MTB-MLE for sustainable development for all: What have we learned? (and what comes next?)
Review: The situation for many children from non-dominant language communities when they enter the formal education system...
Their teachers speak a language they don’t understand;

Their own language and culture, knowledge, and experience are excluded from the curriculum;

They are expected to learn to read and write in a language they don’t know or are just learning; and

They are expected to learn math, science and other subjects but don’t have the language to learn the concepts.
SDG 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.”

The argument here: MTB-MLE is the only way to ensure that SDG4 will be achieved in non-dominant language communities

The good news: Growing recognition in Asia, Africa and the Pacific of the benefits of MTB-MLE...
1980s: MT-first education movement begins in Asia / Pacific

2000s: Beginning awareness that MTB-MLE provides educational benefits; more international agencies / organizations offer support

2010s: More government and INGO sponsored MTB-MLE programs; increasing recognition that policy support is essential

October 2016: We’re getting there! Increasing recognition that MTB-MLE is worth doing and why it’s good.
Still needed: Clear and accessible information—for people / organizations who realize that MTB-MLE is a good thing to do—that explains how to develop strong and sustainable programs:

Who should be involved?

What activities should be included?

When should they take place?

Where should they take place?
Quick review of some of the lessons we (collectively) have learned about planning, implementing and sustaining strong MTB-MLE programs
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

Supportive MTB-MLE policy

Realistic implementation plan

Preliminary research

Awareness raising & mobilization

Supportive partnerships

Acceptable alphabets

Monitoring & evaluation

Teacher recruitment & training

Reading & learning materials

Curriculum & instructional materials
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

- Supportive MTB-MLE policy
- Supportive partnerships
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Teacher recruitment & training
- Reading & learning materials
- Curriculum & instructional materials
- Preliminary research
- Realistic implementation plan
- Awareness raising & mobilization
- Acceptable alphabets
What do we need?

Understand the context(s) in which MTB-MLE will be implemented so plans and activities are appropriate to each place.
What have we learned?

The kinds of information that we need to plan for each level of implementation

The importance of identifying people at each level that know who / when / where / how to ask questions that will elicit the information.
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

- Supportive MTB-MLE policy
- Realistic implementation plan
- Preliminary research
- Supportive partnerships
- Awareness raising & mobilization
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Acceptable alphabets
- Teacher recruitment & training
- Reading & learning materials
- Curriculum & instructional materials
What do we need?

Implementation plans that are realistic, clear, and in a language and format that people can understand and use.
What have we learned?

Planning for each level of implementation requires insights from the insiders (**)

Implementation is a cyclical process with regular evaluations and adaptation.
MTB-MLE programs expand in three ways:

1. Expand to higher grades in pilot schools

2. Expand to new schools, same languages

3. Expand to new languages

Early preparation for each type of expansion includes evaluations so that necessary changes can be made and materials prepared in time.
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

- Supportive MTB-MLE policy
- Realistic implementation plan
- Awareness raising & mobilization
- Acceptable alphabets
- Curriculum & instructional materials
- Teacher recruitment & training
- Reading & learning materials
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Preliminary research
- Supportive partnerships
What do we need?

Awareness-raising activities that provide accurate information...

for stakeholders at each level of implementation

about the purposes and benefits of MTB-MLE

and what /who is involved in developing strong and sustained programs
What have we learned?

Parents and community members need to know why / how MTB-MLE will help their children learn the official school language(s) and do well in the formal education system.

Sharing information about MTB-MLE with community members (Chong, Thailand)
Local and district education officials need to know why MTB-MLE “works” and what a strong MTB-MLE program looks like (and assurance from their supervisor that it’s allowed.)

Sharing information about MTB-MLE with regional leaders (Bench Maji, Ethiopia)
Government officials, universities, businesses, and NGOs need evidence as above plus examples of strong programs elsewhere.

SEAMEO hosts an MTB-MLE advocacy meeting for education officials and others (Indonesia)
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

Supportive MTB-MLE policy

Realistic implementation plan

Awareness raising & mobilization

Acceptable alphabets

Preliminary research

Monitoring & evaluation

Teacher recruitment & training

Reading & learning materials

Curriculum & instructional materials

Supportive partnerships
What do we need?

Writing systems for unwritten languages that...

accurately represent the sounds and structure of each language,
are “reader and writer friendly”,
acceptable to MT speakers and to relevant government agencies and are easily reproduced (easier now!)
What have we learned?

Political / cultural / religious / historical factors influence choice of script

MT speakers are an essential part of the decision-making process

Negotiation is essential and...

So is testing and revision

Dr. Suwilai and Chong leaders plan their new alphabet (Thailand)
We have also learned that…

Writers’ Workshops (to develop graded MT stories) are a great way to test a new writing system (and get lots of stories, too!)

Government agencies / institutions may need to give final approval (so don’t print expensive materials until that happens!)

And yes, it can be done!
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

- Supportive MTB-MLE policy
- Preliminary research
- Realistic implementation plan
- Supportive partnerships
- Awareness raising & mobilization
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Acceptable alphabets
- Teacher recruitment & training
- Reading & learning materials
- Curriculum & instructional materials
What do we need?

Curriculum and teaching materials that...
provide MTB-MLE teachers with the information and resources they need to help their students succeed in each grade of primary school
are easy for teachers to understand and use and
are acceptable to relevant authorities
What have we learned about developing MTB-MLE curriculum?

We’ve learned a lot (!) often/usually by trying out ideas / finding problems / trying again...

Following are some of the things we’ve learned that seem especially important for developing curriculum that translates into effective teachers and successful learners.
Mainstream students who know the school language

MTB-MLE students who must learn the school language

Base MTB-MLE curriculum for each year on MOE competencies, then adapt for MTB-MLE students.
Introduce new concepts by building on students’ prior knowledge.

New concepts, information, ideas

Students use what they know to learn what is new

Students’ knowledge & experience
Emphasize higher-level thinking starting on Day 1.

- Create
- Evaluate
- Analyse
- Explain
- Understand
- Remember
Follow a step-by-step (small steps!) approach to introducing and using languages.

Keep *language* learning and *concept* learning separate in early grades and bring them together in later grades.

Follow a specific plan to introduce L2 academic terms.

Start L1 literacy in KG (5 year old students) and continue building fluency in oral / written L1 *to the end of primary* (issue of multiple languages; need for negotiation).
What have we learned about developing instructional / teaching materials?

We’ve learned that yes, MTB-MLE teachers do need Teachers Guides!

TGs for all grades should include…

• learning objectives
• step-by-step directions for each learning activity
• materials to collect and / or prepare
• new academic terms (L1 and/or L2)
• directions for assessing students’ understanding
Students' knowledge and experience from home/ community and school

Learning objectives for each competency: focus on accuracy & on meaning / higher level thinking

MLE-specific materials that build understanding of concepts

Teachers Guides that provide information needed for each lesson

Re the process for developing TGs & materials:
Also, since MTB-MLE teachers are bilingual, Teachers Guides should be in the official school language but written specifically for L2 speakers (think feasibility, cost, and the need for the same content to be taught in multiple language communities)

Liberia—Teachers Guides in English (official language) for MTB-MLE teachers from 15 language communities
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

- Supportive MTB-MLE policy
- Realistic implementation plan
- Awareness raising & mobilization
- Acceptable alphabets
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Supportive partnerships
- Preliminary research
- Teacher recruitment & training
- Reading & learning materials
- Curriculum & instructional materials
What do we need?

Graded reading materials in the students’ MT and other school languages

Learning materials / activity books / textbooks for language education and other subjects in each grade
**What have we learned about developing reading materials?**

Reading skills transfer across languages (**)  

Students require “graded” materials to help them gain fluency in all their languages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starting to read (L1)</th>
<th>Beginning to gain reading fluency (L1)</th>
<th>Adding a new language (L1+L2) (or L2)</th>
<th>Gaining fluency in both languages (L1 &amp; L2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
And...MT speakers can develop many of the reading materials their children will need

At Writers’ Workshops, they write, illustrate and edit stories about people, places and activities that are interesting to the students and appropriate to their stage of literacy development.
Local artists draw pictures for each page (early materials) that help students understand the text. (Stories for higher grades have more text and fewer pictures.)

Patani Malay MTB-MLE (Thailand)

Artists do the illustrations while others put the stories onto computer. (EMBLI, Timor Leste)
An official language translation is placed at the end of each story(*)

New MT materials are printed cheaply and tested / revised before reprinting in larger quantities.

Test versions of local stories with local pictures printed in the community.
After testing and revision—96 stories in 4 levels of graded readers. (Kaugel, PNG)
What have we learned about developing learning materials for language education (two-track approach)?
We need materials that help students develop decoding skills...

Primers that teach students to identify letters/symbols and put them together to read words

Writing materials that students use to practice forming letters/symbols correctly and writing neatly.
...and materials that emphasize reading and writing to communicate and to learn new ideas

Big Pictures to build children’s oral L1 and later, oral L2 and other languages

Lahu children building oral Lahu (Thailand)  Hmong children learning Thai (Thailand)
Listening Stories for teachers to model fluent reading

Kam teacher (China)

Patani Malay teacher (Thailand)
Big Books that teachers read to and then with their students.

Patani Malay (Thailand)

Rajbanshi (Nepal)
Chalkboard and poster paper for Experience Stories that students create. Teachers write the story on the board and then on posters for students to read.

Rajbanshi students find words in their Experience Story posters (Nepal)

Kom girl reads the Experience Story she and her classmates created. (Cameroon)
Picture sets that students put into sequence and then use to tell the story.

Patani Malay (Thailand)
Seereer (Senegal)

Mon (Thailand)
Paper or individual writing slates for creative writing time. Students create their own stories and “read” them to their classmates.

Saafi Saafii (Senegal)

Pakrari (Pakistan)

Kam (China)
And lots of things to read during Library Time! Students read stories of their choice, alone or together.
What have we learned about learning materials for other subjects?
Use hands-on activities in early grades to introduce / review concepts (no textbooks)

Students sort objects by type, size, length, color, use (Papua New Guinea)

Tharadri science lesson (Pakistan)
Later, introduce “activity books” with familiar illustrations to teach content. If L2 is needed, keep it basic.
From middle grades to the end of primary, teachers use L2 textbooks but they explain new vocabulary and unfamiliar illustrations first. (*)

Parkari girls use L2 textbooks (Pakistan)
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

Supportive MTB-MLE policy

Realistic implementation plan

Preliminary research

Awareness raising & mobilization

Monitoring & evaluation

Acceptable alphabets

Teacher recruitment & training

Reading & learning materials

Curriculum & instructional materials
What do we need?

Bilingual / multilingual MT speakers as MTB-MLE teachers

Quality preservice training, supportive supervision and regular inservice training
What have we learned re teacher recruitment? Qualifications...

- Understand, speak, read & write the students’ MT and the official school language(s)
- Share their students’ heritage culture
- Accepted by parents and others in the community
- Accepted by relevant government agencies

NOTE: In early MTB-MLE programs, MT teachers may not yet be certified. But with good training and support they become excellent teachers.
What have we learned about pre-service teacher training?

L1 and L2 reading and writing practice

Foundational theories of learning and of language acquisition(**)

Child-centered teaching approaches for higher-level thinking

Use of teaching and learning materials

Informal assessment methods

Classroom management

Pre-service training in Timor Leste and Ethiopia
What about supervision and in-service training?

Regular and supportive supervisory visits

Regular inservice training
  Based on supervisor reports
  Share experiences & good practices; discuss ways to solve problems
  Learn new developments, discuss and practice new approaches

Dai In-service teacher training (China)
And what about institutionalizing teacher training as the program expands?

Establish a high quality MTB-MLE component within regular teacher training in universities and other teacher training institutions.

Provide practice teaching opportunities in MTB-MLE schools that are officially supported and of high quality.

Student teachers, Yala Rajabhat University (Thailand)
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

- Supportive MTB-MLE policy
- Preliminary research
- Realistic implementation plan
- Supportive partnerships
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Teacher recruitment & training
- Reading & learning materials
- Acceptable alphabets
- Awareness raising & mobilization
- Curriculum & instructional materials
What do we need?

Formal and informal student assessments at regular intervals

Context, process and impact program evaluations
What have we learned re student assessments?

Pre-tests (especially in pilot stage)
Informal assessments by teachers built into lesson plans
Periodic written assessments based on competencies:
  • Language education: Proficiency in L1, L2 etc
  • Other subjects: Application of concepts
Written tests in the language of instruction (***)
Test questions (math, science, etc.) use only vocabulary and grammar that have been used in teaching those subjects.(***)
What have we learned re program evaluations?

Context evaluations (preliminary research)

Process evaluations to identify strengths and weaknesses and revise the program as needed.

Impact evaluations to provide information…

- for program expansion
- to report to donors and other stakeholders
- for others to use in planning their own programs.
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes:

- Preliminary research
- Realistic implementation plan
- Supportive MTB-MLE policy
- Supportive partnerships
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Teacher recruitment & training
- Reading & learning materials
- Acceptable alphabets
- Awareness raising & mobilization
- Curriculum & instructional materials
What do we need?

Supportive partnerships that include each group of stakeholders and encourage each group to contribute from their areas of strength.
What have we learned re consequences when stakeholders do not work together?

Time, effort and money wasted because knowledge and resources are duplicated. Curriculum, teaching methods, lesson content and outcomes are different across programs so “MTB-MLE” is not clearly understood and loses credibility.
What have we learned re benefits when stakeholders work together in partnership?

Each partner contributes from their areas of strength
Programs are more efficient (lower cost)
MTB-MLE gains credibility
Essential components of successful MTB-MLE programmes

- Supportive MTB-MLE policy
- Preliminary research
- Realistic implementation plan
- Supportive partnerships
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Teacher recruitment & training
- Acceptable alphabets
- Awareness raising & mobilization
- Curriculum & instructional materials
- Reading & learning materials
What do we need?

Language and education policies that provide the political and other support required at all levels for MTB-MLE to be accepted and sustained throughout the pilot period and as it is incorporated and sustained within formal education systems.
What have we learned about the policy support needed for pilot projects?

Official mandate may be necessary to protect the pilot
Criteria for selecting the languages and schools; specify grades to be included (KG to G6)
Agencies/organizations responsible for planning and implementation
Funding to ensure that the pilot is carried through to completion and evaluated before expansion begins
What have we learned about the policy support needed to expand and maintain MTB-MLE in the formal education system?

Official mandate to incorporate MTB-MLE into ECCE and all primary grades

Agencies / institutions—national, sub-national, local—responsible for implementation and support as MTB-MLE expands to new schools and new languages

Mandate to ensure adequate funding

And more...as per the policy session during this conference
Truly, together we have learned a lot!

What shall we do next?
A challenge to all of you who have been engaged in MTB-MLE and who have learned so much about what works and what doesn’t…

Let’s find ways to share what we (collectively) have learned so no one has to start from the beginning without the information they need. Let’s work together to get what we have learned out to the world!

susan_malone@sil.org