First education programme in which children would learn to read and write in their own language before they entered primary school. They formed the Kaugel Non-Formal Education Association (KNFEA), composed of community members, government workers, and religious leaders, to guide and support the programme.

Programme leaders recruited mother tongue speakers as writers, artists and editors. Within two years, they had written, illustrated, edited and produced (on a hand-operated duplicator) over a hundred graded reading booklets for pre-primary classes. When these booklets had been tested and revised, programme leaders learned how to write proposals for funding to produce larger quantities of the reading materials.

Local people who had at least six years of primary education were recruited as teachers for the pre-primary classes. An experienced teacher, who was the programme coordinator, trained others as trainers for literature production and teacher training workshops. With help from the supporting NGO, programme leaders initiated an income-generating project to provide funding that was used to provide a small stipend for each teacher. Relationships were developed with local government agencies, other NGOs, businesses and the Provincial Non-Formal Education Division. These partners supported the programme by providing financial and/or other resources, including classroom space and school supplies.

More than twenty years after it was started, the children’s education programme continues to be maintained under the sponsorship of the KNFEA. In the late 1990s, the programme was incorporated into the Government’s education system and children who complete the Kaugel language classes continue their education in the English school system.\(^\text{10}\)

\(^{10}\) The Kaugel First Language First education programme is located in the Western Highlands Province of Papua New Guinea.
Most parents want their children to get a good education, but they also hope that their children will maintain their love and respect for their heritage language and culture, and for their home community. Parents want their children to become confident and self-motivated learners as well as productive members of their communities. By working together, and with the support of partners outside the community, they can make a good beginning towards achieving those goals.
References


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant language</td>
<td>Language spoken by the dominant social group, or language that is seen as the main language of a country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage language</td>
<td>Language of a person's ancestors or ethnolinguistic group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home language</td>
<td>Language spoken in the home (see also L1, mother tongue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L1</td>
<td>First language, native language (see also mother tongue, home language, local language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L2</td>
<td>Second language, non-native language, language of wider communication, or foreign language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language of instruction</td>
<td>Language used for teaching and learning the school curriculum, also called medium of instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lingua franca</td>
<td>Widely spoken language used for communication between ethnolinguistic groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example: Tok Pisin in PNG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local language</td>
<td>Language spoken in the immediate community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Majority language</td>
<td>Language spoken by the majority of people in a region/country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minority language</td>
<td>Language spoken by a social and/or ethnic minority group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sometimes used to refer to the language of a numerically large group that is not dominant</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Mother tongue (MT)  First language, native language (see also L1, home language, local language)
  - Language that a person: (a) has learnt first; (b) identifies with or is identified as a native speaker of by others; (c) knows best; or (d) uses most

Official language  Language adopted by a country for public administrative and institutional use, often including schools
   
   Example: India has Hindi and English as official languages of the country and a number of different official state languages

Unwritten language  Language that is spoken but not yet used for reading/writing
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Advisory committee**   | Group of leaders committed to supporting an MLE programme  
  - *Usually composed of mother tongue speakers and members of partner agencies*  |
| **Alienation**           | Being disconnected from one’s own language and culture  
  - *Minority language speakers in dominant language education may later reject their own language and culture*  |
| **Awareness raising**    | Providing information that can help people achieve the goals and needs that they have identified for themselves  |
| **Bilingual**            | *Individual:* Ability to speak/understand (and sometimes read/write) at least two languages  
  - *Society:* Presence of at least two language groups  |
| **Competencies**         | Knowledge, abilities or skills in language or other subjects of the school curriculum  |
| **Curriculum**           | Teaching plan, content and instructional materials for an education programme  |
| **Dominant group**       | Most powerful social group of the country due to population (numerical majority), economics (wealth) and/or politics (power)  |
| **First Language**       | Schooling beginning with the L1 for reading, writing and learning, while teaching the L2 (see multilingual education)  |
| **First MLE**            |  
| **Fluency**              | High competence in speaking, reading and/or writing a language  |
| **Implementation**       | The process of mobilizing people and resources to carry out a new programme  |
| **Interculturalism**     | Promotion of mutual understanding and tolerance between ethnolinguistic and/or social groups  |
| **Language development** | In education: Teaching someone to speak, read and write a language well  
  - *In minority language communities:* Promoting oral and written use of a language, for example by expanding its vocabulary, agreeing on a written form, and creating books and school materials  |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language minority</td>
<td>Group of people who share a language and often have less power in society due to population (numerically fewer), economics (less wealth) and/or politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>Ability to read, write, calculate and otherwise use a language to do whatever is needed in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mainstream</td>
<td>Language and culture of the dominant group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Often refers to schools designed for members of the dominant group that do not meet the needs of linguistic minorities</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Migrant</td>
<td>Person or group that has moved from one region to another</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobilization</td>
<td>The process of organizing a community (and its supporters) to work together to plan and implement a programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilingual</td>
<td><em>Individual:</em> Ability to speak/understand (and sometimes read/write) more than two languages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Society:</em> Presence of more than two language groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilingual education (MLE)</td>
<td>Use of more than two languages for literacy and instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Ideally this begins with developing the L1 and adding other languages gradually</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)</td>
<td>Agency that is not part of any national government, often working for community development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orthography</td>
<td>Standardized system for writing a language, including a script and rules for spelling and punctuation (see also writing system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partners</td>
<td>Individuals, organizations and agencies that collaborate with communities to implement a new programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability</td>
<td>Setting up a programme so that it will continue for a long time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing system</td>
<td>Graphic representation of a spoken language in letters or symbols (see also orthography)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>