A GUIDE FOR PLANNING THE FUTURE OF OUR LANGUAGE: A TOOL TO HELP MINORITY LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES PLAN ATTAINABLE MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION GOALS

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SUSTAINABLE USE MODEL


• Languages used to access specific types of “life-crucial knowledge”

• EGIDS = Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale
  • Measure of community-wide language vitality
  • Focus on *speech community* = Everyone who uses the same set of languages in basically the same way
SUSTAINABLE USE MODEL – SUSTAINABLE LEVELS

EGIDS levels:

4 - Educational
6a - Vigorous
9 - Dormant
SUSTAINABLE USE MODEL

• Understand own patterns of language use / vitality by assessing 5 conditions of sustainable use at each level

• Determine level of language use needed for each language to reach goals – goals related to what life-crucial knowledge must be passed on / acquired

• Choose appropriate language development activities for each language to reach that level of language use
A GUIDE FOR PLANNING THE FUTURE OF OUR LANGUAGE

• Shares insights with communities in non-technical ways
• Encourages group discussion and planning
• Points away from one-size-fits-all approach to language development planning
A GUIDE FOR PLANNING THE FUTURE OF OUR LANGUAGE

• Facilitators of discussions are local community members
• Aiming for cross-section of community
• Flow of Guide follows main components of Sustainable Use Model
GROUP DISCUSSIONS

• Draw maps of languages used in each place
• Create posters identifying areas of life-critical knowledge, and language(s) used for each
GROUP DISCUSSIONS

• Self-assess EGIDS level using a poster of a mountain or other object that depicts levels
• Guided by set of questions about the 5 conditions of sustainable use for each sustainable level
GROUP DISCUSSIONS

• Example rating scale about Differentiation:
  #2 – Members of our community talk in certain places, about certain things, or with certain people using only our language.
GROUP DISCUSSIONS

• Decide: Happy with current state of language use, or need to strengthen it / maintain it?
• By considering life-crucial knowledge associated with this language
GROUP DISCUSSIONS

• Discuss and prioritize language development activities that could help
• The Guide provides a Resource Manual with some ideas
GROUP DISCUSSIONS

• Begin with activities that can be done with local resources
• Approach organizations, universities and governments for expertise as needed
REQUIREMENTS TO USE THE GUIDE WELL

• ~3 days training
• Familiarity with Sustainable Use Model
• Ability to facilitate participatory discussions
• 2-3 days for community discussions
• Revisit discussion every year or two
COMMUNITIES USING THE GUIDE – INDONESIA

• Toraja community leaders (university, school, religious, government)

• Identified strong oral use of heritage language (~750,000 speakers), with initial signs of shift

• Although some literature exists in local language, they saw the need for safeguarding oral language use in the home
COMMUNITIES USING THE GUIDE – SOUTH ASIA

• Had already begun MLE and adult literacy
• Used the *Guide* in group discussions, interviews with people in the fields
• Identified a number of goals aimed at stabilizing the loss of spoken language use—crucial foundation for MLE and literacy programs to be effective long-term
COMMUNITIES USING THE GUIDE – SOUTH ASIA

- Desire to expand MLE program to specific schools
- Plan to use more audio materials in adult literacy programs
- Committee of women formed to promote heritage language in the home by parents and community members
- Held awareness-raising workshops for those who have migrated to the city, about language vitality / maintenance
COMMUNITIES USING THE GUIDE – PERU

• Yanesha community commented, “This is the first time we saw our own people training us and giving us orientation on these things.”
• Goal: In 5-10 years, children and youth speaking Yanesha again in the home
• Voice heard in regional newspaper and television to promote local language
COMMUNITIES USING THE GUIDE – PERU

- Yanesha participants have taken the *Guide* training to related communities across the border, on their own initiative.
THE GUIDE HELPS COMMUNITIES SEE:

• Life-crucial knowledge they need to pass on or acquire
• Language(s) they will use to do that
• Current state of each language and whether that will allow them to pass on / acquire that knowledge
• Goals for language development for each language
ATTAINABLE MLE GOALS

• If not all communities are using their heritage language to the same degree, we see that...

• The application of language development activities, including MTB-MLE, must adjust to the way a community is using its multiple languages.
ATTAINABLE MLE GOALS

• The Guide can help communities identify their level of language use—both heritage language and others.

• Ex.: If many parents no longer pass on the heritage language to children in the home (EGIDS level 6b Threatened), other language development activities may be needed prior to / rather than MTB-MLE for those segments of the community.
USING THE GUIDE

• Download the Guide at:
  http://www.leadimpact.org/language/#the-future-of-our-language

• Available in English, French, Spanish, Portuguese. Write to us for other translations: Indonesian, Malay

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• To what degree are communities you work with pursuing language development goals (like MLE) appropriate to their current use of their heritage language and other languages?