

Mother Tongue-Based Local Curriculum for Primary Education in Indonesia.

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With 726 languages, Indonesia has the second largest number of languages in the world. This vast linguistic and cultural diversity prompted the national government in 2003 to require a class period devoted to *MULOK* (Local Content Curriculum) in all public schools, in addition to the national curriculum. This requirement holds for all levels of schooling from first grade through to high school. *MULOK* represents content about ethnic identity, local customs, traditions, arts and handicrafts, and the local environment. In most schools the materials and classroom instruction for *MULOK* are in the national language; Indonesian.

Although there are some advantages to using the national language, the following issues are worth noting: 1) Children in remote areas are often not fluent in the national language; 2) Conversely, in other areas, language diversity is being lost as children forget their mother tongue, and; 3) Cultural content is best taught and expressed in that cultural community's language.

These reasons form the basis for introducing *MULOK* using the mother tongue. This approach is best applied in remote areas where teachers and children speak the same language. It helps to maintain, develop and show value for local languages and cultures.

This paper describes two case studies where the authors are involved in introducing mother-tongue *MULOK* curriculum in formal primary education. These programmes are in Palu, Central Sulawesi and Poulle, Papua, two areas with very different sociolinguistic situations. Methodology, sociolinguistic constraints, community response and provisional results are described in this study.