Policy Guide on the

Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education Systems

amended and adopted by the Ministers of Education present at the African Conference on the Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 20-22 January 2010

BURKINA FASO
UNITÉ – PROGRÈS – JUSTICE
MINISTÉRE DE
L'ENSEIGNEMENT

Association for the Development of Education in Africa

UNESCO
United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

uil
UNESCO Institute
for Lifelong Learning
Institut de l'UNESCO
pour l'apprentissage
tout au long de la vie

Policy Guide on the
Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education Systems

Introduction

For some sixty years now, it has been recognized that the use of learners' mother tongues as media of instruction in education systems improves the quality of education. Hence all experts regard mother-tongue instruction as a necessity and have recommended it repeatedly in many national and international fora, as is reflected in the following instruments:

- The constitutions and laws of the countries concerned;

- The fundamental education laws of the countries concerned;

- The conclusions of the first Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, held in Addis Ababa in 1961, recommending mother-tongue instruction;

- The recommendations of the eighth Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF VIII), held in Dar-es-Salaam (Tanzania) in 2002, on changing and enhancing the status of mother tongues;

- The Regional Convention on Recognition of Studies, Certificates, Diplomas, Degrees and Other Academic Qualifications in Higher Education in the African states, adopted in 1981 and revised in 2002;

- The International Convention on the Preservation of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, adopted in 2003 at the 32nd session of the UNESCO General Conference in Paris (France);

- The Charter for the Cultural Renaissance of Africa, adopted in Khartoum in 2006;

- The Language Plan of Action for Africa, adopted in Khartoum in 2006;

- The Plan of Action of the Second Decade of Education for Africa, adopted by the African Union in Addis Ababa in 2006.

The purpose of this guide is to affirm the policy stance that multilingual and multicultural education should be chosen as the general education system in African countries, with a view to the transformation of African societies. The aim of this transformation, in turn, is to reduce poverty through sustainable development based on African languages and cultures. For this reason, it should be pursued through the programs of existing institutions, whose capacity needs to be strengthened accordingly. Such an education system not only offers equality of opportunity and success to all children, it raises the quality of the education provided because the learner's own language is used as the medium of instruction, with the opportunity of learning other national and foreign languages. It also releases people's creativity and strengthens social cohesion. In employing African languages, the education system helps to consolidate the decentralisation policies adopted by some countries.

A multilingual and multicultural education policy requires:

1. The establishment of policy and legislative frameworks;
2. General awareness-raising and advocacy at national level and the development of regional networks;
3. Institutional strengthening and capacity building;
4. The development of monitoring and evaluation strategies for assessing learning outcomes and follow-up;
5. Curriculum development and training of educators;
6. Publishing in national languages and book policies;
7. Research and teaching innovations;
8. The mobilisation of financial resources.

1. Policy and legislation

A multilingual and multicultural education policy requires the following actions:

> In the short term

- Formulate a language and education policy explicitly in favour of African languages, through national consultations such as fora, «estates general» and national conferences;
- Include the language dimension in all statutory instruments (constitution, fundamental laws, laws promoting languages, decrees, executive orders, decisions, etc.);
- Enact regulations introducing African languages in official examinations and competitions;
- Develop a partnership with civil society organizations, such as parents' associations and teachers' unions, and obtain their involvement in implementing the policy of using African languages of instruction in official examinations and competitions.

> In the short or medium term (depending on the country's situation)

- Use African languages for functions that enhance their image;

- Use African languages in government and administration, the juridical system, the media and education – functions that in some countries are currently conducted exclusively in foreign official languages;
- Cultivate the political will needed to promote a multilingual and multicultural education policy.

> In the medium or long term (depending on the country's situation)

- Decentralize implementation of the policy by involving, at national level, various administrative units (states, regions, provinces, districts, etc.);
- Provide the possibility of translating policies written in foreign official languages into the local languages, in order to satisfy the right of each individual to have access to the information in his/her own language;
- Give each region (within a country) the possibility of having a linguistic policy that meets its particular needs.

2. Awareness-raising and the development of regional networks

2.1 Awareness-raising and advocacy

The following actions should be taken:

> In the short term

- Determine the expectations of local communities;
- Implement a communication plan on the development of multilingual and multicultural education, with the involvement of civil society organizations (unions, parents' associations, etc.);
- Inform all components of society (political leaders, citizens, religious chiefs, opinion leaders, etc.) about the multilingual and multicultural education policy;
- Build awareness among senior ministerial officials (secretaries-general, directors-general, national and regional directors) with regular advocacy campaigns for better take-up of the language policy and the strategies for implementing it;
- Produce appropriate documents for this awareness-raising work, use information and communication technology and various media.

> In the medium term

- Develop a partnership between the state and civil society to ensure the quality of multilingual and multicultural education by introducing or strengthening a regulatory framework;
- Establish a multi-sector partnership.

2.2 Development of regional networks

The multilingual and multicultural education policy will be implemented both at country level and at the sub-regional and regional levels. For the latter, it will be necessary to develop sub-regional and regional networks and a strategic plan covering the actions to be taken in the short and medium terms at all levels.

> In the short or medium term (depending on the country's situation)

- Promote widely spoken cross-border languages in education and for communication in the major regional and sub-regional groupings.

> In the medium term

- Harmonize education systems and policies across countries, particularly as regards pedagogical models, diplomas and certifications, and teaching of widely spoken cross-border languages.

3. Institutional strengthening and capacity-building

The lack of qualified staff to implement the policy of integrating national languages and cultures into education is a major challenge for African countries.

We therefore propose the following actions to meet this challenge in terms of training of trainers and teacher deployment strategies.

> In the medium term

- Sensitise people to and reinforce institutional competencies on the multilingual and multicultural education system;
- Set up a guidance mechanism in the education ministry to conduct training activities, involving all departments at all levels;
- Develop a training plan and strategies for teacher deployment in a multilingual context;
- Make sure that senior education officials assimilate the policy and strategies for implementing it;

- Build awareness among senior ministerial officials (secretaries-general, directors-general, national and regional directors) with regular advocacy campaigns for better take-up of the language policy and the strategies for implementing it;
- Train officials in writing African languages.

> In the medium or long term (depending on the country's situation)

- Draw up a master plan with all stakeholders concerned and a timetable for carrying out the following actions:
  - Codify and gradually reinforce all local languages, including minority languages, to make them suitable instruments for education and national development;
  - Aim in the long run to use all the country's languages, beginning with those for which the most educational tools are available.

4. Evaluation and monitoring

This policy will rely on existing institutions to implement monitoring and evaluation. These institutions will be revamped and put in charge of monitoring, inspection, innovation watch and advice, at the national and international levels.

> In the short term

- Draw up a master plan with all stakeholders concerned and a timetable for carrying out evaluation and monitoring;

- Draw up a reference framework of skills on the process of integrating national languages into education systems (pre-primary, secondary, tertiary);
- Establish certifications to verify, validate and recognize educational attainment.

5. Curricula and training

5.1 Curriculum development and production of teaching materials

Curriculum development:

The revision of education programs has a number of specific implications for the organization of teacher training (pre-service and in-service) for teachers who will be involved in this activity. It also concerns pupils, whose ages and learning capabilities must be taken into account in developing balanced, appropriate educational activities in order maximize the return on education. Such a revision necessarily entails the following actions:

> In the short term

- Institutionalize the cultural practices of local communities to reinforce the use of African languages and cultures in education;
- Integrate national cultures in curricula on the basis of a reference framework of cultural skills developed through a participatory approach and the involvement of the collective imaginations of the various ethnic groups concerned. This skills framework is used to produce appropriate guides and modules for teachers' use, at all educational levels;
- To introduce the cultural elements integrated into the lesson plans of the various educational levels, adopt either an integrated approach through identification of the subjects that will "host" these elements or a systemic approach that reserves specific classroom hours for this new content.

> In the medium term

- Use information and communication technology to digitize output in national languages and promote distance education.

Models of multilingual and multicultural education:

- Develop models of multilingual and multicultural education based on the overall goals of education and on the specific objectives pursued through the use of African languages in education systems;
- Give preference to the most appropriate models, namely additive models, which entail the use of local languages at all educational levels in addition to the learning and actual use of official languages, and which are liable to bring the best internal and external returns;
- Depending on the extent to which integration of local languages has been developed, consider adopting either a bilingual model (first language and foreign official language) or a multilingual model (first language, widely spoken national language and foreign official language).

Guidance for teachers:

- Ensure that teaching staff assimilate the skills-based approach, which has been adopted by most African countries;
- Develop subject-specific teaching methods in all languages taught.

5.2 Preparation of the teacher training plan

> In the short term

- Introduce a strategic plan for training teachers in post, beginning with refresher training. Provision of pre-service and in-service training for teachers and supervisors will require capacity-building for national training institutions (universities, higher teacher training institutes, teachers' colleges and other training institutions);

- Introduce a pre-service training program based on the new approach adopted by the country;
- Review the teacher profile in the light of the new requirements;
- In the short, medium and long terms, build the capacity of officials and actors working in education, particularly supervisors, trainers of trainers, teachers, curriculum specialists and evaluation specialists;
- Revise training programs in the light of the multilingual and multicultural education policy;
- Adopt existing models of multilingual education that have proved their effectiveness.

> In the medium term

- Capitalise on local knowledge and know-how regarding education in African languages;
- Create training of trainers centers at regional level, pool resources to train inspectors and pedagogical advisors from a number of countries, who will then train others using the cascade system, ensuring a multiplier effect;
- Strengthen trainers of trainers' capacities in relation to multilingual and multicultural education, using an approach based on regional and sub-regional integration that takes account of the use of cross-border African languages in education. The point of this strategy is to pool

experience and skills and to promote mobility of teachers and trainers within sub-regions. This will help to make African languages more valuable on the job market;

- Develop a reference framework of skills in multilingual and multicultural education that is in keeping with the Arusha Convention (revised in 2002) and the African Union's policy concerning recognition of diplomas.

> In the long term

- Introduce a national policy on teacher recruitment that is in keeping with the multilingual and multicultural education policy;
- Introduce a recruitment policy for teachers' colleges that gives preference to multilingual applicants.

5.3 Teacher deployment strategies in a multilingual context

> In the short term

- Decentralize teacher recruitment in connection with multilingualism.

6. Publishing in national languages and book policies

In multilingual and multicultural education, it is necessary to produce diversified, multilingual schoolbooks that have been adapted to both the national, regional and international cultural realities and to the various languages taught or used as media of instruction. This offers countries a splendid opportunity to introduce a schoolbook policy that creates and sustains the conditions required for the country-level production of books by national and regional, privately-owned publishers, with a view to both the ongoing education of the population and the development of a literate multilingual and multicultural environment. For this reason, the following actions are highly recommended:

> In the short term

- Encourage the local production of books and privatize book production and distribution;
- Adopt a strong policy that guarantees access to books for all children;
- Support, as an integral part of the book policy, the gestation and development of country-level publishing structures, assist with the assimilation of techniques required to produce books of good quality.

7. Research

> In the short term
- Establish a formal partnership among research institutions, ministries, local authorities, service providers and industry;
- Adopt a research policy that seeks to create or strengthen research and training institutions;
- Raise funding for research and step up cooperation within regional and international organisations;
- Promote the development of a literate multilingual environment in order to reinforce the language skills of learners, in the formal, non-formal and informal systems.

> In the short, medium and long term
- Carry out basic research in social sciences as a pre-condition for efficient multilingual and multicultural education, with the aim of laying the foundation for the development of teaching and learning materials in the languages and subjects taught;
- Link action research to basic research in order to meet the needs of actors in the field; give priority to dialectological, socio-linguistic and terminological descriptions, which can guide the choice of languages of instruction / languages to be taught at national and/or regional level.

8. Resource mobilisation

- Mobilize sufficient internal and external funding to implement the multilingual and multicultural education policy;

- In national budgets, plan the appropriation of adequate funding needed to implement the multilingual and multicultural education policy;

- Strive to raise additional resources from major sub-regional and regional economic groupings and from bilateral and multilateral development cooperation bodies;

- Give the relevant structures the resources they need;

- Ensure sustainable financing for non-formal education, which tends to receive only a minuscule portion of the resources allocated to education.

Conclusion

We repeat that the success of multilingual and multicultural education depends on:

- Consultative, participatory and democratic decision-making;

- Optimal use of all national skills and translating this policy in action by integrating it into countries' planning and development programs, particularly their education budgets.

Text amended and adopted by the
Ministers of Education present at the African Conference
on the Integration of African Languages and Cultures into Education

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 20-22 January 2010

The following countries attended the African Conference on the Integration of African Languages and Cultures in Education, held January 20-22, 2010, in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroun, Central African Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Niger, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Uganda and Zambia.

For more information:

Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)
African Development Bank (AfDB) – Temporary Relocation Agency
13 avenue du Ghana – BP 323 – 1002 Tunis Belvédère – Tunisia
tel: +216/ 71 10 39 86 – fax: +216/ 71 25 26 69
E-mail: adea@afdb.org – web site: www.adeanet.org

UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL)
Feldbrunnenstrasse 58
20148 Hamburg - Germany
Tel: +49 40 448 04 10 - Fax: +49 40 410 77 23
e-mail: uil@unesco.org – web site: www.unesco.org/uil