

MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION: A STRONG BRIDGE.....

In June, a monitoring visit brought a good opportunity to visit the Kol multilingual education (MLE) school in Chapai-nowabgonj. It was nice to see that, children are growing. Beginning of the year, mostly children are not participates in class activities and feel shy to speak with visitors. But this time, get chance see their smiley face. Willingly participating in every class activity. Some students ask me some questions about myself and answering about themselves. They shared about their interest and sing a song in their mother tongue during class time. Teachers are helping them to discover themselves as a confident person and showing them the way to move forward. The Kol language community and SIL Bangladesh run three MLE schools around with 65 students and seven teachers. In the two year pre-school program, Kol children are developing their speaking, reading and writing skills in their mother tongue. They are also learning Bangla as a second language, to help them integrate with speakers of the national language and transition to the Government primary school.

Education is a strong foundation for the development of any nation. It is important to make sure that everyone gets the chance to be educated. But people whose mother tongue is different from the national language often struggle to overcome the language barrier and access their rights. Multilingual education can provide a bridge between the mother tongue and the national language, enabling speakers from different ethnolinguistic groups to make a more confident start in their education.



When SIL Bangladesh started working with the Kol community, one of the first tasks was to develop language resources. SIL Bangladesh provided support to help Kol people produce materials for the schools and to train teachers in how to use the materials. They developed story books for pre-primary classes, where large illustrations are accompanied

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... SNAPSHOTS ...
WHAT'S PLANNED FOR
THIS MONTH

Aug 10-13: Mahle
Students Gathering .

Aug 12: Indigenous Day
Observation.

Aug 20-24: Youth
Seminar on govt. facilities.

SIL BANGLADESH
LANGUAGE, EDUCATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

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by simple sentences. Children discuss the pictures as well as reading the book together with the teacher. Teachers also tell longer 'listening stories' to the children and teach them songs and rhymes in their mother tongue. The aim is to develop the children's language skills and encourage creativity.

When children first arrive at the MLE school they all share a common language. The Kol materials and different activities help them to grow in confidence and explore their cultural identity. Multilingual education also makes a link between two different languages, opening a door to a new world as children move from the familiar to the unfamiliar, learning Bangla alongside their mother tongue.



At first when children start coming to the MLE school, they are often shy and introverted. They are nervous or sometimes start to cry when visitors arrive. Some are hesitant to say their names. But after a while, they welcome visitors warmly and join in conversations about what they have learnt from their teachers. They participate in classroom activities, working in the 'learning corners' in pairs or groups. Sometimes teachers tell us about former students who are making good progress at primary school, keeping up with speakers of the national language. The MLE school is providing a bridge, helping the children to overcome their difficulties and find new opportunities to develop themselves

and their community.

Written by: Scholastica Shefaly Rebarue.

**SIL Bangladesh helps communities achieve their development goals while retaining their ethnolinguistic identities.
SIL Bangladesh is an organization in SIL International's LEAD Asia network – Language, Education, and Development.**