



ASEAN Regional Center of Excellence on Millennium Development Goals



Save the Children

An International Conference on: Language, Education and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

9-11 November 2010, Bangkok, Thailand

Announcement & Call for Papers

The international conference on “Language, Education and the Millennium Development Goals” will be held November 9-11 in Bangkok, Thailand sponsored by a consortium of organizations from the Asia Multilingual Education Working Group, including: UNESCO, UNICEF, SEAMEO, Mahidol University, SIL International, Save the Children, CARE, Asia Pacific Basic and Adult Education, Asia Institute of Technology and the Royal Thai Institute.

Join us for a three-day forum to dialogue about: the state of development of ethnolinguistic minorities, the relevance of local languages in achieving education and development goals, and the development of programs and policies that better reach these underserved groups.

Background

Languages are more than tools for communication; they help shape the identity of individuals and groups, as well as serving as a key element in social integration and cultural development. As such, languages are also strategically important for the attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EFA).

Despite aggregate gains worldwide in achieving the MDGs and EFA, the state of development for the world’s ethnolinguistic minorities continues to lag behind, putting these groups at risk for even greater disparities that hinder efforts to overcome poverty, illiteracy and disease; as well as increasing the likelihood of conflict arising from exclusion.

Purpose

The conference **provides a forum to enhance understanding, inspire meaningful action and increase access to education and development opportunities for ethnolinguistic communities**, through:

- Increasing understanding of the linkages between language and achieving the MDGs and EFA
- Fostering connections among a broad set of actors to support activities that integrate language and education as crosscutting themes in achieving the MDGs and EFA
- Informing policy makers and development partners on good practices to effectively incorporate language and education into strategies and policies to achieve the MDGs and EFA

Target audience

The conference brings together representatives of government agencies, NGOs, academics and local civil society.

Thematic tracks

The conference features four thematic tracks, which incorporate *language* and *education* as crosscutting themes:

1. Language and Universal Primary Education (MDG 2 / EFA 1, 2, 6)

- Linguistic and cultural considerations in strategies that seek to achieve universal primary education
- Access and retention of children speaking non-dominant versus dominant languages in primary education
- Role of learners’ first language (L1) – or mother tongue – versus languages of wider communication (national, official or international languages) in primary education
- Multilingual education as a way towards universal primary education (UPE)
- Language in early childhood education and development: multilingual education to facilitate smooth integration into primary school
- Relationship between adult literacy in L1 and UPE
- Integration of local language and culture effectively into education policies and programs

2. Language and Gender Equality (MDG 3 / EFA 5)

- Linguistic and cultural considerations in strategies to promote gender equality and empower women
- The role of life-long learning in overcoming gender biases and discrimination, including how lifelong learning empowers both girls and boys, women and men
- Situation of women and girls in ethnolinguistic minority communities relative to their counterparts in dominant language speaking communities
- Ways that local language and culture have been effectively integrated in policies and programs to ensure equitable development opportunities, improved status and treatment of both sexes

3. Language, Health, Nutrition and Protection (MDGs 4, 5, 6 / EFA 3, 4)

- Evidence and support for integrating local language and culture into policies and programs on health, nutrition and protection
- Providing equitable access to appropriate health and social welfare services for ethnolinguistic minorities
- Utilizing language and culture to build good knowledge and practice for early childhood care and reproductive health
- Linguistic and cultural strategies to minimize the impact of communicable diseases (i.e. HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria)
- Professional social work practices across languages and cultures to prevent and respond to violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation
- Community-based mechanisms to uphold the rights of children in ethnolinguistic minority communities (e.g. locally relevant diversion and restorative justice programs)

4. Language and Sustainable Development (MDGs 1,7 / EFA 3, 4)

- Language diversity and intangible cultural heritage in poverty reduction and environmental preservation
- Language as a determinant of access to resources, from alleviating extreme poverty and hunger to mitigating climate change
- Role of language in poverty reduction through adult and adolescent education programmes
- Community-based approaches to poverty reduction and environmental sustainability
- Drawing on language and culture to expand access to safe drinking water and improved sanitation facilities

Abstract Submissions:

Abstracts for proposed papers will be accepted until **July 30**. Selected presenters will be notified by **August 20**. We welcome the submission of papers and perspectives representing a **broad range of viewpoints and that highlight relevant local, national or comparative research and practice** in the four thematic tracks of the conference.

- Abstract submissions should be no more than 250 words in English.
- Abstracts should clearly identify the paper's topic and relevance to the conference.
- Authors should identify the track they feel is best suited to their paper out of the four conference tracks listed above.¹
- **To submit abstracts**, please email rm.gesuden@unesco.org, and cc: lcsw@mahidol.ac.th

Registration Fees

Registration fees cover the following items: conference kit, access to plenary and panel sessions, morning and afternoon refreshments and buffet lunches for the three days of the conference. **Online registration will open in July 2010.**

- **Thai Participants:** 4,950 Thai Baht
- **International (Non-Thai) Participants:** US\$250/person

Please see the conference website for more information on the conference program, venue and plenary speakers. For conference inquiries, please contact rm.gesuden@unesco.org or lcsw@mahidol.ac.th.

<http://www.seameo.org/LanguageMDGConference2010/>

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¹ The conference steering committee reserves the right to consider your paper for a track other than the one you identify, if deemed appropriate.