# Approaches to Language in Education for Migrants and Refugees in the Asia-Pacific Region

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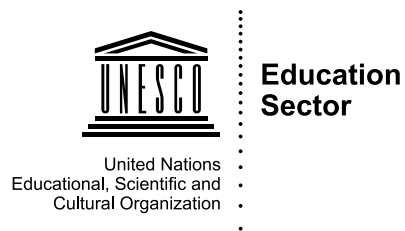
## The Global Education 2030 Agenda

UNESCO, as the United Nations' specialized agency for education, is entrusted to lead and coordinate the Education 2030 Agenda, which is part of a global movement to eradicate poverty through 17 Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Education, essential to achieve all of these goals, has its own dedicated Goal 4, which aims to *"ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."* The Education 2030 Framework for Action provides guidance for the implementation of this ambitious goal and commitments.

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# Introduction

UNESCO Bangkok, together with the Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group (AP MLE-WG), has a longstanding interest in education issues impacting children from ethnolinguistic minority and marginalized communities. In particular, the AP MLE-WG has played a leading role in advancing mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) policies and practices.

UNESCO Bangkok commissioned this paper to examine strategies for addressing the needs of refugee, migrant and internally displaced children in the Asia-Pacific region. This document aims to create a stronger knowledge base to support Member States as they formulate education policies that are responsive to the needs of such children.

This document aims to:

- Examine how linguistic diversity and human mobility intersect and impact minority, migrant and refugee children's access to quality, inclusive education
- Link policy priorities to promising practices, based on international frameworks and lessons learned from successful programmes
- Recommend steps for improving language-in-education policies and their implementation.

To do this, this paper examines:

- Global and regional trends in migration
- The impact of migration on children's education
- Linguistic diversity and its implications for language-in-education policies and practices
- Research and resources that support inclusive quality education for migrant and refugee children.

This document highlights the fact that the Asia-Pacific region hosts the largest number of refugees and displaced people in the world, and is the place of origin for nearly half of all international migrants. However, *data related to the unique language-in-education needs of refugee and migrant children in and from this area is sparse*. Additional research is desperately needed to ensure that the promise of SDG 4 is realized for all of the Asia-Pacific region's children.

**Picture 1: Mother tongue-based multilingual education**

# MOTHER TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION

**7,097**
living languages in the world

**50%**
are in Asia-Pacific

Central Asia **13**

Pacific **1,306**

East Asia **289**

South Asia **665**

**3,519** living languages in Asia-Pacific

Southeast Asia **1,246**

Kyrgyzstan **5**

DPR Korea **1**

Bangladesh **40**

India **447**

Thailand **76**

Philippines **181**

Papua New Guinea **836**

A region of **LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

**40%**
of the world's children don't have the chance to learn in their mother tongue

## IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, HOW CAN YOU LEARN?
### CHILDREN LEARN BETTER IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE FIRST

% students taught in mother tongue

100
80
60
40
20
0
%

HIGH — CAMBODIA, VIET NAM

MEDIUM — PHILIPPINES, MALAYSIA, MYANMAR, THAILAND, LAO PDR, TIMOR-LESTE, SINGAPORE

LOW — INDONESIA, BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

Mother Tongue-Based Education

Mother Tongue → Second Language

*Source: Adapted from Kosonen (2017)*

UNESCO
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Bangkok Office

Sustainable Development Goals

*Mother tongue-based multilingual education is a realistic and cost-effective way to improve quality education for all and ensure respect for the diversity of communities.*

# People on the move

## Global migration trends

The number of migrants worldwide increased from 77 million in 1960 to 244 million by 2015 (UN DESA, 2017a). By late 2018, 75 million people worldwide were identified as "persons of concern," a category which includes refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), asylum seekers, returnees who have not fully reintegrated into their countries/societies of origin, and 'stateless' persons (UNHCR, 2019); 95 per cent of these "persons of concern" were displaced by conflict, human rights violations, persecution or forms of violence. Approximately half of the world's refugees are children under 18 (UNHCR, 2018). Some 41 million people are estimated to be IDPs, 13.6 million of whom are 'newly' displaced (UNHCR, 2018), although this figure is also likely to be underreported (IDMC, 2019). There is little evidence that the current trajectory of increasing numbers of displaced persons is likely to decline in the foreseeable future.

'A surge in global migration, spurred in part by conflict, emergency and fragility, has elicited increased attention to specific needs of migrant and refugee learners. The international community faces an urgent global challenge: more people are now displaced than since the end of the Second World War. Half of those displaced are under the age of 18. Further, while two thirds of international migrants are in high-income countries, 85 per cent of those displaced by conflict or natural disaster now live in low-income countries. Forced displacements creates vulnerabilities, including access to discrimination-free education. Meeting Sustainable Goal 4 by 2030 demands that all children, youth, and adults receive an inclusive equitable quality education. Education is a right that plays a critical role in advancing both sustainable development and peace. Yet refugees, migrants and asylum seekers encounter numerous barriers to an inclusive and equitable quality education in host countries and areas worldwide' (UNESCO, 2018c).

## Regional migration in Asia-Pacific

Migration has been a dynamic feature of the Asia-Pacific region for millennia; however, in recent years the number of migrants has increased dramatically, while the direction of their movement has changed (Castles, de Haas and Miller, 2013). Asia has more than 80 million international migrants (UN, 2017b). In fact, nearly half of all international migrants worldwide in 2015 were born in Asia, with India as the largest country of origin, followed by China, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan (IOM, 2017). Large migration corridors lead from India, China and Bangladesh toward the Gulf States and the USA (UNESCO, 2018a), while new migrant trends also show flows into India and China (IOM, 2018a). These patterns of economic migration often leave children behind, to be cared for by relatives – often grandparents (UNESCO, 2018a).

Most economic migrants leave their homes for the promise of financial opportunity. Poverty can increase the economic motivation to migrate, but research shows that 'the more educated are more likely to migrate' (UNESCO, 2018a). Poverty, food insecurity and lack of access to legal migration channels compel some people to utilize illegal and dangerous means of migration (IOM, 2017). The latter often compel migrants to accept dangerous working conditions and substandard living situations; many tolerate such conditions because of the hoped-for economic benefits of remittances for family members remaining behind (UN ECOSOC, 2017b).

A relatively new driver of migration within Asia has been an increase in educational migration. While Australia, New Zealand and Singapore are long-established destinations for international students, China, Japan, Republic of Korea and Malaysia have recently experienced substantial growth in foreign students (Castles, de Haas and Miller, 2013). These students are not of immediate concern, although failure to return could have long-term consequences for socio-economic development in their home countries.

The past decade has seen an increase in the number of forcibly displaced people in the Asia-Pacific region, including IDPs, refugees, asylum seekers, 'stateless' people and returnees. Forced displacement can be rapid or protracted. Traditional drivers of displacement include conflict, political unrest, racial or religiously-motivated persecution, and the risk of physical or psychological harm (ECOSOC, 2017b).

As of 2019, the Asia-Pacific region hosts the largest number of refugees and displaced people in the world, with the largest numbers of refugees coming from Afghanistan (2.7 million) and Myanmar (1.1 million) (UNHCR, 2019). Smaller numbers of refugees come from Viet Nam, China, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. Of great concern are the children who are unaccompanied and/or orphaned as a result of conflict or natural disasters.

Refugees from countries in the Asia-Pacific region are most often hosted by other countries in the region, including Pakistan (1.4 million), Iran (951,000), Bangladesh (906,600), Malaysia (114,200), Thailand (97,699) and India (18,800). Low-income countries bear a disproportionately large responsibility, sheltering 33 per cent of refugees worldwide (UNHCR, 2019). The education systems in many low-income countries are already stretched; the influx of refugees can thus impact educational quality for both migrant and receiving communities (Dryden-Peterson, 2016).

Increasingly, however, environmental drivers related to climate change, natural disasters and environmental degradation compel people to leave their homes. In recent years, 13 million people in China, the Philippines, India and Bangladesh were displaced by natural disasters, including seismic activity, cyclones and flooding (UNESCO, 2018a).



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# Migration and education

The impact of migration on children's education depends on the type of displacement. When linked to violence, displacement reduces access to education; at least 4 million refugee children were out of school in 2017 (UNESCO, 2018a). Data on refugee children's access to education is limited (Dryden-Petersen, 2011). However, it appears that only 61 per cent of refugee children are enrolled in primary school and 23 per cent in secondary schools, compared to 92 per cent and 84 per cent of non-refugee children, respectively, worldwide (UNHCR, 2017). Enrolment in higher education stands at 34 per cent globally, but only 1 per cent for refugees.

Access to education is particularly important for children who have experienced conflict or other trauma. For these, schools can help with the healing process (UNESCO 2018a; Dryden-Peterson, 2011; UNESCO, 2019). However, displaced children face many barriers to education, including a lack of identity documents, a lack of educational credentials, legal impediments, unavailability of catch-up programmes, a lack of fluency in the language of the host school, and a lack of financial and other resources to enrol (UNESCO, 2018a). Limited data on refugee children makes it difficult for education planners to address these barriers.

Even when such children have access to school, additional barriers can prevent them from participating meaningfully and regularly. Displaced children often arrive in their new school after significant trauma (Heugh, 2017a). Such psycho-social ruptures have lasting consequences for individual and community vulnerability and can negatively impact learning in the short and long term, especially when compounded with other barriers (Dunn, 2014; Polzer and Hammond, 2008).

> 'The number of school-aged migrant and refugee children worldwide has grown by 26 per cent since 2000' (UNESCO, 2018c).

The impact of voluntary economic migration on children who are left behind is likewise complex. Economic migration may bring apparent benefits to children, by increasing household income (freeing money to be spent on education) and reducing the perceived need for child labour (Coleman, 2011; Schapiro, 2009). The extent to which children actually benefit may differ according to their gender, age, the context of care, and location. Such positive effects may, however, be negated by the adverse effects of being left behind. Children of migrant parents show decreased attendance and retention in school, and, in some cases higher drop-out rates (UNESCO, 2018a). Longer durations of parental absence are also associated with poorer educational performance, especially among boys, and poorer overall well-being (Zhou, Murphy and Tao, 2014; Lei, Liu and Hill, 2018).

# Why focus on language?

Children from non-dominant language groups are historically excluded from education, the economy and social mobility. Internationally it has become evident that marginalized and minority people are the most likely to experience forcible displacement, and that language issues impact them wherever they go.

## Language reflects identity

As an overt marker of ethnic identity, language can further marginalize children, youth and adults or exacerbate the risk that they become victims of discrimination.

## Language is linked to migration processes

Forced displacement often strips populations of their material resources and social networks. This exacerbates inequalities in access to social services. This impacts migrants in both their home and host countries. Maintenance of the home language, and acquisition of the host country language, can alleviate such problems, regardless of whether the migrant remains in the host country or returns to their place of origin.

'Decades of research on language and education support the need to develop explicit and inclusive language policies that meet the needs of all learners. The right to education and the right to language are enshrined in many international conventions, declarations and charters. However, the international community has not sufficiently addressed the intersection between migration, education, and language in the context of forced displacement. Indeed, the SDGs, while encompassing educational rights, fall short in explicitly identifying language as a source of concern, largely due to a more general failure to recognize the consequences, both positive and negative, of linguistic diversity among vulnerable populations' (UNESCO, 2018c).

## Language can be a driver of conflict or a pathway to peace

Issues related to language and ethnicity often exacerbate tensions between social groups, driving conflict. Nonetheless, inclusive language planning that involves concerted policy dialogue can contribute to greater social cohesion and peace (UNESCO, 2018c).

## Language is linked to psycho-social well-being

Mother tongue-based programmes reduce the trauma that migrant and refugee children experience during and immediately following their transition. Mother tongue (also known as home or community language) learning has been linked to a greater sense of empowerment or control over circumstances, and a stronger sense of safety and resilience.

## Language diversity challenges educators

Global research shows that minority, migrant and refugee children learn better when mother tongue instruction goes hand in hand with second (or additional) language learning.

Nonetheless, lack of resources can make such an arrangement difficult to implement. Some home and community languages lack writing systems or teaching and learning materials. It may be difficult to recruit, accredit and place teachers from the local language community. Nonetheless, Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child provides crucial guidance: "In all things concerning children the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration."

# Policy gaps

## Lack of background information

When children move between countries, their educational background often gets left behind. Data on their home language(s) and past schooling, including standardized testing and other educational milestones, are rarely available to educators in their new host country. International and host country education providers often find themselves guessing about what the children have already learned, and how best to provide them with some kind of education – regardless of whether it "fits" with their past background or is delivered in a language they understand. This makes it challenging to develop appropriate policies and practices to support these children to move forward with their education.

## Lack of clearly articulated, inclusive language-in-education policies

In the Asia-Pacific region, few countries have clearly articulated, evidence-based language-in-education policies for their own domestic minority communities (the Philippines, Cambodia, and Thailand are exceptions). It should not be surprising, therefore, that most countries do not have clear language-in-education policies for migrant children (Dryden-Peterson, 2015). Where policies do exist, they are piecemeal, with few overarching frameworks based upon pedagogies that can support inclusion and integration (Miller, Ziaian and Esterman, 2018; Baak, et al., 2018).

> 'Although the international community widely agrees that language acts as a key barrier to learning for migrant and refugee children, youth, and adults, certain areas are in need of increased attention in the policies of governments and international organizations' (UNESCO, 2018c).

Countries that do have systematic policies and approaches for the language education of migrants, such as Australia and New Zealand, do not differentiate between refugees and other migrants (including those recruited through immigration programmes designed to attract highly-skilled persons). Both categories of migrants who arrive with languages different from English are considered English language learners (Windle & Miller, 2012), and are thus enrolled in the same type of education programmes.

## Inconsistencies between language policy and practice

Language-in-education policies responding to the needs of marginalized communities should be clearly linked to implementation plans. Nonetheless, implementation of MTB-MLE policies for domestic minority communities are often hindered by weak planning, unclear guidance from central to local levels and lack of sustained commitment (Tupas, 2015). In some cases, MTB-MLE policies are so complex that implementation at the school level is not feasible with available resources. Such difficulties have been experienced in India, Nepal, the Philippines, and Timor Leste (Tupas, 2015; Mohanty, 2019). Thus, it is not surprising that when language-in-education policies for migrants and refugees exist, they may face implementation challenges.

## Uncertainties about the duration of displacement

Interventions for children who have been forcibly displaced are often short-term in nature, designed for a brief period of "education in emergencies." While such programmes do provide immediate benefits to children, it is unrealistic to think that they can replace long-term schooling. This is particularly true where language learning is concerned. Research shows that a minimum of six years is required for most young students to acquire grade-appropriate levels of academic language competency in a new language in programmes where they are simultaneously developing literacy and learning across the curriculum in their home language. Expectations that refugee children can learn effectively in English or other widely spoken languages need to be tempered by this reality. In addition, conflicts driving displacement now tend to last longer—ten years is the global average—which means that refugee education providers need to take a longer view that takes language into account (UNESCO, 2018c).

## Inadequate financial, human and teaching-learning resources

Insufficient human, financial and material resources—or even the perception of a lack of such resources—often hamper the implementation of language-in-education policies, including those that address the needs of migrant and refugee children. An apparent lack of teaching and learning resources is often offered as a reason why government systems find it difficult to implement mother tongue programmes.

The cost of investing in multilingual education is not as high as often believed by government administrators (e.g. Cole, 2005; Grin, 2005). Initial investment is likely to result in a positive return within five years when offset by the thorough calculation of costs that arise when the system fails to provide appropriate opportunities for students to succeed. These short-term costs include student failure, grade repetition and student attrition (dropping out). In the medium-term, those costs translate into a cohort of disaffected youth without the personal and professional skills to contribute meaningfully to society. In the long-term, these shortcomings can lead to negative socio-economic, health and security outcomes.

These challenges are exacerbated in situations of refugees and migrants because of the often short timeframes available for procuring materials and the lack of resources to do so.

## Teacher training

Host country teachers are often unprepared to teach refugee and migrant children. Teachers may be unfamiliar with the historical and political circumstances of the student's forced migration. They may also be unaware of ethnic and cultural differences between various groups of migrants and the host culture. Refugees and migrants are often seen as one homogenous group – a view that does not address the varying linguistic competences of individuals (Naidoo, 2012). This can lead to a lack of context-appropriate training for teachers of migrant students.

Teachers need to be equipped to understand the short, medium and long-term consequences of conflict, disrupted education, trauma and violence for students from refugee backgrounds. The relationship between refugee children's languages, their identities, and the impact of their experiences on their learning, particularly in cases of trauma, is not yet adequately understood by many education providers. Specific training is necessary for educators working with students who have histories of interrupted schooling, and/or who have had minimal exposure to practices of literacy (Windle & Miller, 2012).

## Repatriation

Refugee students who are able to access educational opportunities in host countries often find it difficult to transition back to their home country's system. For example, Afghan refugees returning home after being hosted in Pakistan were expected to repeat at least one grade because the education system in Afghanistan did not recognize the UNHCR refugee camp education system (Coleman, 2019). Migrant and refugee children from Myanmar living in Thailand face challenges in returning to their home area, as the Myanmar government currently does not recognize educational qualifications from refugee camps, ethnic education providers, or the Thai government (Karenni Education Department, 2015). Unless children have been in a bilingual school that uses both the host and home country's languages, they find it challenging to adjust to a new academic language.

## Lack of community participation in policy decisions

The tendency to treat children and parents as "victims" of displacement can obscure the fact that community participation and investment can contribute greatly to successful education. Interventions made without parental buy-in or support will experience more limited success. Girls may be especially disadvantaged in situations where parents feel insecure about sending them into an educational setting that seems at odds with norms of the home culture. In addition, displaced persons bring with them knowledge, cultural art forms, and other aspects of traditional wisdom that can be used as effective tools for education. Conversely, host communities should have forums where they are able to freely express concerns about the newcomers, and work together with policy-makers and migrants to achieve solutions.

# Promising principles

While many obstacles remain to ensure that all migrant and refugee children can access education in a language they understand, significant developments in language-in-education policy and practice have evolved in the Asia-Pacific region over the last decade. This section highlights three promising principles.

## Promote the view of language as a resource

Linguistic diversity is often seen as a problem – something that makes teachers' jobs more difficult. However, the reality of diversity can also be viewed as a resource – a tool for education and long term social and economic development. Modern brain science has found that bilingual or multilingual children reap certain mental-processing benefits. It thus becomes vital for policy-makers and practitioners to understand which systems and pedagogical practices are most effective at engaging all the students' linguistic resources.

'Language-in-education policy often treats language as a problem, and yet the international community frames language as a right, and evidence from learning systems worldwide demonstrate that language is a resource for individuals, communities, nations and economies' (UNESCO, 2018c).

## Reference supportive legal frameworks

Between 2010 and 2019, several documents developed by the United Nations General Assembly and other humanitarian agencies drew attention to the negative life-altering consequences of displacement and called for coordinated international action to ensure the provision of inclusive and quality education for displaced children. These include:

- Framework on Durable Solutions for Internal Displacement (IASC, 2010)
- United Nations Decision No. 2011/20. Durable Solutions (UN, 2011)
- New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (UNGA, 2016)
- Global Compact for Refugees (UNGA, 2018)
- Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (UNGA, 2018)
- Enforcing the Right to Education of Refugees (UNESCO, 2019)
- Refugee Education 2030: A Strategy for Refugee Inclusion (UNHCR, 2019).

Collectively these international frameworks and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) call on countries to ensure 'inclusive and quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' (UN, 2015).

Priority strategies within these frameworks include:

- Enrolling displaced persons within the national education system of the receiving or host countries in order to ensure sustainable integration (IASC, 2010);
- Ensuring more equitable sharing of the costs and other burdens, including education, associated with hosting the world's refugees (UNGA, 2018);

- Encouraging more and better international collaboration, organized responses and implementable action to ensure that displaced, refugee and returning children are provided with adequate inclusive and quality education (UNESCO, 2018a; 2018b; 2019);

- Increasing political prioritization (UNGA, 2018);

- Supporting more flexible education systems and certification programmes that include bridging and catch-up programmes and accelerated alternatives to mainstream education (UNGA, 2018);

- Encouraging exchanges of educational expertise in low, middle and high-income countries on how best to include students' home languages (mother tongues), the school language, a national language and possibly an international language in ways that are responsive to cultural, faith, knowledge and linguistic diversities of students in the region (UNGA, 2018).

Although not connected to the United Nations, the *Salzburg Statement for a Multilingual World* provides a succinct summary of language-in-education issues and action points, in reference both to linguistic minority people and international migrants, that can be referenced by policy-makers, educators, and grassroots organizations (Salzburg Global Seminar, 2018).

## Encourage participatory approaches to policy development

Participatory approaches are critical to language planning in order to inform 'language policies that promote social cohesion, national unity, respect for differences and economic modernization' (Lo Bianco, 2016a). Yet there is often a significant gap between the perspectives of community members and government officials. The latter are often concerned with broad measures to solve problems, an outlook which can lead towards monolingual solutions, with minimal attention to linguistic diversity. For minority and migrant communities, however, languages represent layers of historical, cultural and psychological significance. Community sensitivity to language issues can become heightened when physical and psychological threats are present.

'The perspectives of linguistic minority groups, including those forcibly displaced, are rarely understood or elicited by policy-makers. Yet evidence shows the effectiveness of consultative approaches and the direct involvement of migrants and refugees in collaborative decision-making – described as bottom-up language planning – which includes participatory research, frequent dialogue, and contributions to policy writing' (UNESCO, 2018c).

# Case studies in good practice

## The Language, Education and Social Cohesion (LESC) Initiative in Southeast Asia

UNICEF EAPRO's LESC Initiative was conducted in Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand between 2013 and 2015. LESC investigated the potential of language-in-education policies to promote social cohesion. The process has been documented in three country reports (Lo Bianco, 2016b,c,d), and a synthesis report which captures the key messages from all three experiences (Lo Bianco, 2016a). The initiative was designed 'to strengthen resilience, social cohesion and human security, to encourage practical interventions to alleviate conflict and advance peace through the education sector' (Lo Bianco, 2016a). Of particular concern was the long-term impact of conflict and/or natural disaster on children, poverty, and the exclusion of marginalized ethnolinguistic minorities. Two key lessons learned include:

1. International stakeholders have neither fully understood nor recognized the significance of how language issues and language policy can be used to escalate and sustain inter-ethnic conflict and violence.

2. Participatory action research (PAR) is a useful tool for including multiple stakeholders in peace building and language-in-education policy development. It seeks to bring all stakeholders together to find common ground on as many issues as possible, beginning on the local level and working up to the national level, such that all involved are invested in achieving successful outcomes.

## Collecting language data in Afghanistan

*The Condition of English in Multilingual Afghanistan* (Coleman, 2019) is an important report on the situation in a linguistically diverse country with a long history of conflict and displacement. Some languages are spoken by large proportions of the population, and others by minority groups. Key lessons learned include:

- The need for rigorous data collection in collaboration with multiple stakeholders from the local to the national level

- The importance of a deep understanding of context, including historical inequalities and other sources of conflict, to inform education policies

- Speakers of dominant languages are likely to be monolingual or somewhat bilingual, whereas speakers of non-dominant languages are more likely to be bilingual or multilingual – a trend found throughout the Asia-Pacific region

- Many languages are spoken in more than one nation. For example, Dari (Farsi), Pashto, Turkmen, Urdu and Uzbek are spoken in several countries, including Afghanistan, India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Asia-Pacific region is home to many transborder/cross-border languages

- English language policies must be realistic. In many countries, there is pressure to advance the use of English in the education system as a perceived language of neutrality and pathway to economic success. However, in both Africa and the Asia-Pacific region, English education policies are often overly-optimistic, resulting in low student achievement (Coleman, 2011).

## Engaging teacher education organizations in India

An understanding of teacher professional development organizations may be particularly useful in the context of minoritized migrant communities, such as refugees, as well as internally displaced people. This is particularly true when these agencies engage in collaborative networking with non-government organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), and local/regional/national government agencies.

The Vidya Bhawan Society (VBS) was established in Rajasthan in 1931 as a not-for-profit organization, outside of the formal education system, in order to provide equal, inclusive and quality educational opportunities for children from across the very unequal socio-economic divides in India. Rama Kant Agnihotri worked with the VBS for many years, developing students' and teachers' understanding of multilingualism and multilinguality (e.g. Agnihotri, 2007, 2014) for successful learning for all students. The VBS has outreach programmes that support teachers in school communities within and beyond Rajasthan, where students are from minoritized backgrounds.

The Eklavya Foundation, another not-for-profit educational body, was established in 1982 for the purpose of supporting education, particularly in places where educational resources and teacher training are lacking. Eklavya works within a network of community-based-organizations (CBOs) to support teacher training and materials development. Materials are developed in regional and local languages, as well as in Hindi and English. Eklavya's engagement with a small community-based organization in a low-SES neighbourhood of Bhopal where members of the stigmatized Gondi community live, led to the empowerment of a young Gondi-speaking woman working with out-of-school children. This young woman, without any specific teacher education preparation, realized that the Gondi-speaking children needed to learn to read and write first in Gondi first. She thus developed bilingual Gondi-Hindi reading materials, later adding English (Heugh, 2017c).

## Linking multilingual education and migrant education in Thailand

Thailand boasts one of the highest literacy rates in the world; nonetheless, nearly one-third of youth from ethnic minority households are illiterate (National Statistical Office and UNICEF, 2016). This is particularly evident in the southernmost part of Thailand, where Patani Malay-speaking children typically post the lowest scores in national testing in grades 3, 6, 9 and 12. Language, religion, and historical grievances are drivers of conflict in this volatile region, with over 7,000 people, including 180 teachers, killed since 2004. An MTB-MLE programme that includes the teaching of the Pattani Malay, Thai, and Standard Malay languages has shown educational success and increased the quality of educational provision, offering an example of how such programmes could be extended to more minority communities in the Asia-Pacific region (UNICEF, 2018).

'Language is largely neglected in policies on migration and education. The issues of language ought to be streamlined within national education planning, with clear guidance on not only integrating migrant and refugee students into schools, but also providing access to home language learning' (UNESCO, 2018c).

MTB-MLE programmes have also been successfully implemented in four minority languages in northern Thailand. Students in these programmes have exhibited high gains on quarterly national literacy testing (Foundation for Applied Linguistics and Pestalozzi Children's Foundation, 2019).

The "Thai for Ethnic Children" components of the southern and northern MTB-MLE programmes were combined and adapted to create a new "Thai as a Second Language" (TSL) curriculum for use among the estimated 400,000 children of economic migrants from neighbouring countries (primarily Myanmar). The success of the first phase of this Save the Children TSL programme in two border provinces bodes well for expansion to other parts of Thailand, and demonstrates how MTB-MLE programmes for domestic language minorities can add value to refugee and migrant education programmes (UNICEF, 2019).

## Refugee orientation in New Zealand

Refugees who come to New Zealand as part of the Refugee Quota programme (750 persons per year) are first sent to the Mangere Refugee Resettlement Centre. During their six weeks at the centre, they participate in orientation sessions and educational programmes. Topics covered include living in a multicultural society, understanding local laws, the role of police officers, community health, and how to prepare children for school and adults for the workforce (Immigration New Zealand, n.d.). However, the Mangere programme is not customizable. Refugees with a strong English language background find the six-week programme redundant, while those with weaker English may be insufficiently prepared for the workplace (Billinghurst, 2019).

## Supporting English learners in South Australia

Australian states and territories provide different models of English language support to children and adults. In South Australia, children aged 5–12 years receive specialized instruction in Intensive English Language Centres (IELC). They follow a modified grade-level-appropriate curriculum for other subjects. The objective is to transition individual children to mainstream classes within 18 months. The government provides transportation subsidies for families living more than 1.75 kilometres from an IELC. For older children, the Adelaide Secondary School of English offers a 'new arrivals' programme, which follows a slightly modified version of the government curriculum. Teachers work with students to develop a year 10 'Personal Learning Plan,' linked to the South Australian Certificate of Education. As their English skills improve, students are transitioned to mainstream secondary schools, where they receive additional English language support if annual assessments determine it to be necessary (Armitage, 2019).

## Teaching 40 community languages in Melbourne

While Australia is a destination for English language learners, the government-sponsored Victorian School of Languages (VSL) supports learning in more than 40 languages, through face-to-face classes held in local pre-primary, primary and secondary schools, as well as via distance education, in Melbourne and other areas of Victoria State. VSL's list of supported languages includes Chinese, Spanish and German, as well as less-commonly taught languages spoken by refugee children, such as Amharic (Ethiopia), Falam Chin (Myanmar), Karen (Myanmar), Dari (Afghanistan) and Dinka (South Sudan). VSL also models cooperation between educators and refugee/migrant communities (Victorian School of Languages n.d.).

## Community-based mother tongue literacy in refugee camps in Chad

The 2003 Darfur crisis in Sudan resulted in 150,000 Massalit-speaking people entering refugee camps in Chad. A camp education system was established, first using the same Arabic materials used in schools in Sudan, thus posing a language challenge for Massalit children. After a decade, when it became apparent that repatriation was still far away, the decision was made to switch to Chad's curriculum, also with Arabic as the medium of instruction. Meanwhile, refugee leaders in two camps repeatedly expressed a desire for mother tongue literacy. Two NGOs, CORD and SIL Chad, agreed to help (Young, 2015).

Community input was a key feature of the early days of the project, resulting in the formation of Massalit-led literacy committees in each camp. The literacy committees worked with external consultants to develop their programmes. The Massalit community initially prioritized non-formal literacy programmes for older children and adults, while planning to introduce mother tongue literacy for younger children in the camp schools later. Community members led and participated in workshops to hone their skills as authors, illustrators, and teachers, thus gaining a strong sense of ownership of their literacy programme. The external consultants helped with technical issues related to curriculum design (primer creation, sequencing of lessons, etc.) and discussions of how to transfer the children's Massalit literacy skills to the official languages.

Massalit materials developed in the camps found their way to Massalit people living outside the camps in both Sudan and Chad. Massalit refugees who were resettled in the United States and other countries brought their literacy materials with them, and continue to eagerly follow and support the development of their language. Since 2016, Massalit all over the world have celebrated "International Massalit Language Day" every year in June (Kua and Ismail, 2017).

# Proven pedagogies

It is important for policy-makers, intergovernmental agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders to be cautious when adopting programmes and pedagogies that may appear to be promising but that do not stand up to balanced, evidence-based scrutiny. Five pedagogical practices which have proven successful are identified below.

## Functional multilingualism

This term is used to explain how people use their various languages for different purposes, which has implications for development of functional and sustainable literacy (Franceschini, 2013; Lo Bianco, 2016a). Decades of research evidence indicates that because most people of the world live in multilingual communities, it is important that schools encourage the use and further development of the languages students already know, as well as those they need for their future lives. Multilingual programmes, pedagogies and systems are particularly important for students from migrant and refugee backgrounds. For example, multilingual

refugees may use the home or local language within their families and immediate and local communities, for both informal and formal culturally important purposes. They may need one (or more) additional language(s) for communication beyond the local community, and possibly another language for use in formal education.

This does not necessarily mean that the students will achieve native-like proficiency in several languages; rather it can mean blending, mixing and alternating between languages in order to adjust one's language use to suit the audience and context (Heugh, 1995; 1999).

## Translanguaging

This is an umbrella term referring to the fluid use of two or more languages in conversation. It may involve code-mixing, code-switching, translating and interpreting (Heugh et al., 2019). The focus is on the processes that bilingual and multilingual students use when communicating and drawing from their own repertoire of language knowledge. It is used as a deliberate strategy in some bilingual programmes, and in others it is used as a flexible process in order to encourage minority students to feel affirmed, confident and included in the educational setting. Some educators distinguish between the horizontal use of translanguaging for communication in informal settings and the vertical use of translanguaging for more formal academic or professional purposes.

Fluid (horizontal) translanguaging occurs when students mix their languages by drawing on whatever knowledge and vocabulary they know. This often occurs when they are discussing how to find answers to problems, and when engaged in paired or group work. Teachers can capitalize on this by allowing or even encouraging students to use code-mixing and code-switching when they are drafting paragraphs and essays or extended written responses to tasks across the curriculum. However, students then need to be encouraged to rewrite their texts as closely as possible to the conventional use (or standard) target language. If this does not happen, students will not develop the kind of language proficiency that they need for entry to higher education and the formal economy.

The purposeful use of (vertical) translanguaging can be used as effective strategy for extending students' bi-/multilingual literacy, as students can be asked to:

- interpret what someone says in one language into another language
- translate written text back and forth between languages
- read information in one language and summarize this information (verbally or written) in the same or different language
- compare information available in one language with information available in another language.

## Transknowledging (knowledge exchange)

The idea of transknowledging comes from a recognition that the way people gain knowledge is very different in different parts of the world (Heugh, 2017b). People who work with indigenous knowledge systems recognize that many traditional societies have their own systems for understanding mathematical, scientific, engineering, medical, and legal principles. Some of the most knowledgeable ancient astronomers were in Africa, Australia and India. In order to include linguistically marginalized and refugee communities, it is important to recognize and value the knowledge systems that they bring with them.

As implied by the term, transknowledging involves both language and knowledge. Sometimes knowledge developed through one language is seldom or never talked about in another language. Two-way exchanges of knowledge between the community and the school involve transknowledging. Teachers who understand both translanguaging and transknowledging are able to strengthen social cohesion, inclusion and the well-being of all students (both the migrant or minority students and the more settled mainstream students). This is because, in the process of exchanging information, students from different knowledge backgrounds develop both respect for and understanding of the value of different kinds of knowledge. This reduces unequal hierarchies among students from different cultural backgrounds.

Since 2017, transknowledging has been paired with translanguaging in teacher education in several countries in the Asia-Pacific region. It thus can be seen as a development of the 'funds of knowledge' and 'culturally sustaining pedagogies' approaches discussed below (Paris, 2012).

## Funds of knowledge

This is a pedagogical concept that is used by educators who pay attention to and deliberately invite students to bring to school the knowledge that they have learned in their homes and communities. This is done in order to make connections between home and school knowledge and learning, and to strengthen the self-esteem of the child. Funds of knowledge is a concept and pedagogy developed in the United States, where migrant students from Mexico and other Spanish-speaking countries found themselves experiencing exclusion and marginalization in schools (Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez, 1992).

## Intercultural and culturally-sustaining pedagogies

This refers to a set of pedagogies related to the importance of culture when teaching students from diverse backgrounds, languages and beliefs. Intercultural communication is regarded as an important consideration in bilingual and multilingual pedagogy. This is to ensure that learners understand that language learning is more than simply learning a language; it is how language is used in diverse communities and the reasons why languages are used in different ways. It is also used to strengthen students' ability to reflect on and learn to understand cultural differences and similarities, to appreciate values that are shared across diverse communities, and to overcome fear of differences through recognizing the advantages of diversity.

Culturally sustaining pedagogies (CSP) is one of several teaching methodologies that recognize the importance of retaining and building on all students' cultures, histories, languages and literacies in socially transformative education. Making teaching space for, giving value to, and building upon the cultural and linguistic knowledge of diverse students accelerates inclusion and the successful learning of mainstream curricula. It also accelerates the learning of the main language of the school. It contributes to the overall well-being of all students, whether from migrant, minority or

'Despite the fact that numerous global conventions and declarations have promoted linguistic rights, people in host countries may be unaware of the multi-faceted significance of migrant and refugees' home languages. But this awareness can be raised in schools and other educational settings, by teaching all children, youth, and adults the valuable relationship between language and one's personal identity and culture. Integrating language rights into curricula can also foster increased social cohesion by laying the foundation for understanding and respect between host and migrant communities' (UNESCO, 2018c).

marginalized backgrounds. Paris (2012) argues that this approach offers strong resistance to cultural domination, exclusion, racism and xenophobia. The purpose is to foster a teaching and learning culture in schools that accepts, encourages and values a diversity of languages, literacies and cultures.

# Recommendations and considerations for the way forward

In working towards practical approaches to language-in-education policies that makes provision for migrants and refugees, especially those coming from situations of conflict, many considerations need to be noted. Processes that involve multiple stakeholders from the grassroots up, and from transnational agencies and national governments down, provide useful opportunities to learn from dynamic processes that work.

The following recommendations offer some mechanisms that can begin the process. Experience tells us that there has to be political will for change, especially in education. Addressing the needs of displaced and refugee communities in the Asia-Pacific region needs to be understood within a wider ecology of educational responsibility.

## Transnational, inter-governmental, and national stakeholder responsibilities and reciprocities

There are at least six recent key UN and UN agency documents relevant to the educational needs of refugees or migrants. These provide guidelines at the country level and for INGOs and other stakeholders concerned with education. Together, these documents provide a set of strong imperatives and guidelines for international collaboration and sharing of best practices.

## Role of local stakeholders in participatory decision-making

There is compelling evidence that where communities and local stakeholders become involved in participatory decision-making processes for education, including language education, they become more invested in their children's schooling. This supports their children's learning and retention in schooling. It may also serve to reduce or pre-empt conflict, as found in Southeast Asia (Lo Bianco, 2016a; UNICEF, 2018) and in Central Asia (Stoianova and Angermann, 2018). As evidenced in post-conflict northern Uganda, participatory decision-making can also create opportunities for adults, who have been displaced and had their own education disrupted, to re-engage in education through their children's schooling (Heugh and Namyalo, 2017). Community engagement can include the establishment of community learning centres to promote language maintenance after regular school hours. A further advantage to community participatory engagement is that as communities become more empowered, they can contribute to reciprocal processes of stakeholder and local government accountability.

## Development of national and regional expertise

Capacity development at the level of educational policy-makers and education officials responsible for policy implementation is advised. Relatively short terms of office or rotating positions of leadership for politicians mean that the institutional memory of language policy decisions is short-lived unless education officials have opportunities for professional learning. Such capacity development is advised in all countries. Whereas middle-to-high-income countries often have language policies that support or encourage migrants to learn the national language, most countries have no systematic provision of support for home language maintenance and development for migrant and refugee students.

The South African Development Community provides a good example in offering a post-graduate specialization in language policy and planning for minoritized multilingual communities (2002–2005). A similar trans-national programme could be established in the Asia-Pacific region to build sustainable and durable policies and implementation plans for language education. Investment in such a programme, when offered in one location on an annual or biennial basis, would increase capacity and assist in preparing the way for policy alignment among the countries of the region.

Given that there are so many linguistic communities in the Asia-Pacific region, care needs to be taken to encourage each country to adopt language-in-education policies that include domestic ethnolinguistic communities as well as those from refugee and displaced backgrounds. This is essential to a) ensure equitable education for all; and b) avoid potential conflict arising in the event that 'newcomers' are viewed as receiving better treatment than domestic communities that suffer marginality.

## Policy alignment for effective implementation

A coherent set of language policies that align across the region would result in more efficient provision of education for migrant and refugee children. Policy alignment would facilitate easier sharing of resources and expertise, and this is likely to render cost savings which would be of particular benefit to low-income countries. Policy alignment is particularly important for the inclusion of migrant and refugee students in the national education system of each country. All migrants, including refugees, will generally need to learn the mainstream language of schooling in their host country. This requires policies that address language use in schools, as well as for the provision of programmes that can offer after-school-hours home language support. As a minimum requirement, policies need to encourage consistency in the use of evidence-based pedagogies that will lead to the development of strong biliteracy and strong bilingualism. All bi-/multilingual programmes, whether for domestic minority language communities or for migrants and refugees, need to begin with and retain use of the home language for as long as possible, while systematically adding the main language of schools in the host country. Optimally, the home language should be included as part of children's learning for at least six years. If there is a realistic chance that refugee students will return to their home region, additional provisions will need to be made. Should the main school language or language of wider communication in the students' country of origin differ from their home language, provision for the teaching of this language may also be needed. Such support may require assistance from international aid agencies, and government-to-government cooperation.

Implementation can only be successful if a) the pedagogies align with the research evidence; b) multiple stakeholders at all levels are invested in the process; c) transnational collaboration is fostered to exchange expertise, knowledge and resources; and d) realistic timeframes are mapped out for a process of incremental implementation.

## Teacher supply, resourcing and professional development

The curriculum design for teacher education programmes needs adjustment and enrichment to include principles of biliteracy and bilingualism. Teachers also need to be prepared for students who use two or more languages. This is particularly likely for minority and vulnerable communities. In-service and pre-service training should equip teachers to know how to use inclusive pedagogies that build on students' home languages while also providing the best and most scaffolded access to the mainstream language of the school. Bilingual and multilingual pedagogies go beyond language specific teaching; teachers need to know how to use these across the curriculum. This does not mean that all teachers need to be multilingual. However, they do need to know how to encourage students to use their linguistic capabilities, and their cultural, faith-based and knowledge repertoires for learning at school. This does not need to be an overly expensive process. Well-prepared teacher trainers supported by education officials who understand the principles of diversity in education can reduce teacher anxiety by providing clear, coherent guidance.

Where countries experience substantial in-migration, there is likely to be a shortage of teachers. Decisions will need to be made on how best to include community participation in education systems for students from migrant or refugee backgrounds. The example of Literacy and Basic Adult Education (LABE) in Uganda may be helpful. LABE invited communities to nominate 'parent educators' who fulfilled several functions. These included providing a bridge between the community and the school, taking on home language educational functions to support students, and supporting adult literacy and numeracy education (Heugh and Mulumba, 2014). Similarly, in the case of a secondary school in South Australia, the school invites community participation in staff appointments and in support roles that link parents and families to the school, and that offer migrant students the security (and comfort) of having an adult member of their community in the school (French, 2018).

## Pedagogies that support multilingualism, inclusion and student well-being

As indicated above, unless students develop strong literacy in their home or local community language by the third grade, they are likely to fall behind students from the mainstream language by the fourth or fifth grade (Chall, 1983, 1996; Chall and Jacobs, 2003; Macdonald, 1990). Unless concerted effort is made to close the gap by the sixth grade, it is unlikely that students will be able to complete secondary school with any degree of success (Thomas and Collier, 2002; Heugh, Diedericks, et al., 2007; Reeves et al., 2008; Collier and Thomas, 2017; Ouane and Glanz, 2010, 2011; Mohanty, 2019). Development of biliteracy requires the most significant and urgent degree of attention for all migrant and minority students, but most especially for students who have been violently displaced (Jhingran, 2019). Pedagogies that support strong development of multilingual capabilities, including purposeful translanguaging, are needed for all students who require a minimum of two languages.

Pedagogies that build on students' 'funds of knowledge', including cultural and faith-based knowledge and cultural systems of knowledge (epistemologies), should be integrated into Asia-Pacific region education systems. Whereas most education systems are influenced by Western conceptions of knowledge, policy-makers need to recognize that the cultural and knowledge systems of the Asia-Pacific region have long histories that hold significance for all communities, including those who suffer marginalization, persecution and displacement. Inclusive pedagogies value the linguistic, cultural and knowledge repertoires of students,

and foster students' sense of belonging. These principles apply to domestic minority communities and migrant or refugee communities alike.

Restoration of children's well-being subsequent to the trauma of conflict and displacement is dependent upon pedagogies that build students' confidence, self-esteem and pride in their community affiliations and histories. This is not difficult to achieve when teachers and school administrators are aware of relatively simple ways to invite students and community representatives to bring their histories and knowledge into the classroom.

The sooner students can engage in mainstream education systems the more likely they are to be able to integrate into mainstream society and establish new bonds of affiliation. Integration, however, requires two-way adjustments. Therefore, it is equally necessary for students from host communities to engage in two-way exchanges of linguistic, cultural and knowledge systems. Such exchanges are more likely to forge two-way integration and circumvent possible conflict between different demographic populations. Therefore, policies and pedagogies of inclusion that focus on both the displaced community and the host community need to be strongly encouraged.

## Accelerated or bridging alternatives

Some countries already have programmes designed to provide initial support for migrant students that are intended to accelerate the process of integration. It is difficult to fast-track educational progress, especially when students have had interrupted schooling prior to migration. However, fast-track programmes are necessary and therefore require careful planning and focus. There is no evidence that fast-track programmes designed to provide education in the main language of the host country only will deliver successful outcomes. To be successful, fast-track programmes need to include a strong literacy component in the home language (or a language that the student knows well and can use for learning), plus strong teaching of the school language. The provision of literacy needs to ensure effective scaffolding from *learning to read* in two languages to *learning through reading* in two languages. The provision of strong bilingual numeracy instruction is also necessary if a fast-track approach is to be successful. Normally, six- to seven-year-old students will need three to four years of *learning to read* in their home language before they have the skills needed to *learn through reading* in the fourth year of primary school. It takes students a minimum of six years in formal schooling to be able to *learn to read* in a language previously unknown to the student, before they can *learn through reading* in that language (Heugh et al., 2019). We do not yet have adequate research evidence on how best to fast-track literacy skills for students who have experienced interrupted schooling, especially when they are expected to learn through a language previously unknown to them. This is an area that will require careful and ethically sound investigation.

## Financial, economic and mid- to long-term cost-benefit considerations

Most countries in the Asia-Pacific region have not yet formulated system-wide multilingual policies for education. Reasons for not doing so include a perception that monolingual policies, including those that adopt a former colonial language, are likely to be regarded as neutral and thus as politically safe. Another frequently mentioned objection to multilingual education is the perception that it is expensive. Thus, a thorough cost-benefit analysis should be undertaken for each country. Initial financial investment needs to be weighed against the

consequences of not implementing a language-in-education policy that has the best chance of retaining students to the end of secondary school, and the best chance of avoiding the consequences of either out-of-school or disaffected youth. An economist trained to understand the economics of language needs to be engaged to provide this expertise. The indication from specialists in this field is that the educational benefits over time far outweigh the initial costs (Grin, 2005; 2008).

## Timeframes: Start now!

Sustainable Development Goal 4 aims to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all' by 2030. This provides a ten-year timeframe for transnational and national stakeholders in the Asia-Pacific region to address the widespread gap of provision for domestic linguistic minority, migrant and refugee communities. This includes communities internally displaced within each national territory, as well as minoritized or refugee communities that migrate across geopolitical borders within the region. Coherent, multi-stakeholder policy and collaboration is necessary to accomplish this effectively and efficiently. The potential for conflict to continue, or resurface, within the region is costly in the short-, medium-, and long-term.

It is recommended that timeframe mapping for an incremental process of policy, planning and implementation begin immediately. Both forward and backward planning design need to be done simultaneously. Forward planning objectives for the local and national level can begin to be identified now. These should include multi-stakeholder consultation and participation, particularly at the local level. Effective, two-way channels of communication for advocacy and dissemination of consistent policy intentions based on evidence-based best practices should be developed early in the process.

Simultaneously, an audit of existing written languages, orthographies, glossaries, dictionaries, reading and learning materials in the languages of the region needs should be conducted. This is likely to require assistance from transnational stakeholders, in order to best inform implementation. Backward planning, realistically from 2028 (in order to meet the 2030 commitments) towards 2020, needs to include an adequate supply of schools, classrooms, teachers and learning materials, as well as provision for teacher education, curriculum development, and monitoring and evaluation.

It may not be immediately possible to provide home language instruction for all language communities in the Asia-Pacific region. However, there are pedagogies (including translanguaging and transknowledging) that can be used to ensure inclusive education for all students. Therefore, all stakeholders need to be brought together to collaborate on practical and feasible approaches that are most likely to render positive outcomes. As a matter of urgency, these discussions need to include linguists able to work collaboratively with participatory community engagement to ensure that the development of new writing systems does not create unnecessary linguistic division. Processes that enhance the harmonization of languages, with overlapping vocabularies and cultural histories, need to be undertaken, in order to ensure that in-service and pre-service teacher education can support *learning to read and write* and *learning through reading and writing*, through both the home languages of the students and the main language of the school. It is also important that teaching and learning resources, particularly for *learning to read and write* in the students' home language in the first three years of primary schooling, are developed in a carefully sequenced process that prepares learners for *learning through reading* in that language by the fourth to sixth years of primary schooling. In addition, it is important to note that

students learning to read in order to learn in a second (previously unknown language to them) will need at least six years of learning that language before they can learn effectively through that language. Transnational collaboration for shared minority language and bi/multilingual resource development will provide the most effective mechanism to ensure that national minorities, whether they remain within their own countries or whether they are displaced persons, can access linguistically relevant educational resources. This would provide a long-term, sustainable literacy and language development approach for the education of children experiencing displacement.

# Conclusion

This document has examined key factors related to language-in-education policies in the Asia-Pacific region. Key findings include the following:

- The Asia-Pacific region is characterized by great linguistic diversity, as home to more than half of the world's 7,100+ languages

- The region hosts the largest number of refugees and displaced people in the world, and is the birthplace of nearly half of all international migrants

- The unique language-in-education needs of migrant and refugee children in the region are little-understood; more research is urgently needed to understand current practices and future possibilities

- Some countries in the region have established evidence-based language-in-education policies and practices for children from ethnolinguistic minority communities, while others are at earlier stages in the policy development process

- Teacher recruitment and training significantly impact educational outcomes for minority, migrant and refugee children and their communities

- Transnational cooperation can significantly enhance the education of minority, migrant and refugee children

- Numerous United Nations declarations and international frameworks are available to guide language-in-education policy development

- Pedagogies such as translanguaging, funds of knowledge, transknowledging and culturally responsive pedagogies can have a positive impact on students' academic achievement, sense of well-being, and integration into the wider society, thus contributing to long-term social harmony and economic development.

# Appendix: The Salzburg Statement for a Multilingual World

In today's interconnected world, the ability to speak multiple languages and communicate across linguistic divides is a critical skill. Even partial knowledge of more than one language is beneficial. Proficiency in additional languages is a new kind of global literacy. Language learning needs to be expanded for all – young and old.

However, millions of people across the globe are denied the inherent right to maintain, enjoy and develop their languages of identity and community. This injustice needs to be corrected in language policies that support multilingual societies and individuals. We, the participants of Salzburg Global Seminar's session on Springboard for Talent: Language Learning and Integration in a Globalized World (December 12–17, 2017, salzburgglobal.org/go/586), call for policies that value and uphold multilingualism and language rights.

## WE LIVE IN A WORLD IN WHICH:

- All 193 UN member states and most people are multilingual.
- 7,097 languages are currently spoken across the world.
- 2,464 of these are endangered.[1]
- 23 languages dominate, spoken by over one half of the world's population.[2]
- 40% of people have no access to education in a language they understand.[3]
- 617 million children and adolescents do not achieve minimum proficiency levels in reading.[4]
- 244 million people are international migrants, of whom 20 million are refugees, a 41% increase since 2000.[5] Migrants and refugees alone would constitute the 5th most populous country in the world.[6]

Our world is truly multilingual, yet many education and economic systems, citizenship processes and public administrations disadvantage millions of people due to their languages and language abilities. We must tackle this challenge if we are to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals,[7] adopted in 2015 by 193 countries to "end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all." A just education system built on strong and fair language policies is fundamental to inclusive progress.

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1   Language Atlas, UNESCO: http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/.

2   Joseph Lo Bianco, "Resolving ethnolinguistic conflict in multi-ethnic societies," Nature: https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0085

3   "40% don't access education in a language they understand," UNESCO: https://en.unesco.org/news/40-don-t-access-education-language-they-understand

4   "617 million children and adolescents not getting the minimum in reading and math," UNESCO: https://en.unesco.org/news/617-million-children-and-adolescents-not-getting-minimum-reading-and-math

5   World Migration Report 2015, International Organization for Migration: https://www.iom.int/world-migration-report-2015

6   The Fifth Largest Country, Population Connection: http://www.populationconnection.org/article/fifth-largest-country

7   Sustainable Development Goals, United Nations http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/.

## PRINCIPLES

- Multilingualism denotes both the explicit teaching of languages, and the informal patterns of communication that emerge in multilingual societies.
- Plurilingualism is the knowledge of multiple languages by individuals.
- Historical, geographic, and socio-economic circumstances lead to many different forms and uses of multilingualism.
- Multilingual education, and support for social multilingualism by states and international organizations, promotes exchange of knowledge and intercultural understanding and strengthens international relations.

Targeted language policies can enhance social cohesion, improve educational outcomes and promote economic development. Additive language learning approaches allow children to build strong literacy skills in their mother tongues; help communities retain their languages of identity, knowledge and belief; and create opportunities to learn new languages of personal, recreational, cultural or economic benefit. Multilingual policies can sustain the unique and vital resource of language diversity and drive positive change in the world, economically, socially and politically.

We urge individuals, corporations, institutions and governments to adopt a multilingual mindset that celebrates and promotes language diversity as the global norm, tackles language discrimination, and develops language policies that advance multilingualism.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Policy-Making

Successful language policy needs input from specialists and active participation of community stakeholders. Making rational and clear decisions about languages in society means:

- Negotiating clear goals that are realistic and achievable.
- Including all stakeholders in the policy process, with a prominent role for teachers at all stages.
- Sequencing policy from pre-school to post-schooling and non-formal and lifelong education.
- Focusing on all language assets and needs, including maintenance, learning and usage of the mother tongues of minority communities.
- Utilizing insights from educational and cognitive research for mother tongue and other tongue learning.
- Harnessing the potential of communication technologies.
- Securing adequate resources for full policy implementation.
- Monitoring and evaluating policy aims and implementation regularly.

### Teaching and Learning

The full scope of language policy is social, economic and cultural as well as educational. Lifelong learning of languages is essential for societies to sustain and benefit from multilingualism. Education, skills and labor policies should promote and recognize language learning for all, alongside positive appreciation of language diversity. Children and adults

should be able to access integrated and continuous opportunities to develop, enrich and extend their language abilities throughout their lives.

A new paradigm of education is needed that includes traditional and alternative systems of knowledge and leverages modern technologies. Sites for active language learning go well beyond schools and higher education institutions. Streets, homes, social networks, digital environments, and refugee support settings can all actively promote learning and appreciation of languages.

### Translation and Interpreting

These services are integral to the design and delivery of public services and information exchange in multilingual societies. Equitable participation in health, education, economic and legal environments relies on freely available and professional language mediation.

### CALL TO ACTION

Stakeholders who can drive change include researchers and teachers; community workers, civil society and non-governmental organizations; cultural and media voices; governments and public officials; business and commercial interests; aid and development agencies; and foundations and trusts. We call on them all to help:

- Develop language policies, practices and technologies that support cohesive and dynamic societies with positive attitudes to multilingualism and plurilingualism.
- Actively support language rights, diversity and citizenship in official documentation and public messaging.
- Tackle all instances of discrimination, prejudice, bias and inequality associated with language and literacy.
- Recognize that minorities, migrants and refugees possess high linguistic capital that is of great value for our present and future world.

In their unique way, each of these stakeholder groups can embrace and support multilingualism for social progress, social justice, and participatory citizenship. Together, we can take action to safeguard the cultural and knowledge treasure house of multilingualism for future generations.

*As of November 2019 the Statement had been translated into 50 languages and further translations were in preparation. All the translations can be found at:* https://www.salzburgglobal.org/multi-year-series/education.html?pageId=8543.

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