Addressing language barrier issues for ethnic minority children in mountainous areas in Vietnam via the Teaching Assistant Model
1. Vietnam National context and challenges

1. The practice of the Teaching Assistant (TA) Model in school environment

1. Save the Children’s advocacy achievement and future vision

1. Q&A
1. National context and challenges

Languages context:

- 54 ethnic groups
- Over 100 languages: mostly in spoken form, appx. 30 with written scripts
- Kinh (Vietnamese/national language) – instruction language at school – not known by most ethnic minority (EM) children before entering school
1. National context and challenges (cont)

**Language barriers of EM children**

- Most of the ethnic minority children use their mother tongue to communicate at home, so they do not speak and understand Vietnamese well or even at all.
- One mainstream curriculum and one set of textbooks apply all over the country and the language of instruction in school is Vietnamese.
- Most teachers cannot speak the children’s mother tongue. Few teachers come from ethnic minority backgrounds; but even many of them lack appropriate training, so they struggle to deliver quality teaching.

**CHALLENGES:** Ethnic minority children suffer significantly high repetition rates, low performance outcomes, and high dropout rates compared to children from the majority Kinh ethnic group, leading to fewer life and development opportunities for EM children.

- The need to improving basic education quality for EM children in Vietnam by addressing language barriers
2. The practice of Teaching Assistant Model in school environment

a. Who are they?

b. What do they do?
   – Before the class
   – During the lesson
   – After the class/Outside the class

c. What impacts do they bring?
2. Teaching Assistant Model in the school environment

Who are they?

- They come from local communities of the children, who can speak well both Vietnamese and the local ethnic minority languages, and who wish to work at school with children.

- They are selected by schools and communities, with guidance from Save the Children.
2. Teaching Assistant Model in school environment

What are the differences with other TA models in Vietnam?

- Permanent position that provides day-to-day support for children in class.
- Recruited and trained not only in MT-BBE, but also teaching skills, local ethnic language strengthening, child friendly learning environment.
- Received regular coaching from main teachers and technical support from school leaders, education officers as well as Save the Children staff.
- Exempted from a number of public labor days by the commune authority.
- Some recruited as school staff (cooks, boarding students supervisors, guards, etc.) – this is an effort of schools to maintain the TA position as it is not yet an official post in the education system.
- Recognition from school and community.
2. Teaching Assistant Model in school environment

What do they do?

1. Before the class

(video about TA and teachers working together to prepare for the lesson before the class)

This is a special characteristic of the pilot bilingual teaching program.
2. Teaching Assistant Model in school environment
What do they do?

2. During the lesson

- Before starting a new lesson, TA will use children’s mother tongue to break the ice and suggesting the topic; help children gasp some notions about new lesson by asking suggesting questions.

- Next, teachers go into more details of the lesson in Vietnamese, let children work in group for practice and stimulate their thinking. TA will help teacher in organizing and monitoring children and supporting children in learning process.

- At the end of the lesson, TA summarizes the content in mother tongue for children to exactly understand what they have learnt about.
2. Teaching Assistant Model in school environment

What do they do?

3. After the lesson/ Outside the classroom

- Assist teachers in tidying the classrooms and learning corners
- Reflect and review with teachers about the class and note lessons learned for next ones, agreeing with teachers about what to do to prepare for next lessons.
- Assist teachers and school in communication with parents or children’s caregivers
- Provide support for children’s caregivers to monitor their children’s study at home
- Assist school in mobilizing children to attend school (especially in the beginning of a school year or after a long holiday)

children often follow their parents to faraway field during long break. Hence, it is very difficult for school staff to get them all back in school initially.
# 2. Teaching Assistant Model in school environment

**What do they do in preschool?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Games &amp; Physical development</th>
<th>L1 development</th>
<th>Knowledge development</th>
<th>L2 development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Talking and activities in L1</td>
<td>Talking and activities in L1</td>
<td>Talking and activities in L1</td>
<td>Total Physical Response (TPR)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Physical development</td>
<td>Language development: vocabulary, pronunciation, structure</td>
<td>Cognitive development</td>
<td>Language development in Vietnamese</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cognitive development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In charge</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**In charge**: Teaching Assistant, Teaching Assistant, Teaching Assistant, Teacher
2. Teaching Assistant Model in school environment

What do they do – in primary school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>L1 development</th>
<th>Vietnamese</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Nature and Society</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>L1</td>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>L1, Vietnamese</td>
<td>L1, Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>Talking and activities in L1</td>
<td>Teaching Vietnamese as second language</td>
<td>L1- L2 - L1</td>
<td>L1 – L2 – L1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>Language L1 development: vocabulary, oral expressions, communication skills, pronunciation.</td>
<td>Language L2 development: letters, four language skills, vocabulary, creative writing</td>
<td>Cognitive development Language development</td>
<td>Cognitive development Language development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In charge</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant</td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant Teacher</td>
<td>Teaching Assistant Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Teaching Assistant Model in school environment

Impacts of TA

Teaching assistants play significant roles in enhancing students overall achievements:

- students’ attendance rates increased;
- students are not afraid of speaking and answering in class;
- they are motivated to learn and more confident when expressing themselves in Vietnamese given their Vietnamese fluency obviously increased.
- Students themselves said that they like going to school, and feel confident in class and closer to their teachers as well as interested in group studying given their Vietnamese is much better.

“I love to learn in both Vietnamese and H’mong language. When I was in grade 1, whenever I didn’t understand Vietnamese, the teaching assistant would explain again in H’Mong language, I love it ”, said Vang A Ly, 7-year-old boy, Chua Ta primary school, Dien Bien Dong District.
“Thanks to the support from the project, we have 2 out of 5 grade-one classes with teaching assistants. The students learn better compared with non TA-classes. Especially in Ta Lanh satellite school, where the student minority diversity is high, the TA can speak both H’Mong and Dao language, so he can greatly assist students and teachers”, shared Ms. Vu Thi Minh Thu, Vice Head of Nam Lanh Primary school, Van Chan, Yen Bai.

“Parents care more about their children’s learning as they have a channel (the TA) to communicate with teachers. The TA is someone from their own community, so they feel closer to the school’s staff. Through the TAs, parents also ask about their children’s learning at school. Besides, when children make progress in learning and consequentially like going to school more, their parents feel more confident to invest in education,” Mrs. Thu said
3. Save the Children’s achievements and future vision

Our project achievements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>38000</td>
<td>11400</td>
<td>4363</td>
<td>2140</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>850</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education councils, parents, &amp; community members</td>
<td>15000</td>
<td>5500</td>
<td>6873</td>
<td>600</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>53,850</td>
<td>17,443</td>
<td>11,584</td>
<td>2,790</td>
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</table>
3. Save the Children’s achievements and future vision

Our advocacy achievement

- Training package of New Professional Teachers’ Meeting Guideline (PTM) has been recommended in official letter no. 80/ KH-BGDĐT of Ministry of Education and Training by the project Global Partnership for Education – Viet Nam Escuela Nueva (GPE-VNEN). This has been implemented in 1,447 schools all over the country.

- Since 2014, Teaching Vietnamese as a second language to ethnic minority children Guideline by SC has been officially adopted as a part of curriculum for students in Pedagogy Colleges and Universities of 33 mountainous province nationwide.
Save the Children’s future vision for MTBBLE

- Continue to advocate for MTBBLE approach to be applied in all schools with EM children nationwide
- Continue to campaign for TA model to be an official position in the school nationally and internationally