

Language Education Issues in the Kazakh Community of Mongolia.

**By Mira Namsrai, Ouyntsetseg Shagdar and
Tuya Ykhnaa**

The Kazakh people are an ethnic minority group in Mongolia. Living in the western part of the country, they have their own language, religion and culture. In line with the state constitution and language education policy, Kazakhs are provided with an opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue. Consequently, the Kazakh language should be a medium of instruction for Kazakh children in primary school. At a later stage, mainly in secondary and upper secondary school, Mongolian usually becomes the language of instruction.

However, current research shows that local communities and schools use the Kazakh language more often than Mongolian, which means Kazakh children have less exposure to Mongolian and do not learn much of the official language. As a result, they have insufficient comprehension and command of the Mongolian language. In addition, local authorities do not follow state regulations. They are in favour of a Kazakh language dominating policy. This situation creates a serious problem in language education and needs to be discussed at the policy level. This paper discusses issues of raising the role of the official language, starting from the primary school level, and tries to propose a model of effective bilingual education. Based on the research, there is no national policy on bilingual education which would allow instruction in both the official language and minority learners' mother tongue.

As a second point, researchers designed a Mongolian language curriculum for a Kazakh primary school and proposed newly developed teaching and learning materials. The idea of the curriculum is to revise the teaching/learning methodology by turning it to student-centred and applying more effective teaching approaches.