A guide for planning the future of our language: a tool to help minority language communities plan attainable MLE goals

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Choosing to undertake a mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) program requires no small commitment. What factors might incline a group toward pursuing MTB-MLE versus another language development initiative? What language use patterns are required for a community to effectively pursue MTB-MLE? What language-related conditions would likely make an MTB-MLE program unrealistic for a given community? How does MTB-MLE support the functions for which the community wishes to use its mix of languages for equipping the next generation?

An organization working alongside minority language communities worldwide has developed a tool that helps communities address these questions. This tool—A guide for planning the future of our language—is designed to be used by facilitators from the local language community itself. These facilitators lead group meetings to engage community members in active, participatory discussions. Communities come away with their own plans that lead to their desired language goals. The tool encourages communities to begin with small, achievable goals that they can accomplish using their own resources before planning larger initiatives. One major contribution of the tool is to help communities see what activities are relevant and realistic for their given language use context.

This presentation will describe how communities use this tool to discuss their language situation and goals. We will also give examples of communities worldwide who have used this tool to plan sustainable language development goals and activities, including whether or not to pursue MTB-MLE and related interventions.