

# Multilingual pedagogies for all: Language-inclusive teaching and learning

9 July 2024



The Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group, co-chaired by the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, will organise a webinar on ‘Multilingual pedagogies for all: Language-inclusive teaching and learning’, on Tuesday, 9 July 2024, from 9.00 to 11.00 (Bangkok time; GMT+7). Advance registration is required.

## Background

The Asia-Pacific region is one of the most linguistically diverse areas in the world, home to over half of the world’s languages.<sup>1</sup> Countries such as India, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and the Philippines each boast hundreds of languages spoken within their borders. This diversity presents both unique opportunities and significant challenges for the region’s education systems, which are tasked with providing quality education to learners from a wide range of language backgrounds and ethnolinguistic communities.

<sup>1</sup> Eberhard, D.M., Simons, G.F., & Fennig, C.D. (Eds.). 2023. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World*. Twenty-sixth edition. Dallas, Texas: SIL International. <http://www.ethnologue.com>

The complexities of multilingual classrooms in the Asia-Pacific region are thus vast, as learners often come from varied linguistic backgrounds and speak different first languages, which may not be the language of instruction. This rich language diversity can pose significant challenges for educators, who must determine how best to navigate these different linguistic backgrounds while delivering effective instruction. For instance, a teacher might share a common language or two with all, or most, of the learners, facilitating relatively easy communication. However, in another classroom, a teacher might share the same language with only a few learners, a situation requiring different strategies to ensure that all learners are included and can access the curriculum.

By understanding different situations and approaches to using learners' first languages alongside additional languages of instruction, multilingual pedagogies – instructional strategies that incorporate two or more languages in the teaching and learning processes – can leverage learners' existing linguistic resources and cultural backgrounds to enhance their learning experiences and help make educational content more accessible, engaging, effective, and equitable.

Multilingual pedagogies are at the core of first language-based multilingual education. This approach is essential for effective teaching and learning in such classrooms, especially with multilingual learners, where instruction, materials, teaching and learning activities and assessments are in learners' first languages *before* transitioning the language of instruction into the national language. First language-based multilingual education embraces the linguistic diversity of all learners and offers a promising solution to these challenges, as recognised in the *Bangkok Statement on Language and Inclusion*<sup>2</sup> and the *Bangkok Priorities for Action on First Language-based Multilingual Education*.<sup>3</sup> Multilingual education further underscores an innovative mechanism to work toward achieving the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to 'ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.'

With this in mind, the Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group, functioning under the Learning and Education 2030+ Networking Group and co-chaired by the UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, has organised the webinar 'Multilingual pedagogies for all: Language-inclusive teaching and learning'. This event aims to present Member States with practical solutions for preparing teachers to teach in multilingual classrooms. Multilingual experts will delve into approaches to teaching and learning with diverse multilingual learners, presenting promising practices and concrete examples from various countries.

Now is the time to embrace multilingual pedagogies as we consider how to transform education systems and envision a better, more inclusive and more equitable future of education. By addressing language barriers and promoting linguistic diversity in learning, we can eliminate one major factor toward achieving quality and inclusive education for all.

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<sup>2</sup> UNESCO. 2019. The Bangkok Statement on Language and Inclusion. Bangkok: UNESCO.  
<https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000372785>

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO. 2023. The Bangkok Priorities for Action on First Language-based Multilingual Education. Bangkok: UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000387958>

## Objectives

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This webinar aims to:

- Explore how multilingual pedagogies can be effectively implemented in different multilingual contexts to support learning and overall educational development, including through teacher development and support mechanisms
- Raise awareness of the importance and benefits of multilingual pedagogies in enhancing learning outcomes for multilingual learners
- Present case studies and successful examples of multilingual pedagogies from different countries in the Asia-Pacific region
- Foster a network of policy-makers, practitioners, educators and researchers committed to education and learning with regard to language
- Contribute knowledge toward the realisation of the *Bangkok Priorities for Action* and Sustainable Development Goal 4

## Target Audience

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The webinar is intended for:

- Policy-makers and practitioners at all levels of decision-making – including both national and sub-national levels – responsible for education and learning
- School administrators, teachers, educators and other members of the learning community
- Other national and regional stakeholders that support multilingualism and language inclusion in education, such as bilateral and multilateral agencies, civil society and non-governmental organizations, teacher unions, academia and other relevant policy sectors

## Working Language

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The working language of the webinar will be English. Simultaneous interpretation will not be provided.

## Date, Time and Format

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Tuesday, 9 July 2024

9.00 – 11.00 (Bangkok time; GMT+7)

Zoom Conferencing

## Registration

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Registration is free but required in advance of the webinar: [https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_sdFsR3S8QieadXrcOBLEJg](https://unesco-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_sdFsR3S8QieadXrcOBLEJg). Upon registering, you will receive a unique join URL via email.

## For More Information

For more information, please contact the Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group Secretariat: [mlewg@unesco.org](mailto:mlewg@unesco.org).

## Provisional Agenda

**Tuesday, 9 July 2024**

**Moderator:**

**Kyungah Bang, Consultant, Education Section, UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok**

<b>9.00 – 9.15</b>	<b>Welcome and Introduction from the Asia-Pacific Multilingual Education Working Group</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Rika Yorozu, Programme Specialist, Education Section, UNESCO Regional Office in Bangkok</li><li>• Mitsue Uemura, Regional Education Advisor, UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office</li></ul>
<b>9.15 – 9.40</b>	<b>Setting the Scene for Multilingual Pedagogies</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kathleen Heugh, Professor of Language Education and Multilingualism, University of South Australia, Australia</li></ul>
<b>9.40 – 10.25</b>	<b>Promising Practices from the Asia-Pacific Region</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sangsok Son, Consultant for Literacy and Education, SIL International, Thailand</li><li>• Dhir Jhingran, Founder and Executive Director, Language and Learning Foundation, India</li><li>• Maria Mercedes Arzadon, Associate Professor, College of Education, University of the Philippines-Diliman, Philippines</li></ul> <p>(15 min/person)</p>
<b>10.25 – 10.55</b>	<b>Q&amp;A Session</b>
<b>10.55 – 11.00</b>	<b>Closing</b>