PATANI MALAY-THAI BILINGUAL EDUCATION:
SUCCESES, CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNED, FUTURE DIRECTIONS
Language Diversity Thailand

65 million population speak 70+ living Languages, belonging to 5 Language Families

- **Thai is the only official/national language.**
  - Derived from a variety of Central Thai. About 50% of the population use it proficiently (as in the first language or mother tongue)
  - Used as the medium of instruction in all levels of education all over the country

- **Language shift and language decline**
- **Underachievement in education**

- Tai (24)
- Austroasiatic (22)
- Austronesian (3)
- Hmong-Mien (2)
- Sino-Tibetan (20)
For large language groups at the border, not only is their mother language declining but many cannot access government services. Children lack sufficient knowledge of Thai, the school language.
Thailand  Melayu
83% of the population or more than a million people in 4 border provinces of Thailand are Muslim and speak Patani Malay

Once Patani Sultanate – Center of Islamic Studies
Grade 3 Reading / Writing Abilities in the South (2008)

- **Unable**
  - Reading-National: 3.12%
  - Reading-South: 25.5%
  - Writing-National: 10.53%
  - Writing-South: 42.11%

- **Needs improvement**
  - Reading-National: 4.18%
  - Reading-South: 17.08%
  - Writing-National: 5.81%
  - Writing-South: 20.86%

Source: *Bangkok Post* October 3, 2010
Implementation of Patani Malay-Thai MTB-BE in Thailand’s Deep South

An action - participatory research project

• Implemented in 4 pilot schools in 4 Southern Border provinces.
• Expanded to 15 schools over lifetime of program
• A 9-year program starting from KG1 to Grade 6 plus one year of preparation.

Goals

• To facilitate Patani Malay speaking children to speak, read and write well in both Patani Malay and Thai.

• To retain Malay identity and culture at the local level and Thai identity at the national level, contributing to national social cohesion
10 Components of the Program

- Preliminary Research
- Realistic implementation plan
- Supportive MTB-MLE policy
- Supportive partnerships
- Monitoring & evaluation
- Teacher recruitment & training
- Acceptable alphabets
- Curriculum & instructional materials
- Awareness raising & mobilization
- Reading & learning materials

Susan Malone, 2016
Establish PM writing system

"Script Issue"

Jawi Orthography Reform

Thai-based PM Orthography Development
Writing stories
Editing
Drawing
Community consultation and participation
Book binding
Melayu Reading Materials – Big books and Small books
Cultural scenes – to stimulate talking and thinking
ไอ กตาตา ไอ กตาตา ปาไช้
อาปอ งัง ปาง ญูญ? มำก้า มำนอก
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TEACHING SCIENCES USING SANDWICH TECHNIQUE (G. 1-3)

Students are alert and participated well in the class.
“This project is very useful. It has brought back our Melayu identity. I would like to pray for Allah to make this project sustainable forever.”

(Abdul Rohim, a religious teacher from Satun)

“(The PM – TH Bilingual Education) is very very good. The students know how to read and write when they go up to Grade 1. They know both Melayu and Thai.”

Wisut Yayo
Father and member of Local administration, Pattani
Parents are happy watching their children’s performance in the class.
Grade 1 Academic Assessment for 4 subjects

แผนภูมิเปรียบเทียบผลการเรียนของนักเรียนชั้นป.1 ระหว่างโรงเรียนนาร้อง (โครงการทวิภาษา) และโรงเรียนคู่เทียบ

Number of Students

Performance Categories

Comparison
Experimental
Annually, 30 student teachers from Yala Rajabhat University spend their one-year internship in the 15 program schools.
Achievements

- Student learning monitored and better achievements recorded;
- Local research teams (teachers, academics, religious leaders, local artists, musicians etc.) were involved in all stages of the program;
- 145 teachers and 13 teacher assistants developed skills (through 106 workshops) and served over 2,300 MLE students in 15 primary schools.
- Thai-based, Patani-Malay writing system standardized and approved by the Royal Society of Thailand;
- 1,447 educational items (big books, small books, diglot books, primers, games, posters, teacher handbooks, student dictionary, etc.) produced.
- Local University empowered to establish the MLE training program for undergraduates, in-service teachers and school administrators.
- Greater levels of trust/satisfaction with schools among local communities.
- The draft of the National Language Policy of Thailand supports MLE and contributes to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by using the mother tongue as the key factor in learning languages and literacy process.
Framework of Thailand’s Current Draft of National Language Policy
Challenges

• Different stakeholders have differing opinions and sometimes opposition to MLE – advocacy and communication on the importance and approach of the program has been vital;

• Difficult environment (security, violence, flooding) which made the program implementation and monitoring more difficult;

• Difficult conditions for teachers combined with the demand for substantial change in teaching practice/curriculum/materials;

• Some of the elites and religious leaders prefer the Arabic-based Jawi script (used for religious documents);

• Need to build trust between local people and Thai officials
Learning

- Stakeholder analysis should be done as part of the programme planning, especially in a conflict zone;
- Community consultation and participation is crucial to take into account cultural, linguistic and other considerations;
- Any MLE programme should have an accompanying advocacy strategy to inform and influence key actors both for programme implementation and any future scale-up.
- There needs to be a systemic approach to teacher training and development, as well as support for school directors, for sustainability
Future Directions

• Advocacy with Ministry of Education: Development and implementation of National Language in Education Policy, building on the National Language Policy.

• Technical support: Regional and National scale-up strategy and budget within the education sector, informed by the program

• Stakeholder engagement continued – documentation, dissemination of approach and results, public advocacy

• Program schools continue to offer a model for scale up, learning, teaching practice…..

• Institutionalising MLE teacher education in other universities.