Finger math as mathematical logic development in early childhood and primary education
with the MLE Track, the Afghanistan Pashai MTB-MLE program case

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Literacy means not just the ability to read and write. It should be understood through a holistic development perspective. This is a good example of that.

Pashai preprimary schools for children from five to six years old are following a multilingual education program that continues up to the 5th grade. It functions in a complementary fashion with the government’s school system and public schools. Preprimary school consists of the mother-tongue primer course (in the first six months, oral; in second 6 months, writing and reading). When the students are familiar with working in their mother tongue, a finger math course taught in the mother tongue, Pashai, is introduced. Finger math is a kind of math primer that introduces preprimary students to math. It also helps improve mathematical logic development in primitive learning environments. It has been proven throughout the pilot classes in Pashai that outcomes are very positive for students, especially those who are in primitive living and learning environments where logical or mathematical thinking development is problematic.

This current project to train public school teachers to implement finger math was requested by regional school principals. The project has been training them since 2011. The course is also being implemented for other minority groups in Afghanistan. While the materials were originally developed in Korean, the teacher’s guide and textbook are now translated into the mother tongue, Pashai, the national language, Pashto, as well as English.