Motivating MLE implementers in Bangladesh

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Bangladesh is a multilingual and multicultural nation where more than 45 languages are spoken. These language communities have distinct social structures and cultures but share a common context of language and culture loss, poverty, and low levels of education.

SIL International Bangladesh has provided technical support for preschool multilingual education. This paper will describe challenges faced and strategies used when working with communities in different parts of Bangladesh.

SIL provides 10 days of preservice teachers’ training and arranges inservice training as required. SIL works directly with language and development committees to select potential teachers for MLE classes. The committee also provides a portion of the teachers’ salary and builds the school infrastructure as a part of community development. However, it is hard to get qualified educated teachers in some communities to run the MLE program. The more educated young generation is highly influenced by the majority Bengali culture and do not want to be a part of mother-tongue education. Sometimes poor school infrastructure does not encourage the teachers to have pride in their work or to be respected like the other school teachers.

SIL has been working with the communities to address these issues by raising awareness, providing regular teacher training, developing an accessible monitoring tool for school supervisors, and introducing livelihood programs within each community. This paper will explore these strategies and give recommendations for motivating MLE implementers.