Signposts to Identity-Based Community Development (IBCD)

Based on reflections from the LEAD Community of Practice.

Written by

Phil Smith

Matt Wisbey

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The authors are responsible for the choice and the presentation of the facts contained in this book and for the opinions expressed therein, which are not necessarily those of SIL International.

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Firstly, thanks must go to the Toyota Foundation for providing the financial support to run the Identity-Based Community Development community of practice event, from which this Guide was birthed. Whilst many of the ideas included supersede this event, the opportunity to bring them all together in this way was made possible through this support. Equally, without SIL International's support – both technical and administrative – this opportunity could not have been taken. It is our hope that this will prove a good resource and that the ideas behind IBCD will continue to grow as a result of this investment.

We would like to thank all of the contributors, including contributors, editors, reviewers, proof readers and all the community of practice participants. Any errors that remain in the text are the responsibility of the authors. As we say in the introductory chapter, this is very much a work in progress and as such we hope that the list of contributors will continue to grow as we continue to dialogue around issues contained here.

Finally, the authors would like to reserve special thanks for Sharon Kim, who tirelessly worked through edits, rewrites and unintelligible sentences to ensure that this Guide was as readable as possible. Without her help it would never have made it this far.

Acronyms & Abbreviations

CoP	Community of Practice
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
EFA	Education For All
IBCD	Identity-Based Community Development
ILO	International Labour Organisation
LEAD	Language, Education and Development
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MSC	Most Significant Change
MTB-MLE	Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
SIL	SIL International
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

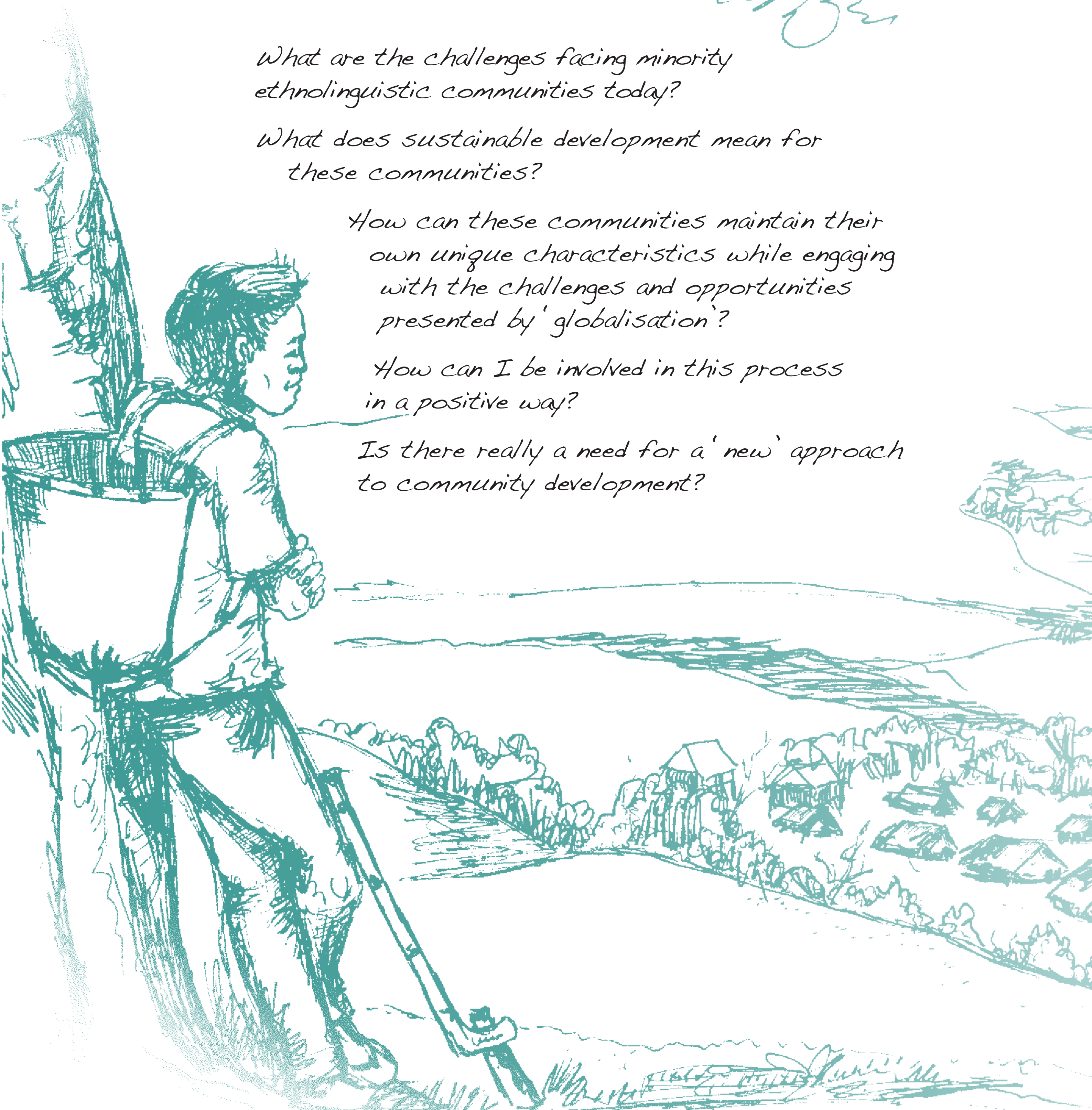
What are the challenges facing minority ethnolinguistic communities today?

What does sustainable development mean for these communities?

How can these communities maintain their own unique characteristics while engaging with the challenges and opportunities presented by 'globalisation'?

How can I be involved in this process in a positive way?

Is there really a need for a 'new' approach to community development?



Chapter ONE

Introductions

Welcome to our journey

Welcome to *'Signposts to Identity-Based Community Development (IBCD)'.* We hope that through reading this Guide, considering the principles within it, and exploring some of the tools highlighted you will start to find answers to these important questions. Although we hope it will provide some insight and assist you in your work, it is not a step-by-step process for IBCD. Rather, it is an introductory Guide the fundamental features of IBCD, providing pointers to some examples of effective practice. In a sense, not much in this Guide is actually new, but by bringing together the approaches and tools detailed here under one heading we think that this does set out a new way of viewing our work.

Equally, we hope it provides a foundation for further discussions, because it is certainly not the final word on the topic but more a work in progress. As more people engage in IBCD we look forward to seeing more examples of tools, processes and attitudes that expand and correct what we have written here. We see this as the beginning of a journey of exploration and we invite you to join us on it.

Setting our starting point: Who we are

"Signposts to IBCD" is a result of discussions held at Language, Education and Development (LEAD) community of practice events over the last few years, especially from the ideas discussed at a Toyota Foundation funded event held in March 2013 in Bangkok. The event, facilitated by LEAD Asia, was attended by 59 participants from 12 different country contexts and modelled a participatory approach that put participants' knowledge and experience at the centre of the event's design and structure.[1]

Drawing from diverse education and development projects across Asia, the event explored some of the essential features of 'Identity-Based Community Development' (IBCD). This Guide is a synthesis of the results from this knowledge sharing event, and we frequently refer to participants' contributions. The event detailed successful current and past activities and outlined effective practices that could be adopted in development work in other Asian countries in order to build equitable and multicultural societies.

The geographical limits of the event and the subsequent report were countries within Asia, and as such the participants and their experiences and tools are all situated within

1 Details about this event can be found in Annex 1.

this geographical area. However, many of the issues covered in this Guide are not unique to Asia or Asian communities, we hope it can therefore be of relevance and assistance to practitioners wherever they are located. One key principle in IBCD is the need to contextualise tools and methods. We trust that you will take the material included in this Guide and do just that for your own context, wherever that may be.

Who is LEAD Asia? What is the LEAD CoP?

In 2008, SIL International (SIL)[2], through its Asia Area administration, formed LEAD (Language, Education and Development) Asia[3] to focus on the educational and development challenges facing minority ethnolinguistic communities in Asia. One way LEAD Asia is doing this is by facilitating a 'community of practice' (CoP) – a network made up of Asian based NGOs, SIL country units, and other development practitioners – to promote the sharing of information and experience around topics relevant to minority ethnolinguistic communities. As part of this, regular events are organised to provide opportunities for these practitioners to come together to share knowledge and support one another.

> Communities of practice are "groups that share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis...[CoPs are] not only about knowledge exchange, but also about making sense of and interpreting context and experience together, and through this creating new knowledge. (The Barefoot Collective, 2011: 117)

Traveling companions: who is with us

One of the common features of members of the LEAD community of practice is that participants are all involved in working with communities who are marginalised because of the language they speak – **minority ethnolinguistic communities.** Their first language is neither an international language nor the official language of the country in which they live. Although we are using this as a 'catch-all' term, it should be emphasised that this is a very diverse 'group', who have different languages, cultures and livelihoods, live in different geographical contexts and have different relationships with the respective state. There are often similarities between these groups; however, there are always many differences.

It is also important to recognise that while these groups are in the minority in relation to a dominant language and culture, they are often the majority within their own area, province or district. Furthermore, some of the groups have populations into the millions.

2 SIL International is a registered 501(c)3 organization with operational experience in 100 countries globally with an annual budget of $142 million and 5,500 staff worldwide. See www.sil.org for more information

3 For more information see **www.leadimpact.org**

Nevertheless, regardless of the size of the number of speakers or their dominance on a local or regional level, these communities face common challenges of marginalised identity on a national level and as such deserve particular attention.

Ethnolinguistic communities may be referred to by many other terms, for example, tribal, highlander, natives, adivasi, nomads and lumad. Some terms have a specific focus while others carry negative connotations. Minority ethnolinguistic communities are also often 'indigenous'. According to Kymlicka (1995, in Ehrentraut, 2009), who categorises minority groups within modern multicultural societies according to their mode of incorporation into the state, indigenous peoples are those who are involuntarily included in the state but had no participation in its formation. While this is a helpful definition, many of the groups represented through the CoP and included within the scope of IBCD are not indigenous in the countries in which they are resident but may have been resident there for centuries. For this reason throughout this Guide we use the broader term ethnolinguistic community - people who are defined by their language and as a result often suffer from the marginalisation of their identity.

What is meant by community?

Within this Guide, a community is a group of people who 'self identify' as belonging to this group according to common or unifying characteristics. Typically in this Guide we envisage a community being defined by a village or district, but this is not always the case. Where we are referring to a broader ethnic identity, we try to use the term ethnolinguistic community.

This Guide is written with and for development practitioners who often find themselves trying to bridge the gap between different cultures. These people are often described as 'cultural brokers'. Cultural brokering can be defined as:

> ***the act of bridging, linking or mediating between groups or persons of differing cultural backgrounds for the purpose of reducing conflict or producing change. (Jezemski and Sotnik, 2001, quoted in Michie, 2003)***

Cultural brokers can be from either culture, so long as they can facilitate dialogue between cultures. Within that framework, many of the CoP participants who are from 'within' minority ethnolinguistic communities, are cultural brokers. Likewise, 'expats' and 'nationals' who are not part of the minority ethnolinguistic community, but who learn the language and culture, can also be cultural brokers.

Them and us

Since this Guide is written by practitioners, whenever the terms 'we', 'our' or 'ourselves' are used, unless clearly used in a case study, it is referring to practitioners. Likewise, unless otherwise stated, whenever the terms 'they', 'their' or 'themselves' are used it is in reference to ethnolinguistic community members.

To summarise, there are three main groups we refer to regularly throughout this Guide:

- **The community or ethnolinguistic community** – these people are the 'insiders'. (Note that the term community is examined further in Chapter 3.)
- **Wider society** - those who are external to the ethnolinguistic community in focus, the 'outsiders'. These people could be at the regional, national or global level and could even include those from the community who have left and now associate more closely with the more dominant culture.
- **Practitioners** - development practitioners operating as cultural brokers.

Where we have come from: origins and beliefs

A foundational value of this Guide is recognising and understanding the impact we all make on any situation we find ourselves in, a concept often referred to as reflexivity (we explore this term some more in Chapter 4). As such it seems fitting that we (as authors of this Guide, on behalf of the LEAD Community of Practice) should reflect on some of the key features of our identity that have influenced how we have shaped the content of this Guide, since we can claim neither neutrality or objectivity.

Language, education and culture

Most of the CoP participants come from organisations with a strategic focus on the roles of language and culture in education and development. This significantly shaped the perspectives that were shared within the CoP, and defined the boundaries of what was explored. However, the CoP also highlighted that there are many other significant issues that impact much of the work participants are involved in but that are currently outside the expertise represented within the CoP. The impact of this on the breadth of this Guide is clear.

As a result, those from a natural resource management, health or economics perspective will possibly find these issues inadequately addressed here. While literacy, numeracy, and education all have the potential to serve the economic interests of minorities, for example, the Guide does not particularly focus on culturally appropriate ways of developing livelihoods economically since this was less frequently raised by participants. Additionally, although we do begin to explore the connections between a sense of place, the environment and identity in chapter 6, these issues are not well integrated throughout the Guide.

Instead of seeing the limited focus of this Guide as a failure, we believe it serves as a positive challenge, a call for greater cooperation between language, culture and education specialists and those involved in natural resources management and environmental issues, economic development specialists, health experts and so on. It is our hope that further input can be received to develop a future version of this Guide that better addresses these important perspectives.

Our identity and cultural relativity

The majority of participants (and the authors of this Guide) are motivated by faith, therefore our work is 'faith-based'. In terms of categories of world religion the majority of the group were Christian. However, most of the participants have come from families or communities which practice indigenous beliefs, even if they do not share those beliefs today.

One of the challenges that we faced in writing this Guide was to ensure that it is as widely accessible as possible, and as such we have erred towards framing issues from a cultural relativity perspective - that all cultures are valid, and no absolute moral framework exists. While this helps keep us open to learning, ultimately we do believe in an absolute moral framework, albeit one that allows for and encourages a lot of cultural expression within it. This means that we see some aspects of culture as morally wrong. For example, we cannot condone 'witch hunts' that pour molten lead into the hands of the suspected, or the ritual killing of twins, two practices still followed in certain contexts in the region. Neither can we condone the global inequalities and 'economic violence' towards indigenous minorities.

Of course, these are extreme examples to highlight a point, and the reality of life when working across cultures is often far more ambiguous. Cultural relativity, or at least an openness to learn, helps to ensure that we do not blindly impose our own culture onto others. However, while we believe there are many aspects of culture that are morally wrong, we also believe there is much that is 'right' in all cultures. Culture harbours the best of humankind's ingenuity, knowledge, care, and protection, but at times also rationalises great evil. It is through dialogue across cultures that we can better understand ourselves and our morality, and have hope for the same in others.

Our identity and community development

Ultimately we believe that working together with communities on cultural change issues is a legitimate intervention. However, culture and cultural change processes are complex and require a significant investment in learning that should deeply shape our approach and interaction with indigenous communities.

We must respect the community as the 'rights holders', the legitimate decision makers regarding the future of their culture. However, we also recognise that there are significant barriers to participation at every level: personal, community, government and policy which must all be addressed.

Key to these issues is an iterative learning approach that can lead towards supporting cultural sustainability in communities. It is this orientation towards continuous learning that forms a framework for the approaches and tools highlighted in this Guide and ultimately provides the foundation for Identity-Based Community Development.

The road ahead: some key signposts

IBCD, like any complex and highly contextualised concept, is difficult to define. In such circumstances it is often easier to start with values and principles rather than strict definitions. During the course of the CoP event participants highlighted the following values as foundational to any definition of IBCD:

- The need to deal with the complexity of cultural change in an increasingly globalised world,
- The importance of people's identity and the need to address the concept of marred identity,
- The need to start with what people in the community know and do, and to build appreciatively from there,
- The need to help communities make new choices as a result of new opportunities and new threats,
- The need to start with ourselves (whoever we are) and build our own capacity in working across cultures,
- The need for us to be better learners, to proactively implement changes in the way we work based on the new information we receive, and
- The need for practitioners to have greater awareness about the importance of the environment and a sense of place for ethnolinguistic groups.

As we mentioned before, we see this Guide as similar to being on a journey. As we explore issues and solutions it is as though we are travelling, exploring the different places that we pass through and examining the opportunities and challenges that they present. This picture shows that journey graphically, and below we briefly summarise where we are going on this journey.

In this section, we have described who we are as a group and identified some of our underlying values. This frankness is important as we recognise that this will clearly shape the content that we have pulled together elsewhere in the Guide and the relative emphasis we will give to different topics.

1. Introductions

Welcome to the Journey

2. Contextualising the issues

Globalisation and inequality

Challenges facing ethnolinguistic communities

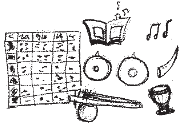
Who Are We?

Shortcut past theoretical issues

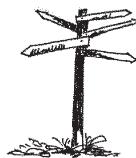
3. Foundations for IBCD

What identifies you...

4. Engaging in dialogue and reflection



Tools for reflection



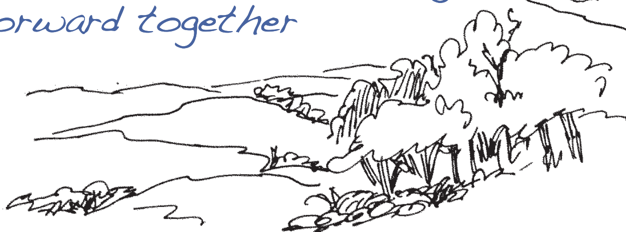
Unity

Voice

Education

5. Relevant action: Moving forward together

6. IBCD and the environment



7. Concluding thoughts

In Chapter 2 *(Contextualising the issues)* we will then look at some of the global changes that are occurring, exploring how international policy and globalisation are creating new opportunities but also new threats for minority ethnolinguistic communities. We look at the challenges for cultural brokers working with these communities and whether or not we can legitimately act in this context. From there, we look in more detail at some of the specific challenges that ethnolinguistic communities are facing, drawing from the experience of the CoP participants from across Asia.

We recognise that Chapter 2 begins to explore some more theoretical issues. While we only touch on these, some readers might want to initially skip past this chapter and first learn more about the actual practice of IBCD. This is fine and you can take a shortcut to Chapter 3 (Foundations of Identity-Based Community Development); however, we do encourage readers to familiarise themselves with the theoretical issues that we have highlighted in Chapter 2 as these provide part of the context in which the practice of IBCD has been developed. As is true in many places in this Guide, we have not addressed these ideas in detail but instead hope that what we have included provides sufficient introduction to allow readers to explore the topics further should they wish. To help we have tried to provide clear links to more information wherever possible, and we welcome feedback about areas where more information can be found.

In Chapter 3 (*Foundations of Identity-Based Community Development),* we introduce the key concepts of IBCD. We start by exploring what we mean by identity and community. From here we look at how a commitment to learning with communities in action and reflection is vital to any community development process which seeks to address the complex issues that they face.

Chapter 4 (Engaging in dialogue and reflection with communities) explores how we can work with communities to develop reflection and dialogue. The first step of this process is to start by looking at ourselves: are we individually and organisationally really ready to work with ethnolinguistic communities? We explore how we can prepare ourselves better and therefore mitigate against our own biases and prejudices. We also highlight some concrete tools that can enable communities to explore their own history of cultural change and to reflect on the impact of that on their own lives. This is particularly important as we believe this provides an important springboard for relevant action by the community.

From here, in Chapter 5 (Relevant action: Moving forward together), we begin to explore what relevant action with ethnolinguistic communities can look like and we provide some short descriptions of effective approaches that have been used across Asia. Our aim here is to link you to further resources which can provide more in-depth understanding of these approaches and help you to get started using them. These cover a wide range of possibilities including multilingual education, developing community based radio and new media, supporting rights-based approaches, exploring and encouraging the use of the arts, and participatory language development.

One key issue that we recognise is not yet well addressed through the LEAD community of practice is the importance of the environment and the way a sense of space influences decisions and activities in ethnolinguistic communities. In Chapter 6 (IBCD and the environment: A pressing issue), our penultimate chapter, we begin to explore this issue, outlining some of the major challenges facing ethnolinguistic communities today and some of the approaches that are being taken by organisations to address them. We recognise that for many communities language, culture, identity, environment and their sense of place are all inextricably linked. In giving significant space to this topic we are making a call for those working with minority ethnolinguistic groups to proactively engage with environmental issues and link with those organisations with expertise in this area.

Our final chapter provides a few concluding thoughts and outlines one way in which practitioners are encouraged to continue engaging with the developing approach of IBCD. It is important to reiterate that this is a work in progress. The approaches that we have highlighted here continue to be used, adapted and improved, and we hope that the results of our continued dialogue will lead to a greater refinement of 'Signposts to Identity-Based Community Development'. We encourage you to engage in this process at http://lead-impact.org/cop.

Chapter TWO

Contextualising the issues

Minority ethnolinguistic communities are increasingly encountering a wide range of development actors and opportunities, offering a variety of options that may not have previously been available. Many of these options will bring change, some positive and some negative. In this chapter we set out some of the wider issues affecting ethnolinguistic communities, explore some of the specific challenges for cultural brokers working with these communities, and then lay out some of the immediate issues facing communities as identified by practitioners themselves.

Globalisation and unequal development

Over recent decades rapid development has spread across Asia, with even the remotest corners becoming part of a connected 'globalised' world. However, the impact of this development has not spread equally, both in terms of quantitative and qualitative change. Minority ethnolinguistic groups frequently continue to be excluded from both the benefits and the process, with many groups actually being adversely affected by it.

Current data[4] suggests that there are 2,304 languages in Asia, a figure that is representative of Asia's wealth of cultural diversity. Much of this diversity is harboured within minority ethnolinguistic groups who, whilst having much knowledge and cultural insight to share, face major challenges for their own cultural survival and transmission. Finding ways for these communities to transmit their culture and to appropriately adapt to and participate in a rapidly globalising society is crucial to their livelihoods and future well being, the maintenance of human knowledge for all peoples, and to maintaining and encouraging strong multicultural societies.

Despite efforts by the Education for All (EFA) framework and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) to improve the lives of millions of marginalised people around the world, it is increasingly acknowledged that progress is not being obtained equally (Save the Children, 2012). Lack of equality impacts both the effectiveness of poverty reduction and development initiatives, resulting in individuals failing to access minimum standards of living, and the wider socio-economic development of states as a whole. As the report of the High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda (United Nations, 2013: 4) outlines:

4 http://www.ethnologue.com/region/Asia

"...we are struck by the level of inequality in the world, both among and within countries. Of all the goods and services consumed in the world each year, the 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty only account for one per cent, while the richest 1 billion people consume 72 per cent."

We believe this inequality is both the result and the cause of the failure of development initiatives. It is clear that for real progress to be made, close attention must be given to the complex and often intersecting inequalities facing many of the poorest people worldwide (UNICEF and UN Women, 2013: 30), with development initiatives not only respecting communities' individual and collective identities but actually using them as a resource from which to begin any development. Despite rapid progress in social innovation practices, understanding around language acquisition and development theory, many communities around the world continue to experience huge obstacles in their efforts to break out of the poverty cycle. Although these situations are often characterised by a complex web of interacting inequalities (see the World Inequality Database on Education[5]), alongside wealth one consistently recurring factor is that of ethnicity. Sadly there remains a lack of understanding of how to work alongside marginalised ethnolinguistic communities, with many initiatives taking place in national or international languages and in culturally unfamiliar or offensive ways.

Culture: an emerging global agenda

Alongside the recognition of issues of inequality in development, there is also increasing recognition of the important place of culture in global debates on sustainable development. While the linkages between culture and development have been recognised since the 1960s, only recently has this begun to be integrated into international development policy (Hayashi et al, 2013). Several frameworks of sustainability at the community level now recognise the contribution of culture in a 'four pillar' model of sustainability (Duxbury and Gillette, 2007), such as the one shown below. Sustainability is no longer viewed as being only related to economics or the natural environment, but also the social and cultural areas of life.

5 http://www.education-inequalities.org

Source: Four well-beings of community sustainability, from New Zealand Ministry for Culture and Heritage (2006: 8).

The recent Hangzhou Declaration on 'Placing Culture at the Heart of Sustainable Development Policies' (UNESCO, 2013), also part of the ongoing discussions around Post-2015 development goals, further develops the need to integrate culture more deeply into development practice by highlighting the following practices:

- Integrate culture within all development policies and programmes
- Mobilise culture and mutual understanding to foster peace and reconciliation
- Ensure cultural rights for all to promote inclusive social development
- Leverage culture for poverty reduction and inclusive economic development
- Build on culture to promote environmental sustainability
- Strengthen resilience to disasters and combat climate change through culture
- Value, safeguard and transmit culture to future generations
- Harness culture as a resource for achieving sustainable urban development and management
- Capitalise on culture to foster innovative and sustainable models of cooperation

One of the key terms in this debate is the idea of **cultural sustainability**:

> *the ability to retain cultural identity, and to allow change to be guided in ways that are consistent with the cultural values of a people.*
> *(Sustainable Development Research Institute, 1998: 1)*

It is important to emphasise that culture naturally changes and evolves, so development need not be at odds with culture. We believe both are possible, as expressed in the vision of LEAD Asia to see 'communities achieving their education and development goals while sustaining their unique languages and cultures'. IBCD is one approach to realising this. As we will explore in the next chapter, at the heart of IBCD is a recognition of this link between culture and development, the goals of cultural sustainability, and the need to discover steps towards what this might look like in practical action in and with communities. However, as we continue to explore here, the challenges to this kind of vision are vast and should not be underestimated.

Your issues, my issues

Ethnolinguistic minorities across Asia face a spectrum of challenges brought on or intensified by externally imposed changes. While change is a natural part of community and culture, the rapid change brought about through globalisation and modernisation can be like a whirlwind, destroying cultural systems while leaving nothing behind in their place.

Improved infrastructure in many places has resulted in a huge influx of people - with their own unique culture, history, values and expectations - into previously remote and isolated ethnolinguistic communities. In relatively short periods of time communities are having to adapt to these new ideas and systems or else be absorbed and lost in the majority culture. Similarly, improved education systems can be double-edged swords: while bringing many benefits they also accelerate change within communities. The speed of these changes makes it increasingly difficult for communities to adapt existing structures and practices to incorporate changes in a considered or sustainable way, often forcing communities to accept everything or nothing. This is a false dilemma that, as we will explore, has more possible solutions than just these two. Inevitably many minority ethnolinguistic groups that have previously been separated from wider society are suddenly faced with decisions or challenges that they are not adequately equipped to deal with, such as to how to maintain their identity in an increasingly multicultural society (Wisbey and Young, 2012).

To explore these issues more broadly, CoP event participants were asked to consult with their colleagues and, if appropriate, members of the communities in which they work, as to what they felt were the key challenges facing minority ethnolinguistic communities today. These can be summarised as follows:

- **Land degradation, challenges around land rights and the loss of access to natural resources:** These high-profile and widespread issues are key for indigenous minorities. Concessions for economic development and land privatisation can lead to a rapid loss of land, while extraction of resources (like logging) can degrade and destroy the environment on which they depend. Whilst the land is being degraded many communities are also finding that the land on which they have built their livelihoods for many years is being removed from them and granted to large corporations through (often illegitimate) land concessions. This not only impacts their physical needs, such as providing sufficient food or income but strikes at their very sense of place and belonging, their identity.
- **Discrimination, exclusion, and psychological challenges:** Members of minority ethno-linguistic groups are often subject to discrimination and exclusion, both proactively through established structures (such as job applications being required in a certain language) and 'passively' through ingrained social attitudes. Feelings of inferiority and marginalisation are reinforced by external factors such as linguistic colonisation, language policy, and other pressures to assimilate. Often this leads to minority ethnolinguistic groups devaluing their own identity and 'owning the view of the

oppressor', displaying shame, lack of confidence and self-worth, loss of pride and ultimately internalising negative external opinions of their culture.

- **Societal impact of rapid change:** Extensive and rapid social change can disrupt functional social systems which have helped protect and maintain community well-being for centuries. Without the opportunity to re-envision culturally appropriate structures, communities are vulnerable to strong negative social impacts such as alcoholism, drug abuse, gambling, domestic violence, prostitution and human trafficking. Economic migration can heighten this issue, particularly as working age people move out of communities in search of work. This leaves huge demographic gaps which can lead to a rise in new social problems that communities are often ill-equipped to address.

- **Limited access to basic services:** While many minority ethnolinguistic communities lack basic services due to their remote location, they can also can find themselves excluded from basic services because of their lack of understanding of the national language or the language of wider communication. Prevailing negative attitudes towards non-dominant languages together with the lack of printed materials in these languages perpetuates the difficulty of using them in increasing domains of society.

- **Political difficulties:** This can range from a lack of awareness of basic rights by the individuals, through a lack of structure or organisation to appeal for those rights, to a lack of political recognition or will to protect those rights. Insufficient relevant information and low levels of literacy in national or international languages leaves ethnolinguistic communities vulnerable to exploitation and vote buying. Government inaction further decreases their political status, with the state often not recognising or supporting minority groups. Governments themselves often lack awareness of or expertise in minority issues, and hierarchical government systems and national policies can limit grassroots initiatives which might otherwise be supportive.

- **Wider societal lack of awareness and misunderstanding around minority issues and their implications:** Mainstream media, usually in a majority language, is inevitably culturally biased toward majority issues. Unhelpful, imbalanced and often incorrect information around multiculturalism and ethnic diversity promotes national division and fuels uncertainty about how to address issues facing minority ethnolinguistic communities. Governments frequently wrongly cite national unity as a key reason for not encouraging diversity and minority empowerment, impacting donors and academia who as a result fail to gain support for challenging minority issues. In many contexts throughout Asia there is a real tension between cultural homogeneity and variety, with the former being viewed as simpler, more streamlined, convenient and efficient, while the latter is complicated, conflicting, inefficient and often inconvenient. Until there are changes to prevailing attitudes like this, attitudes that often permeate all levels of society, minority ethnolinguistic groups will continue to face an uphill task in building their futures on their own unique identities. As one participant said, becoming part of a monoculture, diluting one's individuality down to the majority culture, is like losing a part of yourself.

- **Economic development:** For extremely poor ethnolinguistic groups, often those who have already lost access to their natural resources, material poverty is often a more pressing priority than issues of identity. Faced with a lack of access to markets due to geographical isolation, limited infrastructure and language barriers, maintaining one's own identity can be a secondary consideration. However, this can become a downward spiral as marred identity undermines the confidence needed to take action to escape poverty. Communities may also feel as though they have insufficient local resources to maintain their language and culture.

- **Conflict:** Minority ethnolinguistic groups can also face issues of conflict. There is often insufficient healthy interaction between the dominant and minority cultures, leading to a lack of understanding of each other and a growing hostility between groups. In many cases this makes productive engagement across the cultural interface very difficult, with distrust and power dynamics being major challenges. In some extreme cases this can lead to insurgency and civil unrest. Clearly, building dialogue before this stage is reached is critical to multicultural societies.

- **Cultural sticking points:** Without a way to integrate the known with the unknown - the familiar and the foreign - long-held spiritual beliefs or traditions may continue to undermine the communities' own development aspirations. For example, it may be difficult for groups to accept and readily incorporate modern health and sanitation practices, or change deeply ingrained gender practices and internal social oppression. Finding ways to dialogue around such issues is central to seeing progress in other areas of community development.

- **Movement of people:** While improved infrastructure has made communication and travel into and around formerly remote ethnolinguistic communities easier and less costly, in addition to the challenges mentioned above it has also raised new challenges around population location, changes to demographics and the impact on social dynamics, and changing demands on the provision of government services.

The impact of an issue: people movement

While recent changes have seen large numbers of people moving into minority ethnolinguistic communities, they have also made it easier for people to leave communities where previously that was very difficult or unusual. As access is improved, many people have taken the opportunity to seek prosperity or a 'better life' elsewhere. The movement of these so-called economic migrants, often made up of a high number of youth, has huge implications for both the places they leave and the places where they arrive. For the communities that are left behind, large gaps appear in the demographics that can have wide ranging consequences for social order. And for the places to which people move, the allure of many urban contexts often gives way to poorer standards of living and worse health issues.

Of course, people are not only leaving minority ethnolinguistic communities for economic reasons. So called environmental migrants, people moving because of changes to the environment or land – either because of manmade or natural changes, are becoming increasingly common. As well as the issues mentioned above, in situations where whole communities must consider moving away from their historical and cultural home, major issues around identity, unity and inclusion are raised and played out. It is not uncommon in these communities for there to be a prevalent sense of helplessness, with some participants readily explaining that people just do not know who they are or what to do. In these circumstances there is a real need for peace-building and reconciliation, something that can only really come about by recognising, valuing and then incorporating cultural elements from those affected communities.

Development: in the way of community well-being?

One of the key challenges faced by practitioners as we consider how to address these challenges, overcome inequality, and integrate culture into development, is how local and globalising culture can be reconciled. This is a controversial issue, particularly where global economic interests are in direct conflict with indigenous 'life projects'.

Life Projects

'Life projects' is a term used to capture the whole way of life of a community, in contrast to the economic goals of globalisation and 'development projects'. "Life projects are embedded in local histories; they encompass visions of the world and the future that are distinct from those embodied by projects promoted by state and markets. Life projects diverge from development in their attention to the uniqueness of people's experiences of place and self and their rejection of visions that claim to be universal. Thus, life projects are premised on densely and uniquely woven 'threads' of landscapes, memories, expectations and desires." (Blaser et al, 2004)"]

A four-way categorisation can help frame the different responses to development in minority ethnolinguistic contexts. Two dimensions are considered, the extent to which ethnolinguistic communities are included or excluded in the development process, and the extent to which cultural issues (both internal and external to the community) are critically engaged within that development process:

	Excluded in development processes	**Included in development processes**
Uncritical of development	a) Ethnolinguistic communities are "in the way of development"	c) 'Development as Tragedy', a rhetoric of exclusion
Critical of development	b) Intentional isolation	d) Dialogue, participatory development

a) Many ethnolinguistic communities live in areas of rich natural resources and continue to suffer from the effects of land concessions given to agro-industry and mining. Economic development has often actively excluded those connected to the land in the name of economic growth, where communities are "in the way of development" (Blaser et al, 2004).

b) A common response among anthropologists and activists is to argue that minority ethnolinguistic communities should be isolated, recognising that any interaction with the external world will irrevocably change their culture. However, from a pragmatic perspective the ubiquity of globalisation makes this increasing difficult and from an ethical perspective isolation confines these people into a 'museum' piece potentially against their will (Bourdier, 2006).

c) Often the challenges that ethnolinguistic communities face are described as 'exclusion', that they are excluded from, and missing out on, the benefits of development. However, there is a danger that this fails to recognise the fundamentally different 'life project' (Blaser et al, 2004) that the indigenous minorities have been trying to achieve:

> *What is the fundamental use of roads, trade and integration into the national and international economy for a people who have historically defined themselves in terms of their isolation, independence and self-sufficiency? (Hammer, 2009:147)*
>
> *Their cultural heritage of community-level resource management, high levels of local self-sufficiency, and relative social equality is the antithesis of how the commercial world was developed and is currently organised (Bodley, 2008: 7).*

While these development actions are often well intended, failure to take into account the differences in culture and worldview often render these actions as forms of cultural imperialism, reinforcing the stereotype that ethnolinguistic communities are inferior (Smith, 2010). This process is well described in Hammer's (2009) critique of development in the minority regions of Cambodia, aptly titled 'Development as Tragedy'. If people are simply being empowered to take part in a commercial society, as consumers and capital producing labour for global markets, then "'empowerment' is tantamount to what Foucault calls 'subjection'" (Henkel and Stirrat, 2001: 182).

d) The final distinction is both pragmatic yet critical. While recognising the significance of the arguments above, the cultural boundaries between ethnolinguistic communities and surrounding dominant societies is today rarely that clear. Much change has already occurred with minority ethnolinguistic communities adopting 'commercialised life projects'. Bourdier (2006: 184) argues that "identity is constantly reaffirmed according to new points of reference and evolves with the transformations that are occurring in society". Recognising the dynamic nature of culture opens the possibility of critical evaluation of culture, where communities can evaluate cultural practices in relation to their current values and needs to connect with other societies so that they remain meaningful (Gyekye, 1997):

> *our common subjugation to global material forces and the possibility of transformative dialogues - make the need and likelihood of collaborative alternatives more urgent and pressing (Mohan, 2001: 167).*

IBCD is a response to this fourth possibility, recognising the need to establish dialogue with minority ethnolinguistic communities, to help undo the damage of negative stereotypes, support the reevaluation of their culture as they choose how and if they wish to develop. This dialogue is not only for the communities, but to help us all build a richer understanding functional life projects. This is by no means simple; indeed significant issues are implied in this approach.

Since development actors are part of modern society and globalisation, can relations be negotiated at this cultural interface without requiring or implying the subjugation and assimilation of one culture into another? Often 'well meaning' development agencies can bring major challenges for communities. As they go about their work they often unconsciously introduce concepts, value systems, administrative structures and power dynamics directly counter to the communities' own cultural understanding. While communities may want to engage with development processes, they are often not

well placed or empowered to be active participants in this decision making process. Development in this context puts the responsibility on practitioners to adequately address power differentials and narratives of inferiority in their interactions with minority groups (Smith, 2010). We will explore ways in which they can fulfill this responsibility further in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Chapter THREE

Foundations of Identity-Based Community Development (IBCD)

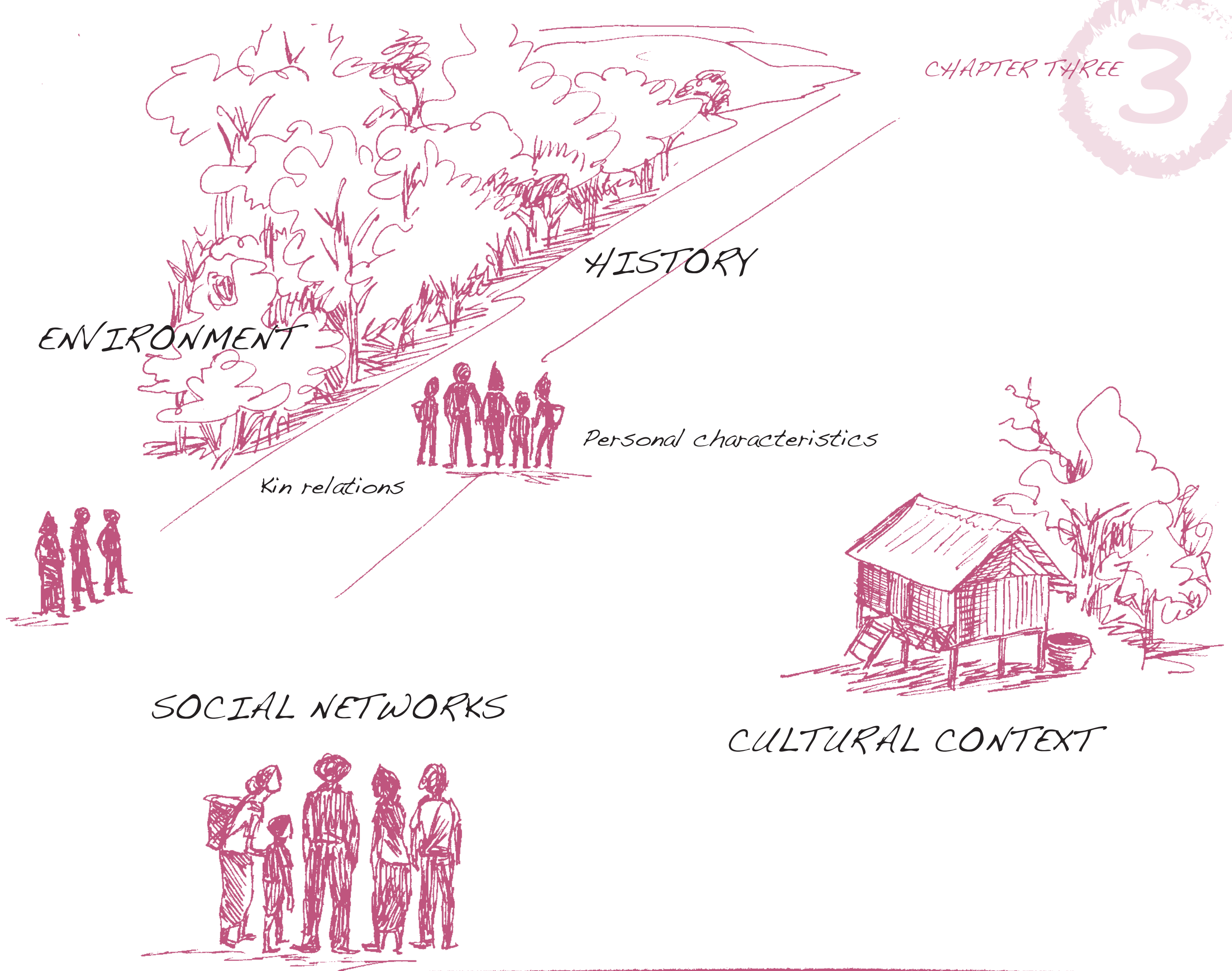
The goal of this Guide is to highlight practical strategies that have been used in Asia to help support cultural sustainability, relevant development and multicultural societies, and it is the coming together of these approaches that forms what we have come to call Identity-Based Community Development. The majority of challenges outlined in the previous chapter demonstrate how powerless communities can feel, seeing external issues as final statements about their future where the result is inevitable and change is impossible. Throughout the CoP event, participants highlighted the importance of communities reflecting on their own situation: understanding themselves and their culture, their history and their possible vision for the future. By recognising development as a cultural change process it follows that it must build upon the knowledge, culture, resources and values of the community. Within such a paradigm, a community's identity is a natural springboard, encouraging community-directed and culturally appropriate development.

IBCD proposes a process of community reflection on cultural change narratives as a starting point for exploring the unique rights, responsibilities and opportunities of their situation and the corresponding development actions. From this foundation, actions can be chosen and implemented by communities to help them become increasingly empowered and participative within their national societies. Through dialogue, both dominant and minority groups can develop mutual understanding and respect for the variety of languages and cultures in the region, creating an environment to forge harmonious rather than combative relationships. Marginalisation and disenfranchisement can then be reduced, enabling more inclusive multi-cultural societies and vibrant democracy building throughout the region.

Before we can begin to explore the practical methods and strategies around IBCD that were highlighted in the CoP event, the core concepts of identity and community development need unpacking, questioning and understanding.

Identity

Globalisation raises questions of "Who am I?" and "Who are we?" - questions of identity and identity construction. Identity can be defined as 'the inner certainty of a subject to remain one and the same person [or community], despite changing situations and stages of life' (Schaub and Zenke, 1995) . Our identity is who we are, and is informed by many factors as shown by this illustration:



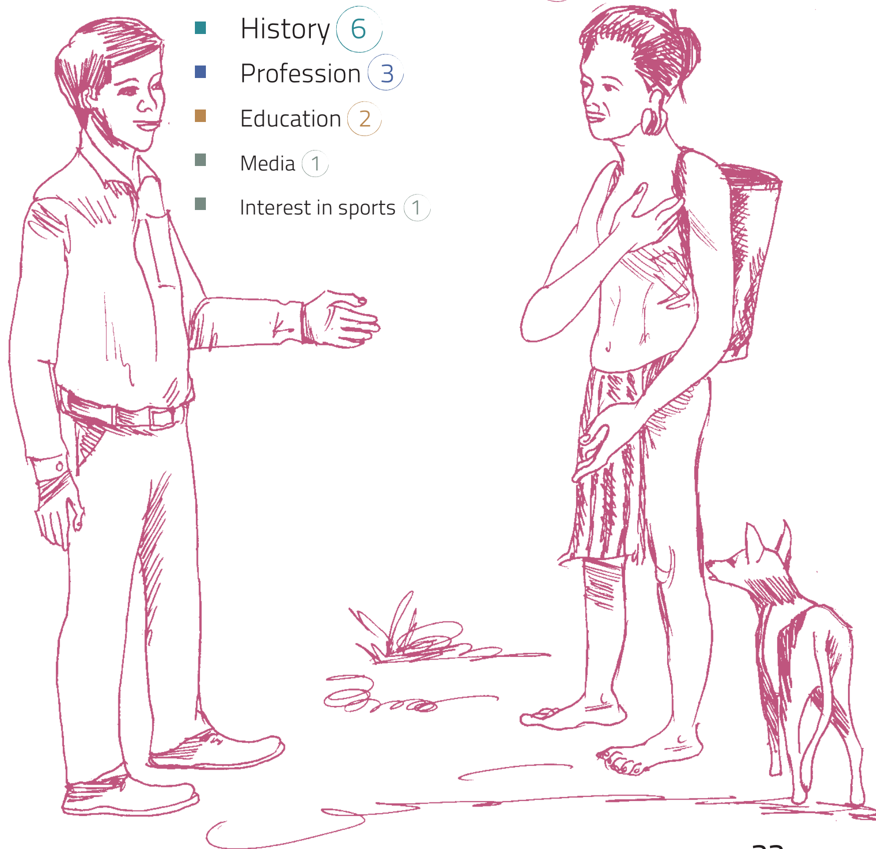
Collective and individual identities exist and impact on one another (Schöpflin, 2001). Identity (both personal and collective) is therefore a 'negotiated construct'; and while individual and community identity are not the same thing, they are shaped and agreed upon by each other. Identity is a complex issue, especially in the context of rapid externally imposed change. By seeking to know who we are and where we are in the midst of this change, this can help us decide upon appropriate and adaptable routes to get us to where we would like to be. In turn this helps us to own our identity and values, to stand out among the noise of global change and to engage as proactive participants. Without knowing who we are or where we are, we are unable to know where we want to go and how to get there - we may feel lost. Others' voices around us tell us where to go and how to get there. They may not make sense, they may conflict, but they may be all we have.

Culture and identity are closely linked but they should not be seen as the exact same concept. Identity is formed by many factors, with culture being one (albeit a powerful one) of those factors (Clarke, 2008). Culture is the way of life of a group of people, the particular way in which social life happens to be structured. Identity relates to knowing who you are. Identity-Based Community Development therefore seeks not just to base development on culture but to help communities develop greater consciousness of who they are and then to use this as a platform for achieving greater community wellbeing. For this reason, we believe that 'identity-based' is a more appropriate term than 'culture-based', though the latter may also be true.

While basing community development on identity could be applied to any community, it is particularly relevant when working with minority ethnolinguistic communities. The exploration of identity starts with the question: "What makes you part of the [name of any ethnolinguistic group]?" Given the diverse factors that inform identities, it is no surprise that identity markers - those things or behaviours that identify us as belonging to a certain group - are also diverse.

'Ethnolinguistic identifiers' highlighted by participants included:

- Food/Ways of Eating/Traditional Food 32
- Traditional Music/Arts/Dance/Folk tales 31
- Language 28
- Culture/Customs/Traditions/Special Festivals 27
- Social Structure/Value Systems/Ways of thinking, communicating, and solving problems 24
- Environment/Geography/Relationship with Land/Outdoors 16
- Beliefs/Belief system/Religion 13
- Traditional Clothes/Handicrafts/Dress 10
- Multilingualism/Mixed heritage/Interacting with people from multi-backgrounds 7
- Relationships/Family Relationships/Relations with others 7
- Physical Appearance 7
- History 6
- Profession 3
- Education 2
- Media 1
- Interest in sports 1



The myth of community?

A significant challenge to community development, and especially community empowering approaches, is the 'myth of community'. This relates to the false assumption that there are 'epistemic communities' who share a common knowledge and agenda (Long, 2001: 179). Indeed there is a real danger that community development overlooks the varying agendas of individuals and sub-groups, and perpetuates local power structures (Cleaver, 2001). While communities may share common histories, languages, and other identity markers, different sub-groups in the community will interpret these differently. This puts great importance on understanding the different perspectives of sub-cultures (which is discussed later), and facilitating dialogue and communication across all of these groups. These subgroups can be defined by a variety of factors including gender, economics, caste, religion, geography, and age. This challenge is so central to any discussions around community development, that in many cases it may actually be better expressed as 'developing community'!

The issue of age, or generations, is particularly important in the consideration of identity and cultural change. In many communities around the world, the older generations are becoming increasingly disconnected from the youth, creating an intergenerational disconnect. In the past, youth and elders had natural connection points: on the farm, walking through the forest, during village meetings, or by the fire listening to traditional stories. It was during these times that culture and knowledge were passed both informally and through formal rituals and institutions. Cultural transmission was healthy and often resulted in a clearer, more balanced, concept of 'community'.

As youth gain access to national education systems and seek alternative forms of employment, or modern forms of entertainment take the place of the traditional, these natural points of connection fade and there can be a break in cultural transmission. Better-versed in the dominant language and culture than their elders, they may see themselves as having more status or knowledge, and possibly even shame towards their 'uneducated' elders. With the changes facing minority ethnolinguistic communities many youth feel torn between two (or more) worlds, wanting to explore the opportunities of new and 'foreign' cultures, feeling obligated to find waged work to support their families, and longing to still feel connected to somewhere they can call 'home'.

Each generation has an essential role to play in the life of a community, holding rights and responsibilities which are needed for the community to function. Culture, language and history are just some of the threads that weave communities together, strengthening the connections between people of all ages and allowing each to play their own part. Intergenerational connections are vital to cultural sustainability, and so a key issue in IBCD is rethinking ways in which these connections can be revitalised and adapted in a changing cultural climate.

Reconnecting old and young

The CoP event highlighted some interesting challenges related to intergenerational disconnections:

In Cambodia, one community discovered that an intergenerational gap was the result of changed cultural expectations about teaching. The older people felt that the young were not interested to learn about the traditional culture because they never came to ask. The youth on the other hand, who through formal schooling had come to expect knowledge to be passed from teacher to student, thought that the elders were not interested in teaching them! A practitioner who saw this disconnect, was able to help facilitate dialogue and reconnect the youth and elders.

A community in Northern Thailand found that the arts helped them find points of connection. One young community member took traditional music and integrated it with break-dancing! The result was a fusion which celebrated the meaning of the traditional music, but also connected it to the modern culture of the youth. The elders were impressed by the musicians grasp of the traditional music, and this synthesis provided an opportunity for the youth and elders to connect and dialogue about their traditional culture.

In China, millions of young people have migrated to cities for work but return to their home communities for new year celebrations. Whilst this annual movement of people provides many challenges, the new year celebrations provide opportunities for cultural transmission and intergenerational dialogue, both things that can help develop harmonious multicultural communities.

Complex cultural systems

The interactions between cultural change and development are highly complex. As a complex system, issues are interrelated and connected, different perspectives from sub-groups will come to different conclusions about a given situation, and power relations will determine who decides which of these perspectives are considered authoritative (Williams and Hummelbrunner, 2010). These issues are important to explore further in the context of culture and identity if IBCD is to adequately address the complexity practitioners are often faced with in their daily work.

Interconnectedness

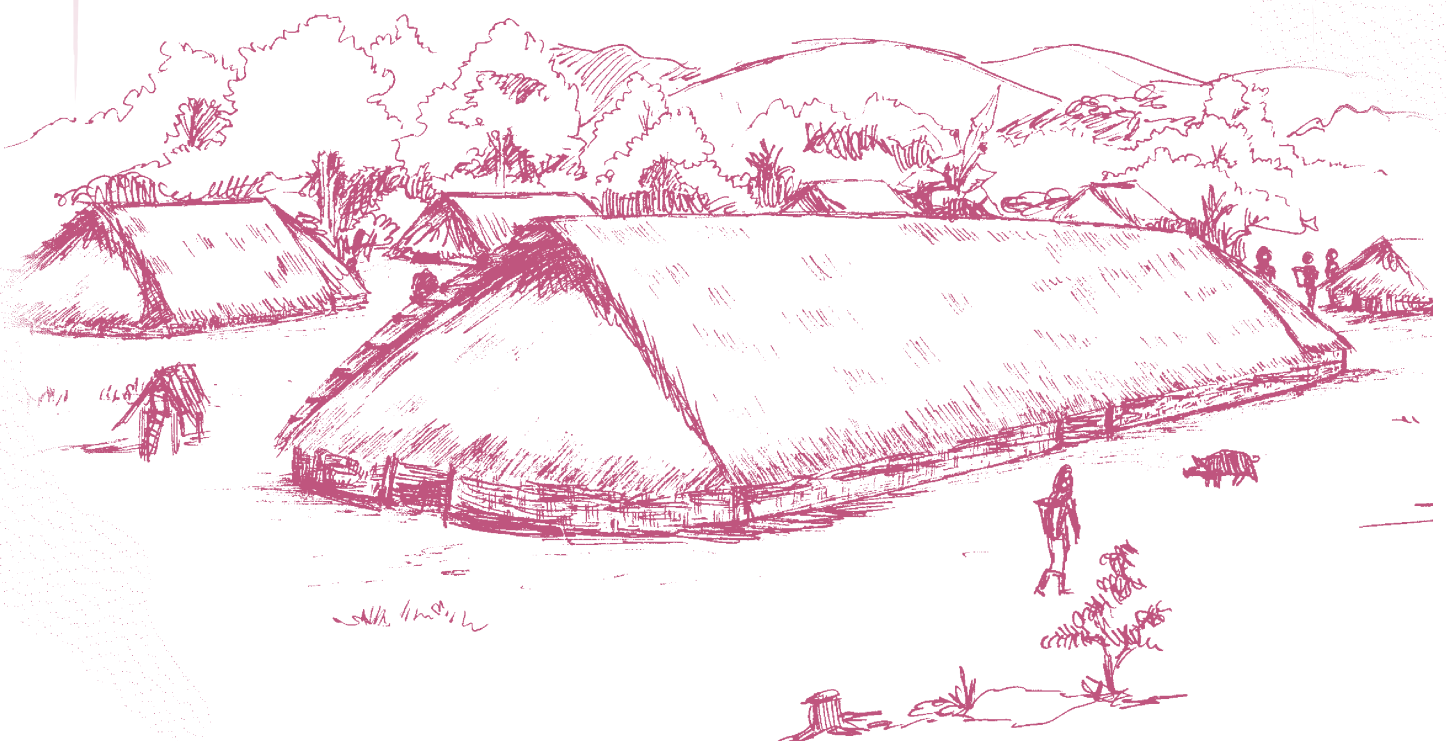
Cultures are a vast system of interconnected issues. Belief systems, language attitudes, livelihoods, environment, arts, food, architecture, social protection - to name but a few - are all interconnected. While these systems have not been static, externally induced change in minority ethnolinguistic communities often arrives rapidly and powerfully, destabilising the existing systems.

Many cultures have developed systems to protect themselves from social problems, solve conflict, and prevent poverty. For example, shared access to common forest resources has been a means by which many communities have survived in the face of crop failure. As these systems are shaken, established identities, community services, and social safety nets can be broken. The potential collapse of such systems leaves communities vulnerable to negative change such as alcoholism, increased domestic violence, human trafficking, decreased farm productivity, disempowerment and poverty. Sometimes these connections are obvious, with the implications of one change on another area of life clear to see. Often, however, they are not, with small changes in one area of life having far-reaching and long-term impact on often unseen areas of life.

Housing - From Bunong to 'Khmodern'

The change of Bunong housing provides a good example of how changes in one part of a culture are deeply interconnected with other aspects, triggering a cascade of cultural changes.

The Bunong, a minority ethnolinguistic group in Cambodia, traditionally lived in what they refer to as 'Chey', which were traditionally up to 100m in length. These buildings served as the living quarters for the entire village. The houses are skilfully built with wood, rattan, bamboo and grass thatching. More than just sleeping quarters, the 'Chey' forms an intimate part of the Bunong lifestyle; serving as a centre of ritual, ceremony and decision-making; as the rice granary (and therefore the house for the 'spirit' of the rice) and seed storage; and had specific areas for the reception of guests.



The Bunong describe living in 'Chey' as common practice up until the 1960s when many fled due to the disruption of the Vietnam-US war and then the forced displacement by the Khmer Rouge who burnt their villages. When returning to their village locations in the 1980s to rebuild their houses, they found the context had changed dramatically.

As Khmer immigration increased and markets were established, the availability of wood (by modern machinery) and tin roofing increased as markets penetrated the area. Land privatisation forced the Bunong to abandon their practice of moving to new village locations to allow forest resources to naturally recover. Without these sustainable systems in place, and with an increase in deforestation and agro-industry, raw materials were exhausted and increasingly difficult to find. The Bunong saw how robust the Khmer wooden houses were compared to the 'Chey', the status the wooden houses carried in the new society, and the increasing difficulties in finding raw materials, and so began to abandon the traditional houses.

This was more than purely a loss of an identity marker. The construction of 'Chey' had always been an important part of 'Jha'bhal' culture, the playful convincing of people to get involved in a project, often using music. However, the construction of wooden houses now required outside knowledge and capital, thus implying a break with tradition and therefore requiring financial remuneration. The 'Chey' were also designed such that seed saving and safe rice storage were integrated into the house. As such, access to indigenous varieties of crops are now in decline, due to a lack of seed stock and difficulties around rice storage.

The new form of building also removed the communal space from the village, originally found in the centre of the 'Chey'. Communal meetings now must take place in the new 'Salaa', the political building built in the style of the dominant Khmer culture, reinforcing the perception that the community must behave in a culturally different way if they want to be part of modern society. (Edited from Smith, 2010)]

Perspectives and boundaries

While most would agree that changes in indigenous cultures have happened at an unprecedented rate, different perspectives would claim this change as positive or negative. As such it is important to recognise that change can often be interpreted in different ways.

Nomadic sea populations provide a good example of this. These groups have a vast knowledge of the ocean, are often isolated from other societies, and depend almost entirely on the resources that the 'mother ocean' provides. However, this is also a risky way of life, diving for resources and facing violent storms. But the ocean is their home, their identity.

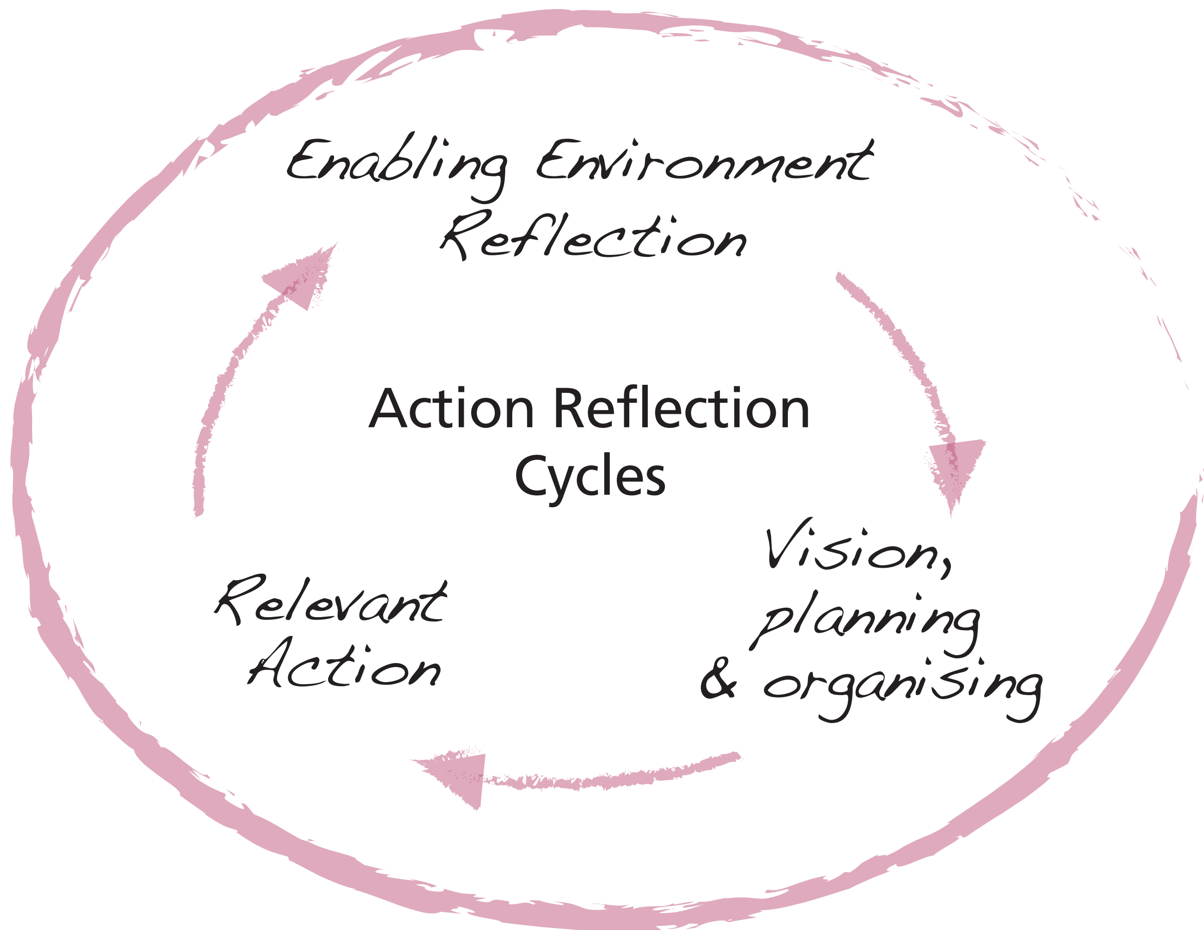
Many of these populations have been forced to move onto land, by governments, pressures from tourism, and declining resources from industrial fishing. They have gained a greater awareness of the world, gained legal rights, gained access to modern medicine, they live in houses and their children now go to school. Many changes have come, but at what cost? What, often unstated, values are being applied when making a judgement about the cost of this change? If economic, educational and health factors are chosen, then the changes may be considered positive. However, if self-determination, cultural diversity, and a value for alternative life projects are also included, then the changes may be seen as negative. Project Moken provides an interesting example of the challenges that nomadic sea communities face, see: http://www.projectmoken.com.

These issues can be described as the 'boundaries' of the system - the choice about which factor are chosen to determine whether a change is considered good or bad. These play a significant role in determining how a situation is understood, and what interventions (if any) are taken. Frequently, the values applied are from those who have power - which is rarely the communities themselves. Empowering communities, therefore, should not only impact the delivery of interventions but open up alternative interpretations of change, challenging practitioners' and communities' own understandings and encouraging dialogue around the issues.

Empowerment focused

Given the complexity of cultural systems, working with minority ethnolinguistic communities requires a position of learning. As practitioners we must do all we can to understand from different perspectives how issues are interconnected and which are being given preference when determining action. Of course this does not stop with us as practitioners. Communities must analyse these complex issues for themselves, identifying where boundaries have been imposed from 'outside' and given space to set their own priorities.

To explore these possibilities together requires an orientation towards action learning: encouraging communities to reflect on and analyse their situation and experimenting together to see what impact, including unexpected ones, any changes may have. This creates a space for communities to be the drivers of their own change process, encouraging cultural sustainability and development. This basic structure of action and reflection is assumed in IBCD, and forms the basic framework for this Guide, which will explore these steps in more detail.



An enabling environment

Given the histories of oppression and subordination surrounding many minority ethnolinguistic communities, empowering approaches need to work appreciatively to build up the confidence and trust of the communities to work with each other and outsiders. Self-esteem takes time to rebuild and a culture of trust and safety is necessary for communities to feel able to take the lead in critical decision making.

There is also a necessity to create an enabling environment on a wider scale. As highlighted in Chapter 2, culture and inclusion are gaining significant attention in the UN's Post-2015 development discussions. However, there is still a need to explore what works, and ensure that policy, funding, and programming are supportive of these approaches. While tools for advocacy at this level are beyond the scope of this Guide it is hoped that it will contribute to a better understanding among funders and policy makers about the significance of cultural sustainability and the kinds of approaches that are necessary to support it. This may require substantial changes to development practice which will undoubtedly require advocacy at multiple levels.

Reflection, vision building and mobilising

> ***Socially sustainable communities have the capacity to deal with change and to adapt to new situations, attributes that are now becoming increasingly essential in a globalized world (Williams, 2003, quoted in Duxbury and Gillette, 2007).***

Inherent to the concept of cultural sustainability is reflection and choice. Communities need to decide for themselves where they want to adapt and where they want to resist change. IBCD therefore promotes reflection on changes in the community, whether these changes are supporting or undermining cultural values and whether it is felt to be a positive change or not. Physical and cultural assets should be explored to help communities (and often practitioners themselves) understand that there are resources in the community to support their development and resilience. Developing a 'local understanding' of local issues and an awareness of the local resources available, provides a foundation for building a common vision within the community for cultural sustainability.

An iterative process

Finally, a central feature of IBCD must be the space to start small, fail early, fall a short distance, and reflect deeply on results. Although this is a concept popular in modern management, it finds its roots much earlier in empowerment thinking (Freire and Ramos, 1987). Allowing communities the 'freedom to fail' is key to 'learning towards transformation' (Myers, 2011), something that while simple to say, can be incredibly difficult to promote or adopt.

Adopting such an attitude recognises that people's initial analysis, vision and decisions change over time through their own learning and experience and that this is something to be facilitated and encouraged. Indeed the role of practitioners should be to help communities in this process, encouraging adaptation and reassessment within structured plans and goal setting. To be most effective, reflection, planning and action should therefore be done in small "bite-size chunks". This process forms an ongoing cycle of reflection and action, building upon the experience and knowledge of the community to work towards their vision for development and cultural sustainability.

The challenge now, then, is to enable this ongoing dialogue. How exactly is this possible, given so many of the challenges we have highlighted? This challenge of enabling dialogue and reflection, will be explored in the next chapter.

Chapter FOUR

Engaging in dialogue and reflection with communities

Minority ethnolinguistic communities exist in a wide variety of contexts, some remain in their traditional landscape, some are undergoing rapid change and are in a state of 'shock', others have already experienced the changes and are struggling to survive amongst competing cultures. In each situation, taking a step back and reflecting on what is important and what is changing are crucial to cultural sustainability and relevant development.

However, promoting reflection can be a challenge in itself.

For some it will be a foreign concept. Many isolated minority ethnolinguistic communities have had little need to reflect on cultural change. Their cultural priorities have emphasised continuity and maintenance of relationships with the communities and environment in which they live. They have had little need to organise themselves or make strategic decisions for the future in a relatively steady context.

For others it will be hard to connect with their cultural heritage, either where significant change has already happened and youth and elders have become disconnected, or where communities are currently surrounded by the often contradictory claims of cultural change. Cultural sustainability will require the whole community, even if they are geographically separated or surrounded by competing claims, to engage in a process of reflection.

- **I never knew that was part of our culture!**
- **Why do we do things like that?**
- **We don't want to lose our language and culture.**
- **I have never thought of things like that before.**
- **What does that mean for us, here and now?**
- **How can we participate in development?**

In this chapter we begin to explore how a conversation, a dialogue, can be started with and within communities about what cultural sustainability means for them.

Why reflection? Why dialogue?

All cultures need to adapt and change to stay relevant, but how can this happen intentionally, rather than just being swept along by global changes? While development promotes change, cultural sustainability also implies resisting unwanted change. Identity-Based Community Development assumes that communities, together with the relevant information and empowering environment, have the right and the ability to chart their own course for themselves.

Reflection and dialogue are keys to this process. From a practical perspective they help to ensure that development activities are effective and relevant in the context. But, more importantly, they also help facilitate a process that allows communities to make the choices that they need to. While many minority cultures have slowly evolved over hundreds of years, they are now facing new challenges and systems for which their indigenous knowledge and structures provide limited insight (Smith, 2010). Choice is not really choice if it is not informed choice. But informed choice is not just about new information, but about understanding how that choice will affect you - socially, culturally, economically and environmentally.

Dialogue and Reflection:

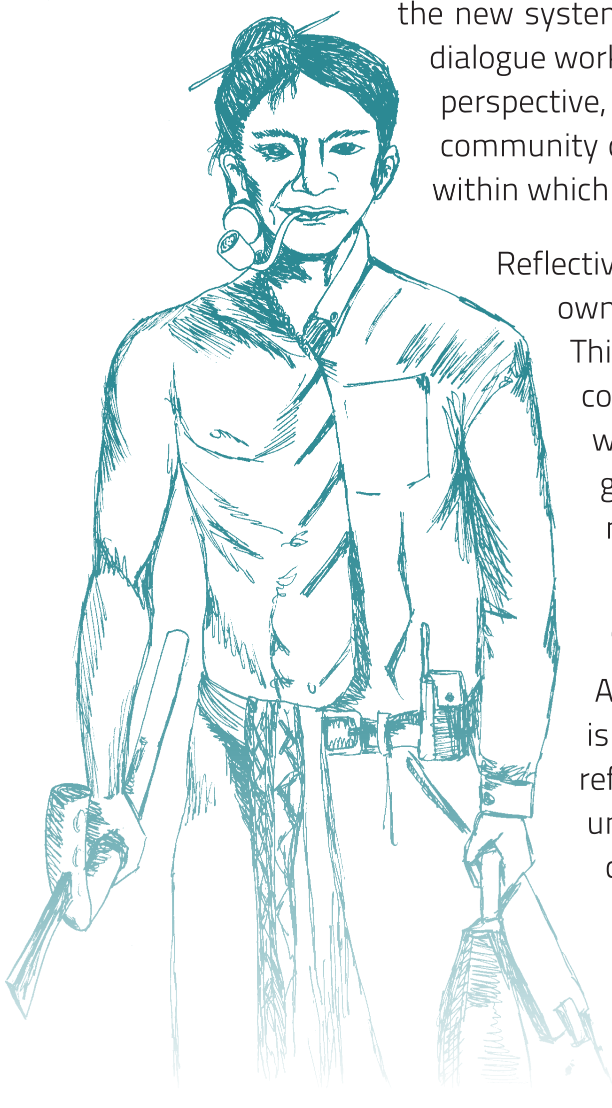
Dialogue occurs when:

1. All participants "suspend" their assumptions,
2. All participants see each other as equals or colleagues, and
3. There is a 'facilitator' who 'holds the context' of dialogue.

True dialogue occurs within, and contributes towards, establishing a culture of trust. It should enable all participants to gain a richer understanding of each others' viewpoints and through that enable a larger pool of knowledge (Adapted from Senge, 1990).

Reflection is to reexamine something, an event or action, to 'make it more conscious, to analyse it, to evaluate it, to understand it better or on a deeper level' (Barefoot Collective, 2009: 109). Practically this means to ask questions such as: What happened? Why did it happen? What caused it? How do we feel about it? What helped? What hindered? What did we expect to happen? What assumptions did we make? Were they valid? What do we need to do differently or the same next time?

The process of reflection helps a community to understand what it values. Dialogue within the community and with those outside it brings new information and knowledge to the community in a context of trust, which can help them understand and navigate the new systems in which they must participate. In the same way, since dialogue works in both directions, by learning to see things from another perspective, practitioners gain a richer view of the world and the community development processes as they learn from the community within which they are working.

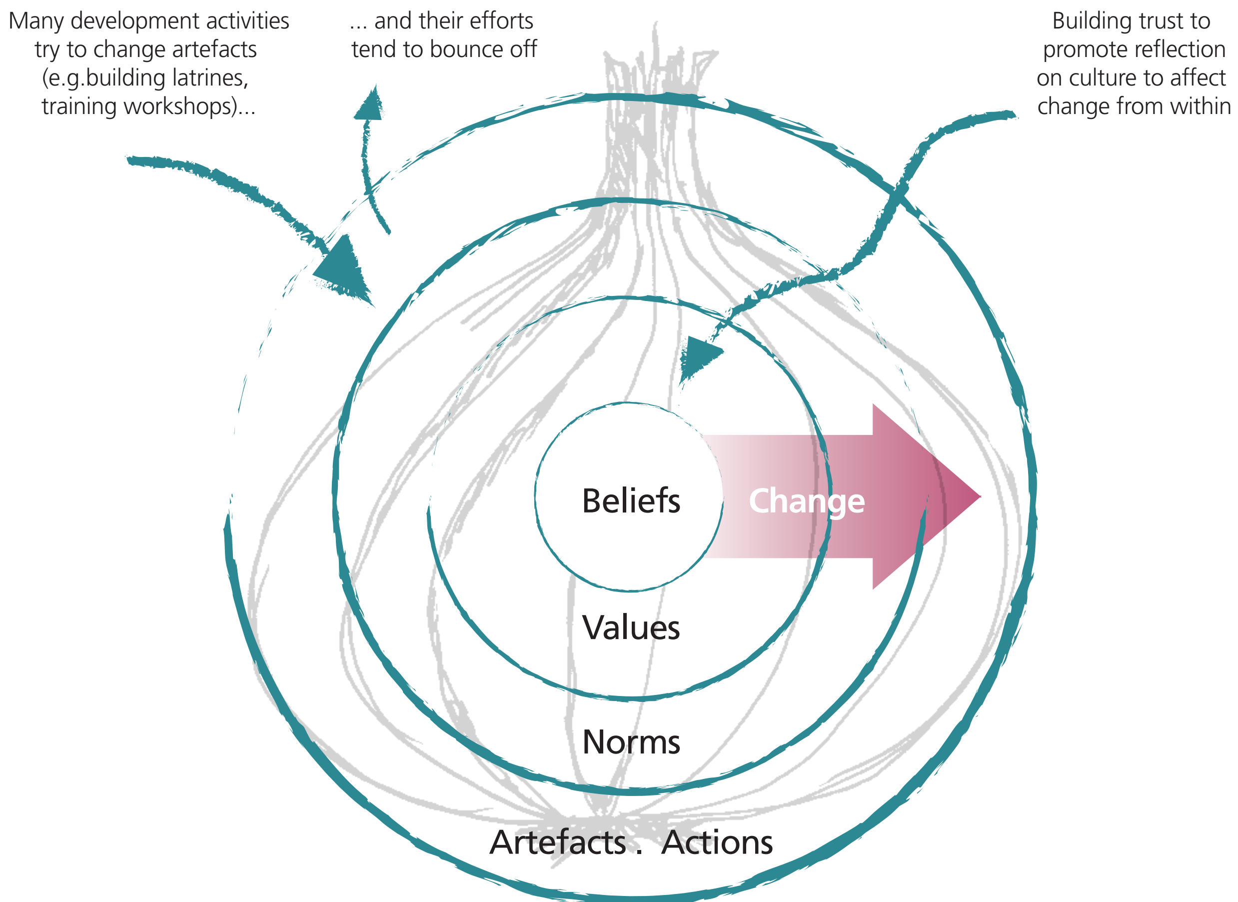


Reflective communities have the ability to analyse and evaluate their own culture, foreign cultures, and their own cultural changes. This helps to ensure that changes in the community remain consistent with their cultural values and identity, an identity which is not 'marred' by negative stereotypes. In this way, global forces of change can be used to help communities move in the direction that they want to go.

Community development from the inside-out

A significant role of community development practitioners is to begin a dialogue and facilitate this process of deeper reflection. Practitioners must learn with communities how to understand their culture, how change has happened and how communities themselves evaluate this change according to their own values. One well-known model of intentional change is the U-process (Barefoot Collective, 2009). The process describes the need to understand and analyse the current situation by first acknowledging and bringing to the surface beliefs and values, and then identifying the underlying patterns and systems, before any common vision or plan can be made for the future. Only when communities develop their own understanding of their situation, can plans and action be considered 'owned' by the community.

Many well-intended development projects in minority ethnolinguistic communities fail to consider this process, and simply attempt to change the external physical aspects or actions of a culture: the farming techniques, water and sanitation, or literacy for example. These changes often do not 'stick' as ongoing practices because they are not relevant to the community or coherent with their understanding of the world, values and norms (see the 'Cultural Onion' below, adapted from Hofstede, 1991). If any sustainable change is to happen in communities it must connect with the deeper level of cultural beliefs and values within that community, both to ensure that it is relevant and to ensure that it does not undermine other important aspects of their culture.



Appreciative approaches, which start with what the community knows and build from there, can be powerful tools in this process. They can help develop community self-esteem, establishing a belief that the community themselves are able to address their own issues. Appreciative approaches facilitate reflection on core beliefs and values, and help build a foundation of trust as communities feel that they are beginning to be understood.

There are many tools already available which describe appreciative or asset-based approaches to community development; a list of helpful tools is included at the end of this chapter. This next section highlights some tools and approaches which specifically focus on exploring identity and cultural change with communities, enabling them to begin reflecting on their own story of change. These approaches explore how the arts, language, customs, local knowledge and local resources can all be instrumental in bringing about the changes a community desires while mitigating against those which they do not. But first we must begin by looking at ourselves.

Practitioners: starting with ourselves

As mentioned in the introduction, the main target audience for the tools in this Guide are the people who find themselves standing between two cultures, cultural mediators or brokers. Whether from outside or from within the community it is important that practitioners, as cultural brokers, look to develop their reflexivity and to be aware of the impact they have in the community.

Reflexivity is the conscious act of recognizing one's own imprint on the nature and content of their work. By being in communities, we have an effect on the way they operate, so it is important for us to take time to reflect and build self-awareness about what effect we are having. 'Reflexivity entails the researcher [or practitioner] being aware of his effect on the process and outcomes of research based on the premise that 'knowledge cannot be separated from the knower' (Thorpe and Holt, 2008).

Many indigenous communities suffer from what some have termed a "marred identity" (Christian, 1999) or, as Freire expressed, they "own the view of the oppressor" (Freire, 1970). These views can manifest themselves as self-perceptions of being illiterate, ignorant, non-productive, and environmentally destructive. If these views have operated over a long period of time, or been reinforced by violence (physical or economic) they can be deeply entrenched and difficult to overcome.

> *It started with fear. This lady feared that because she was illiterate, even when she was invited to be involved, she thought she couldn't participate. (From a Most Significant Change story shared during the LEAD CoP event)*

Practitioners need to recognise that they may actually be seen as part of the systems which are negatively affecting a community, and so may need to work therapeutically with communities to establish trust. Without addressing these issues, there is a significant risk that minority ethnolinguistic groups, undermined by low self-esteem, will devalue their own understanding of their context and simply mirror external agendas in their interaction with others. This can result in agreement of irrelevant development projects, or at worse contribute to the further disempowerment of the community, undermining self-confidence and further fueling the loss of language, culture and knowledge (Smith, 2010).

The first step for us as practitioners working with ethnolinguistic communities is therefore to start with ourselves, to build our own reflective action and self-awareness so that we are better placed to create a conducive environment for dialogue. Not only does this better prepare us to engage in genuine dialogue with communities, but it also allows us to model that process for the community. This non-instructive and often non-verbal method of communication can be invaluable, particularly in the early stages of developing relationships.

The **Barefoot guides** listed in the resources section at the end of this chapter provide some valuable tools for building our own capacity to reflect. To supplement these, we have briefly highlighted some particularly important issues for practitioners to consider when working with minority ethnolinguistic communities and some practical steps that can foster the behaviour needed to support open dialogue with these communities.

Work in the mother tongue

While it should be an obvious issue, many development organisations practitioners do not invest sufficient time in either learning the mother tongue of the communities in which they work, or ensuring that they have mother tongue speakers as part of their team. This is often due to inflated expectations of national language ability in the community, which may in reality be greatly varied, and/or a lack of awareness about the difference communicating in peoples' first language can make in both understanding and trust. Women and children are often particularly disadvantaged when required to use a language other than their mother tongue, meaning that their perspectives are often excluded.

> *Properly conducted participatory development brings improved outcomes both in the short- and long-term. According to one study, development initiatives that sought beneficiaries' involvement achieved 68 percent success, while those that did not achieved a success rate of just 10 percent. Genuine participation obviously relies on a two-way communication, which means engaging with the languages people actually speak. (UNESCO, 2012)*

Whilst there are differences of opinion around the precise definition of a 'mother tongue', for the purposes of this Guide we are taking it to mean the language (or languages) most familiar to the individual or community. In some ethnolinguistic communities this is not always simple to identify, particularly in less remote or culturally diverse areas. What is key is that the language chosen to communicate does not provide another barrier to involvement, but instead validates the speaker and their associated knowledge as a key participant in the ongoing dialogue.

Find good places for dialogue

Sovereign spaces are the places where people 'feel at home', where their knowledge is relevant to the environment they find themselves in. Sometimes the places used for community meetings or workshops, such as village halls or NGO offices, may carry assumptions about what language, culture and knowledge can validly be used in such settings. This can make people feel uncomfortable or restrict their participation, especially in the initial stages of building relationships. Sovereign spaces might include the field, a kitchen garden, the traditional house, walking through the forest, or sitting around the fire at night. Talking with people in these sovereign spaces can open up stories which would otherwise not be heard helping to build a richer understanding of the culture, and helping to develop trust.

Learn the stories of the community

Learning the stories of the community can also help to reveal the complexity of their culture and context, and the interconnectedness of local issues. Stories often embed values and abstract ideas which are hard to express in other ways. It is usually helpful to assume that there is a reason why people do the things the way they do, and stories are often a good way to listen for this meaning. As mentioned, people are more willing to tell stories at the right place and time, so understanding sovereign spaces will be important in accessing those stories. It is also important to note that some of these stories might be difficult to hear, especially when our own culture and values (if not our own actions) have been implicit in causing the suffering of another community. We may find we even need to seek forgiveness and healing for the actions of our society in order to build space for continued dialogue.

Connect with local decision making

In keeping with the idea of meeting people in their sovereign space, time should also be taken to see where people already meet together in the community - where decisions are usually made - and requests respectfully made to join in these processes, primarily to listen and to learn. While workshops are often a 'standard' tool for practitioners working with communities, and they do have a place, particularly if communities no longer meet together, they can also be a 'foreign construct' which undermines the cultural places of decision making. Taking time to learn about how these systems work and incorporating elements into future decision making processes where appropriate, will enable a much more balanced dialogue to take place.

Invest in local people

All of the above issues imply a huge amount of learning for practitioners from outside the culture. Practitioners who are from the community themselves will often be at a distinct advantage, and be able to connect more deeply with communities and more readily understand their perspective. Although practitioners from outside can help catalyse initial reflection, representatives from within the culture will usually be much better equipped to pursue real dialogue within communities. Indeed, reflexive practitioners who are from the community can be very powerful contributors to cultural sustainability. For this reason, in Cambodia, minority ethnolinguistic community leaders have requested that community development take on a more indigenous face, requesting that NGOs invest more in local people who understand the context (Hutchinson et al, 2008).

Supporting practitioners, teachers, trainers and managers from within minority ethnolinguistic communities is therefore a key part of developing an identity-based community development approach. Just like those from outside, practitioners from within the community also need to develop skills of reflexivity, to be aware of the effect they are having in the community, and the extent to which they are facilitating open

dialogue. It is also likely they will need to learn the 'outsider' culture, particularly where they are part of a national or international organisation, in order to serve as an effective translator and cultural broker.

Be clear about our beliefs

During the CoP event, one important issue of discussion was how to work across cultures when this implies and involves different beliefs and faiths. Many participants were coming from a context where their culture and belief system were perceived as being synonymous and so reflection on one is seen as a reflection on the other. For example, it was recognised that it is not always possible to establish a distinction between being Buddhist and Thai, or Christian and Filipino.

Developing our own reflexivity is important here, as we will probably find ourselves in situations where we strongly disagree with indigenous beliefs. Do we defend our view or keep quiet? How do we encourage communities to reflect on elements of their culture without denigrating their beliefs?

As we enter into dialogue with those of other faiths, we may find that we need to 'suspend' our beliefs: 'Suspending does not require destroying our existing mental models of reality [our beliefs] - which would be impossible even if we tried - or ignoring them. Rather, it entails what Bohm called "hanging our assumptions in front of us" (Senge et al, 2005). Of course this first means being aware of our own beliefs and how they are affecting us, and then choosing to listen and understand the perspective of the other regardless of how it may conflict with our own perspective.

This strikes at a core issue - as practitioners we need to be clear about our own sense of belief and our own identity, so we can be transparent with the community. Of course this is an ongoing process throughout our lives. We tend to discover more deeply who we are over time, and we are always doing this in relation to our faith and in relation to others. In light of this, the necessity for an open and ongoing dialogue seems all the more important.

Promoting reflection on identity

In this section we introduce some approaches which have been used by LEAD CoP participants to promote reflection on culture and identity. These can be a springboard for the community to think about action towards cultural sustainability and community wellbeing. First, we look at cultural change timelines and archetype stories, which can help to initiate reflection on cultural change and build greater awareness of that change. Then we move on to the place of 'Ethnoarts' in promoting a more engaged and active approach towards reflection, which can help build deeper awareness of the cultural values of ethnolinguistic communities.

Simple tools to explore cultural change

One simple approach to begin exploring culture and identity with communities is to reflect on how their culture has changed over time and why. While communities are often aware that their culture has changed, it is often surprising to them to see just how much has changed without them consciously being aware of it. Creating cultural timelines and archetype stories are two simple tools to help start greater reflection. These tools have been used by International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC), to help inspire communities to take action to sustain their culture through education activities, the arts, community events and the protection of their natural resources.

Cultural Change Timeline

This tool is best used during meetings with village groups and communities. By using the tool with different groups - men, women, the youth, the older generation etc. – it can be a valuable way to get different perspectives on change. These perspectives can then be compared later, and used as a further resource for reflection.

Here is a brief explanation of the tool:

- Draw a chart, with each column heading being a time period which makes sense to the community you are working with. The easiest way to indicate intervals of time is often by finding a relevant era or an event, for example a good harvest or the arrival of a road, rather than specific dates.
- Name each row with different 'identity markers' - a cultural skill, practice, produce, tradition or value. Encourage them to think about what identifies them and makes them different from other people.
- Encourage deeper thinking around a wider variety of markers, thinking beyond physical identity markers to things that are not so easily seen - including values, communication styles or behaviours.
- Using 10 seeds or stones, ask the participants to indicate how strong the cultural marker is/was in each time period. 10 seeds where the practice is as active/present as it was in the past, no seeds where nothing remains of that aspect of culture. Using seeds or stones can make the tool more interactive than writing marks or crosses on paper.
- 'Interview the chart': ask the group how and why each thing changed or remained as it has done. How does that make them feel? What would they like to change?
- If different groups have worked through the tool, get them to compare their results. What is similar and what is different? Why have the groups highlighted different aspects of change? Why is that significant?

Archetype Stories

Another tool is archetype stories - a story of change which 'caricatures' the situation typical to many villages in the area. These stories require good cultural insight and awareness of the context. They are best written by local people or staff from the community who have reflected on change in their own communities, and should be in the local language. It could also be produced in a workshop setting.

The story doesn't have to be precisely written out, but should provide a framework 'storyboard' for improvisation in a specific village. The story is drawn onto large paper, and orally told or acted out to the wider community during community meetings. If the story is good, some village members have been known to say "this is about our village!"

Ultimately the purpose is to promote discussion about the story in comparison to their own experience. After the story is told, community members should be free to critique and discuss: What is the same, and what is different in their own village? How does it make them feel? What could they do about it? The story also helps village members to see that they are not alone in the changes they are facing; that other villages are struggling with the same issues.

A simple archetype story

Let me tell you a story about a village called Bu Ngkol Village, it is our village and we have been living there for many years. In the past our village had plentiful natural resorts, deep forest and wild animals. We lived comfortably together, collecting all kinds of things available in the forest to support our every-day lives. Because our village was so abundant with natural resources, it wasn't long before the news reached the ears of outsiders. They moved to live in our village as well, bringing new unknown things to sell to us and buying the things we had collected from the forest. We all were very happy to see that our forest products were bought.

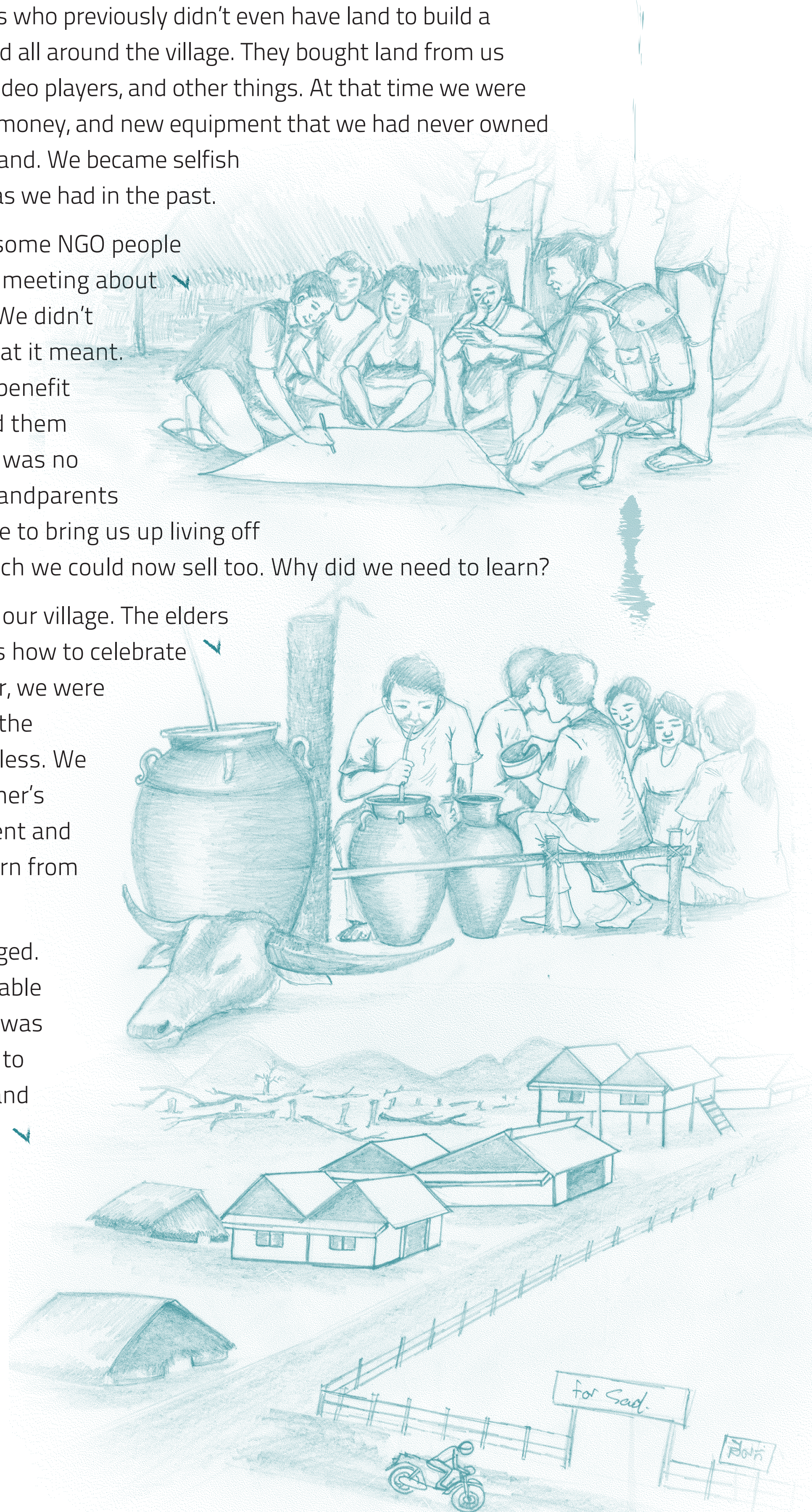
One year later more newcomers came to the village, and the things we collected from the forest were even more valuable. Then we all stopped farming and just found products in the forest to sell. However, it wasn't long before the things in the forest

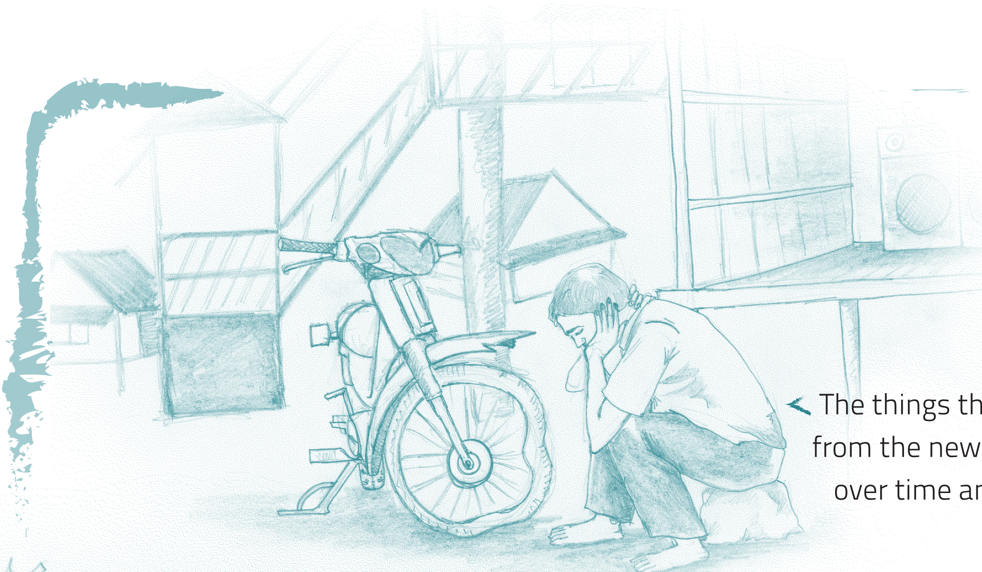
began to run out. The newcomers who previously didn't even have land to build a house, now had large plots of land all around the village. They bought land from us or exchanged it for motorbikes, video players, and other things. At that time we were happy because we had so much money, and new equipment that we had never owned before, but we had lost our farmland. We became selfish and stopped helping each other as we had in the past.

A few months later there were some NGO people and education officials having a meeting about education and Bunong culture. We didn't listen and didn't understand what it meant. Those people told us about the benefit of education but we just ignored them because we thought that there was no point for us. Our parents and grandparents were illiterate but they were able to bring us up living off the forest and wild animals, which we could now sell too. Why did we need to learn?

One day there was a wedding in our village. The elders in the village gathered to discuss how to celebrate the wedding ceremony. However, we were not interested, we thought that the traditional ceremonies were useless. We completely followed the newcomer's tradition - It was more convenient and modern so we didn't want to learn from the elders.

Over time things gradually changed. The elders who were knowledgeable about our culture died. Our land was now limited since we had sold it to the newcomers, and the forest and wild animals were almost gone.





The things that we had bought from the new comers damaged over time and were unusable.

Then the other day, there was another wedding in our village, we completely followed the modern ways since we didn't know how to celebrate the ceremony in our own tradition any more. No one knew about the traditions. The young people thought that the traditions were out of date, so we decided to celebrate it in the modern way.

A group of foreign tourists came to our village and asked me "We heard that there was a Bunong wedding ceremony today, where is it?" I pointed at the wedding ceremony behind me and responded "This is the Bunong wedding ceremony ! " Their faces looked puzzled. "But it looks like any other wedding ! How can you tell that they are Bunong? " Then I was speechless and walked away.

That night I didn't sleep well and just thought alone "What can I do to prove that we are still Bunong?"

Source: Used with permission from International Cooperation Cambodia. Translated from an original story in Bunong.

Ethnoarts: using the arts to explore culture and identity[6]

One of the core principles in exploring the area of 'ethnoarts' is that **all arts carry meaning.** As described earlier, one of the foundations of IBCD is to work with communities to explore their cultural values, and to ensure that change in the community does not conflict with these. Since arts carry so much cultural meaning, it is important that communities reflect on how they can continue to transmit these arts to the next generation in the midst of globalisation. Not only that; CoP participants' experiences show that exploring the arts with minority ethnolinguistic communities has been one of the most effective approaches in building reflection, dialogue and motivation for cultural sustainability.

The importance of arts in indigenous communities

Every known culture has (among other things) two components: their own language and their own expressive art forms. Most cultures use both language and these relevant art forms for communication. Art forms like music, drama, dance and visual and oral/verbal arts (including proverbs, poetry, storytelling, chanting, etc.) can express cultural values and deep feelings in creative and powerful ways. For centuries many oral traditions have used arts as a tool for passing on local wisdom and knowledge. These arts are their resources for information, history, and instruction. These oral cultures hold such art forms in their mental and cultural libraries, and have passed them on from one generation to another.

Language uses words to share thoughts and ideas. Each language has a prescribed structure; a defined and familiar word and sentence order is needed for clear communication. Music, for example, uses a combination of those words (usually in some poetic form) and rhythmic, melodic components. Both language and music can communicate thoughts and ideas. Music, however, can often express things that cannot be spoken or talked about. Music, through poetry and sound, can go beyond the expressions of everyday life. The unique sounds in each culture speak clearly to the hearts of people within that culture.

In the same way that music has structure, so other art forms within a cultural context have a specific structure. For example, in Mon dance, every hand movement carries specific meaning. Mon dances are structured in order to sequence the hand movements to tell a story. In the area of visual arts, the Hmong have embroidery stitches that each carry different meaning. So, for one design, not only does the overall larger pattern itself carry meaning, but each of the stitches also has meaning. The structures within each art form are understandable to those who communicate using that form within the culture, or to those who understand the structure and its related meaning, but to others they pass by often unacknowledged.

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6 Special thanks to Todd and Marybeth Saurman for providing much of the content for this section.

Many cultures use arts to speak of life experiences, both literally and metaphorically. For example in Mongolia, song texts are written to describe a strong lover, comparing him to a high mountain. Some cultures, through metaphor or direct communication, may address certain needs, issues, or feelings. It may not be acceptable to talk about an issue, but singing or dancing or acting or drawing about the issue may be appropriate. For example, in one group in Asia the women of the village sing instructions about the wedding night to the bride before her wedding. It would be rude to speak these instructions to her, as these types of direct discussions are taboo, but to sing them is appropriate. In Thailand, to speak directly to someone about one's feelings – especially feelings of anger – is not appropriate. But a drama or a song can hold intense emotions and communicate deep feelings to others without anyone being exposed or accused directly.

Many cultures hold history and stories within their art forms. Aborigines in Australia use their visual art storytelling style to communicate about their cultural history as well as for documenting recently hunted food items (a drawn menu, of sorts). Tibetan language groups tell stories of their history and important lessons through a combination of visual art, dance, and song. The Hmong have history songs about their people, songs about the creation of the world and songs about world events. In India and Pakistan some groups tell epic tales in song. Some of these songs can last all night.

Most cultures feel a strong sense of identity, emotional connection, and solidarity with their own culture's art forms. When minority ethnolinguistic communities share relevant arts together there is a stronger sense of worth and value of their artistic expressions, their culture, their language and therefore their identity. In particular, affirming and integrating relevant arts into literacy and multilingual education activities can help communities build a bridge from their language and cultural identities into the surrounding national and global realities.

Empowerment through arts

Working with arts is inherently appreciative; the communities' arts are held in esteem and anyone who is not from that community can only watch and seek to learn from the experts, the community artists themselves. In the context of marred identity, this process can have a huge impact on personal and community self-worth and confidence. As community members recognise that they have valuable knowledge to share, they are more confident to participate in other arenas of community life and more empowered to engage with the changes they are facing.

Bringing security in the Philippines

On a recent visit to a minority ethnolinguistic group, a Filipina researcher observed that minority people groups commonly manifest what she termed "collective insecurity," and the power the arts have to rebuild that insecurity.

In conversation with one young man from the Subanon group in the southwest of the Philippines, he described his people group as "Subanon lang kami" – "we are just Subanon", the implication being that his people group are of less value than other groups in the Philippines. Continuing, he shared that more and more minority communities in the Philippines aspire to be part of a dominant culture - whether that be a regional group, a national group or even to be American – all of which are perceived to be more prestigious. The Subanon do not see how their unique language and culture can help them improve their lives.

However, as a group of Subanon came together to explore using their culture and art forms, the tribe elders rose up and gladly demonstrated and mentored the youth who were, in turn, fascinated anew with Subanon arts. The elders danced, the youth followed suit. The elders demonstrated how to play the kulintangan – a traditional stringed instrument, sang courtship songs, shared a peace dance, cooked cassava in bamboo and coconut husks, and proudly taught how their ginataang gabi (sweet potato in coconut milk) is different from all the world's ginataang gabi.

Because of the unifying and enriching power of a shared culture, even the 3 different religious sectors in the community, who had never before come together, gathered for the first time under one roof to celebrate their cultural identity as a people group. The generation gap that threatened to diminish their arts was bridged by the simple venue for intergenerational mentoring that can be created around culture and the arts.

The young man who had earlier said "we are just Subanon", now proudly says, "Ito pala ang ibig sabihin ng maging Subanon. Mayaman pala kami" – "This is what it means to be Subanon. We are, indeed, rich!" Since then, the community have started to do activities focussed on Subanon culture and the arts without intervention from the outside, composing new Western Subanon songs and recording them on a CD!

Source: Story shared by a CoP Participant

Exploring cultural art forms with communities

A simple self-research and communication model for assisting ethnolinguistic groups in researching, writing about, and promoting the arts of their culture has been developed by ethnomusicologists. The model is intended as an overview of important issues when researching cultural art forms and should be applied in culturally appropriate ways.

The model first involves seeking out community members who want to learn more about their traditional art forms. These 'insiders', or 'self-researchers', are encouraged to explore the different art forms used by people in the various subcultures within their ethnolinguistic group. Sub-cultures will vary with each culture, but may include groupings such as the elderly, the youth, urban, rural, rich, poor, formally educated, high/low caste, various religions, located in different regions or countries, music specialists or non-musicians. These different groups may use and value different arts for different reasons, and so this is important to explore.

The model goes on to explore the cultural contexts of these art forms, and to actively ask questions to identify what is important about each, such as:

- Who performs or creates it?
- Who is it performed for?
- What is the meaning?
- Where does it occur?
- When does it occur?
- Why does it occur?
- Any other special information?

Through this process, community members can assess how best to communicate through relevant art forms and develop new art forms that are appropriate and meaningful for the subcultures of their group. These new art forms will ideally be in the community's mother tongue and use artistic styles that are familiar to the community.

This model has motivated multilingual young people to re-engage with traditional art forms, realising that they do not have to give up learning about alternative 'global' arts in order to learn more about the arts of their own culture, or vice versa. People have also become more interested in their language and culture as a result of learning more about the connected arts and the way they are used to communicate information. Because the model is community-driven it is also more likely that any new art forms that are developed, perhaps incorporating elements of the dominant culture, will meet a felt need of that particular sub-culture.

This is just a brief introduction to some of the ways to begin exploring Ethnoarts in and with communities. The model is explained in more detail in the manual 'Overview Workshop for Producing Culturally Relevant Language Development Materials for a Mother Tongue-Based Education Program'. This provides detailed workshop processes which can be used to help explore arts and how this research can be used to communicate new information through the arts (which we introduce in the next chapter). This manual is available through the LEAD CoP site: **http://lead-impact.org/CoP/IBCD**

Digging deeper: other helpful tools

The tools outlined above help to highlight the role culture and identity play in forming a vision for a community's future. There are many tools which help to reflect further on other community issues and so strengthen that vision and plan for the future. A short list is included here to provide some good starting points to explore some more helpful tools:

Barefoot Guides

The LEAD CoP regularly makes use of the Barefoot guides. The Barefoot Connection is a global and local community of social change leaders and practitioners, sharing diverse practices to deepen and develop approaches and initiatives to contribute to a changing world. The Barefoot Connection exists both online, as a global network, and locally as face-to-face collectives. More information, including access to its first three free guides, is available online here: http://www.barefootguide.org

The Collective Action Toolkit

The Collective Action Toolkit (CAT) is a package of resources and activities that enable groups of people anywhere to organise, build trust, and collaboratively create solutions for problems impacting their community. The toolkit provides a dynamic framework that integrates knowledge and action to solve challenges. Designed to harness the benefits of group action and the power of open sharing, the activities draw on each participant's strengths and perspectives as the group works to accomplish a common goal. More information about the CAT can be found online here: http://www.frogdesign.com/collective-action-toolkit

Methods for Community Participation: A complete guide for Practitioners (Kumar, 2002)

In this participatory methods classic, Kumar gives an excellent list of tools with clear, detailed descriptions of how to use them. Kumar also provides a good introduction to participatory mindsets and underlying theory, both of which are foundational to any implementation.

Locating the Energy for Change: An Introduction to Appreciative Inquiry (Elliott, 1999)

Produced by the International Institute for Sustainable Development, this book provides an in-depth introduction to appreciative inquiry while drawing on many case study examples from the authors' experience in West Africa. Local people can use the appreciative approach to identify their current strengths, then plan an improved future, based on their understanding of the 'positive present.' An electronic version of the book is available online here: http://www.iisd.org/pdf/appreciativeinquiry.pdf

Participatory Workshops: a sourcebook of 21 sets of ideas and activities (Chambers, 2002)

This practical sourcebook for running workshops or other learning events provides 21 sets of ideas and options for facilitators, trainers, teachers and presenters. It covers many basic but fundamental issues around practical participatory approaches and helpfully highlights some common mistakes to avoid. Available from Earthscan.

80 Tools for participatory development (Geilfus, 2008)
This guide on participatory development focuses mostly on tools for agricultural research and development. An electronic version of the book is available online here: http://www.iica.int/Esp/regiones/central/cr/Publicaciones%20Oficina%20Costa%20Rica/80tools.pdf

Participatory Learning and Action: with 100 field Methods (Mukherjee, 2002)
This book describes a range of methods based on innovative and diverse field experience from different countries and localities. It contains one of the largest collections of participatory methods and practices; verbal, visual and diagrammatic, and also those for practitioner behaviours and analytical skills. Available from Concept publishing, New Delhi.

CHAPTER FIVE

Relevant action: moving forward together

This chapter builds upon the last by outlining key tools, approaches or experiences that have been used to engage in mutual learning and development with ethnolinguistic communities as they have reflected on their situation and identified areas in which they want to work. This chapter provides signposts to relevant approaches and techniques used or advocated by CoP participants, LEAD Asia, SIL International and partner organisations throughout Asia. As we have mentioned elsewhere, contextualisation and adaptation are key elements of Identity-Based Community Development and so we are happy to commend these tools to your work as you seek to adapt them to your context. For ease of reference we have broken these signposts into three broad categories:

Identity strengthening education

- Multilingual education
- Participatory language development
- Integrating arts into education
- Learning circles
- Rights-based approaches for education and identity

Voicing our identity

- Cultural festivals
- Participatory community radio
- Social networks and new media
- Documentary films

Unity through identity

- Peace-building
- Catalysing networks
- Developing community based organisations (CBOs)

To try and make this section as helpful as possible we have set out some introductory information about each tool or approach. Where appropriate this includes the practical and ideological benefits of the approach, an example of how it has been used in practice and a list of relevant resources. Once again, this section is a work in progress, and we invite you to contact us to contribute new ideas to this section.

Identity strengthening education

Education can be an important mediating factor in the complex issues of cultural sustainability. However, externally imposed education systems, operating in an unfamiliar language and culture, can create barriers to understanding and serve to further fuel insecurity and reinforce negative stereotypes regarding ethnolinguistic community members' identity. Children who cannot understand the language of the classroom are more likely to fail in school, undermining their self-confidence and the value of education in the eyes of the community:

> *What does it do to the dignity and self-image of young people if the language of their parents is not good enough to be used in school? (Meerkotter, 2003: 41)*

A significant function of education is that of cultural education, ensuring that those within the community know how to operate in the community and thrive in their environment. However, many minority ethnolinguistic students are educated through and into another culture, compounding the disconnect between youth and older generations, and further eroding community values. This can create a difficult choice for communities; resist education, or let it 'educate out' the youth from the community.

This need not be the case. Intercultural learning – be it in formal environments like school or adult education classes, or in informal environments through daily activities or relationships – can be an empowering, encouraging and even validatory experience. When the learner's identity is not only recognised as relevant to learning but also a key foundation on which to situate new knowledge, positive effects can be seen both cognitively and socially (Cummins, 1976; Alidou et al, 2006; Baker, 2011; Dutcher, 2004; UNESCO, 2007). As people's identity is strengthened they are more likely to be able to positively interact with the opportunities and challenges that they face. As such, we see education that places the learner's identity at the centre of the process as key to seeing real, positive, sustainable change in individuals' and communities' lives and therefore a key ingredient of IBCD. For these experiences to be positive catalysts for change, however, our concepts of education and learning must be expanded beyond our limited experiences or expectations.

During the CoP event, participants were asked to list all the resources that can be used for learning. Among the resources listed were more traditional media like radio and television, as well as newer media like the internet and specific sites like Wikipedia and YouTube. Other categories of learning resources included institutions, audio-visual and written archives, and practical experiences. It was also recognised that many resources that are rooted in culture, that come together to help form one's identity, do not necessarily appear in school curricula but can still facilitate learning. For example, a number of participants cited local cultural experts, members of older generations, the natural world, arts and crafts, oral traditions, community events, festivals, and ceremonies all as learning opportunities or resources.

Resources for Learning

Language Development
- Languages Devleopment Committee
- Linguists
- Orthography
- Grammars

Human Resources
- Family
- Peers
- Trainers
- Mentors
- Cultural Experts
- Cultural Centers
- Clubs/Societies
- Meeting People
- Older People/Previous Generation
- Mothers
- Socializaton

Literacy/ Reading Manuals
- Primers
- storybooks
- Songbooks
- CD's
- Literatures
- Dictionaries
- Big Illustratied Books
- Graded Readers
- Small Story Books
- Format TExtbooks
- Teaching Kits

New Media
- Wikipedia
- Google
- Facebook
- You Tube
- MTV
- Cartoons
- CD's
- News
- TV
- Internet

Community Events
- Cultural Centers
- Festivals/Ceremonies
- Church
- Visiting Historical Places
- Sports/Recreation
- Games
- Language Camps
- Seminars/Forums/Workshops

Institutions
- NGO's
- GO's
- Church
- Schools/Academic
- Clubs/Societies

Natural Environment
- Home
- Playground
- Nature
- Agriculture
- Biodiversity/Animals
- Hunting/Gathering
- Medicine/Herbs
- Spirits

Practical Skills
- Apprenticeships
- Day-to-Day Instructions
- Seguing to Academic Subjets
- Experience/Training Workshops
- Research
- Brainstorming Together
- Trial-and-Error
- Field Exposures
- Problem-solving

Audio-Visual-Written Archives
- Movies/Documentaries/Talk Shows
- Libraries/Museums
- Scriptures
- Language Survey
- Pictures
- Posters/Charts/Flyers
- Newspapers/Magazines
- Living Museum

Oral Traditions and Arts
- Traditional Wisdom
- Charts
- Songs
- Proverbs
- Dances
- Stories
- Poems
- Folk Songs
- Riddles
- Parables
- Drama/Plays

Crafts/Arts
- Instruments
- Dress
- Martial Arts
- Colors
- Building Houses
- Culinary Arts

Interacting with these wider opportunities to learn is all part of this cyclical process of education strengthening and developing one's sense of identity, while identity situates and makes sense of this learning. Below are some examples of good ways to incorporate this philosophy into development contexts.

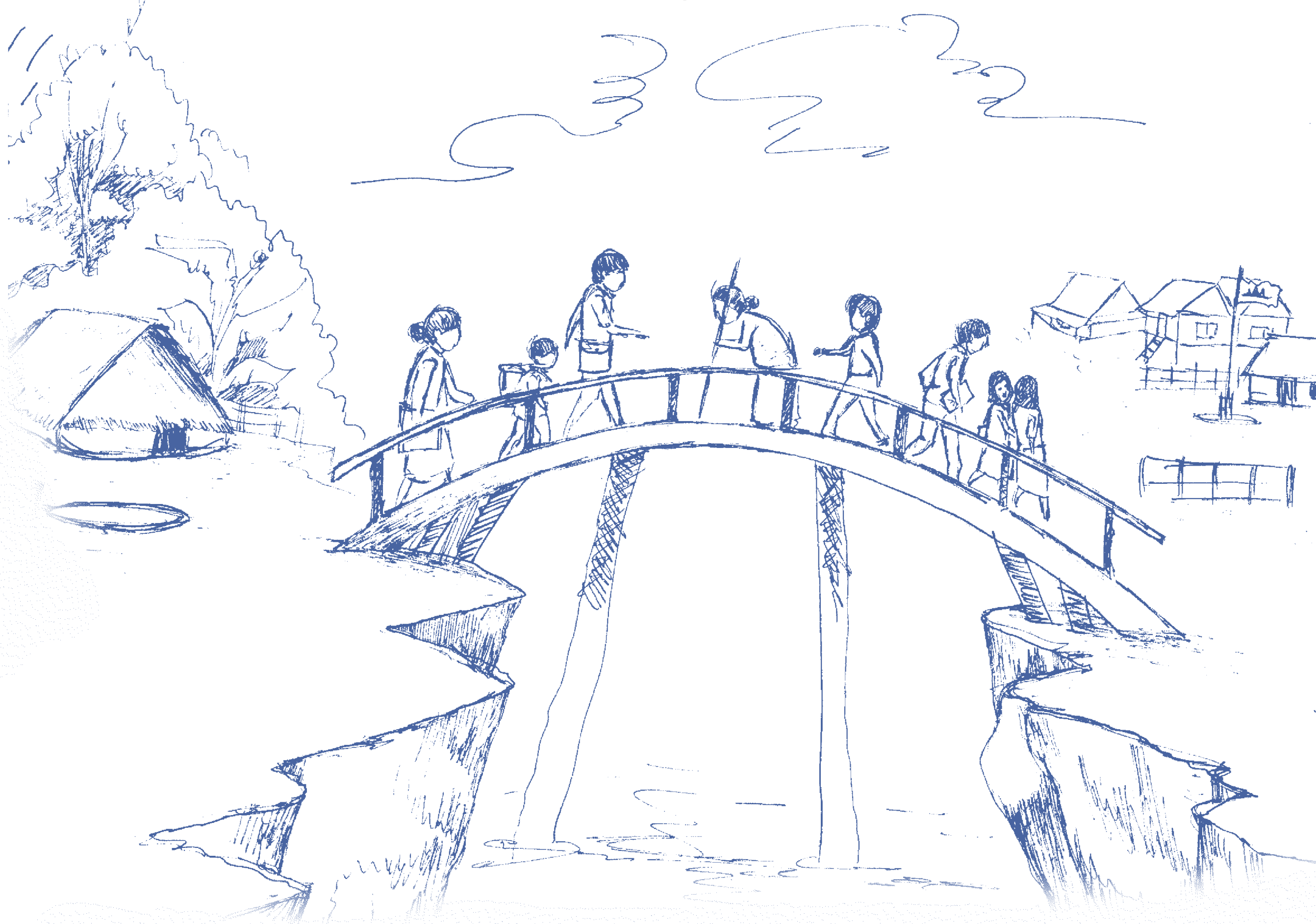
Multilingual education

Introduction

Mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) focuses on ensuring that learners begin their education in the language(s) with which they are most familiar. It is about more than bringing minority languages into the classroom; it is also about developing the use of these first languages, from supporting basic interpersonal communication to academic language proficiency (Cummins, 2000: 58). Doing so promotes strong multilingual competence as well as developing a healthy identity and community-based processes that can help sustain the language and culture (Panda and Mohanty, 2009: 295).

MTB-MLE is about moving from viewing learners as passive vessels waiting to be filled with external knowledge, to active participants in the learning process. It emphasises the importance of starting with what the learners know before using that knowledge to help them move towards what they don't yet know. This is often visualised as a bridge, helping learners connect with languages and knowledge from outside their community by building a strong foundation in the mother tongue.

MTB-MLE programmes engage the wider community in developing culturally appropriate curricula, encourage local writers and authors to produce original materials through writers' and artists' workshops and work with communities to establish culturally appropriate classroom practices and strategies.



Benefits

Research is showing that instruction that begins in the mother tongue of the learner contributes far more to the cultural, emotional, cognitive and socio-psychological development of children than instruction beginning in an official or foreign language that learners do not yet understand (Cummins, 1976; Alidou et al, 2006; Baker, 2011; Dutcher, 2004; UNESCO, 2007). By using a familiar language and a culturally relevant curriculum, delivered in a culturally appropriate way, learners are better able to connect their existing knowledge and understanding of the world with the new information they are receiving. Not only are learners better able to understand and therefore engage with the material being presented, but their identity – as speakers of that language – is affirmed as valuable through their learning experience.

UNESCO (2007: 6) notes that when children are offered opportunities to learn in the language they are most familiar with they are more likely to enrol and succeed in school and their parents are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's learning (Benson, 2002; Ball, 2010). Such intergenerational involvement in education supports the use of these languages for development initiatives as individuals and communities build awareness of the functional uses of their language for learning.

There is also a growing body of research (Cummins, 1976, 2000, 2001; Alidou et al, 2006; Benson, 2004; Heugh, 2002, 2005a, 2005b; Pinnock, 2009a, 2009b; UNESCO, 2006, 2007; Walter, 2009) that shows learners who gain strong literacy skills initially in their mother tongue are then better able to acquire literacy in additional languages. The multilingualism and cognitive development that this supports then helps individuals to access further educational opportunities, and enables greater participation in decision-making processes in their communities and broader political systems.

Case Study

SIL International, in collaboration with UNESCO Bangkok, has produced several videos highlighting the value of multilingual education in communities throughout Asia. These videos (along with introductory 'how-to' videos) can be found at http://www.youtube.com/user/ttextservices/videos.

These videos have also been translated into many Asian languages. Check with your local UNESCO office to find out whether they are available in the languages you need.

Relevant Resources

As a topic of emerging importance, there is a rapidly growing body of resources on MTB-MLE theory and guidance on how to run programs. Both these websites provide an excellent starting point for finding up-to-date resources:
http://www.mlenetwork.org, http://www.asiapacificmle.net.

Language and Education Guides (Save the Children, 2009, 2011)

Save the Children produced an excellent set of guides on the link between language and education:

Language and Education: The Missing Link
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/language-and-education-the-missing-link

Steps Towards Learning: A guide to overcoming language barriers in children's education
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/steps-towards-learning-guide-overcoming-language-barriers-children's

Closer to Home: How to help schools in low- and middle-income countries respond to children's language needs
http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/resources/online-library/closer-home

Manual for Developing Literacy and Adult Education Programmes in Minority Language Communities (UNESCO, 2004)
This manual provides 'information that will help program leaders plan and implement adult education programs that are...learner-centered, community-centered, development-oriented, [and] sustained.' It also contains several case studies of such adult education programs in Asia and best practices for program leaders. It is available at:
http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001351/135164e.pdf.

Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education: Including the Excluded (UNESCO, 2007)
An extensive guide on how to conduct advocacy in your own context. It is available at:
http://www.unescobkk.org/resources/online-materials/e-library/publications/publications-2007/advocacy-kit-for-promoting-multilingual-education-including-the-excluded/.

Planning Mother Tongue-Based Education Programs in Minority Language Communities (SIL International, 2010)
SIL International has also produced a manual outlining the essential features of strong and sustainable MTB-MLE programs, namely the training of teachers and community-centered orthography, curriculum and literature development, giving examples of interactive surveys, work papers, and sample plans for each feature.
It is available at:
http://www.sil.org/resources/archives/41126.

Overview Workshop for Producing Culturally Relevant Language Development Materials for a Mother Tongue-Based Education Program (Foerster and Saurman, 2013)

This is an extensive manual on producing relevant language development materials for an MTB-MLE programme was produced in 2013 building on SIL's experience in Thailand and elsewhere across Asia. For the latest version of this guide visit: **http://www.LEAD-impact.org/CoP/IBCD**

Participatory language development

Language forms a very significant part of the culture and identity of a community. It is the means of communication in a community, the means by which much community knowledge is encoded and passed on from one generation to another and it is one of the strongest markers of identity.

The language and culture connection: The Kelabit, Malaysia:

"Language, culture and customs are intertwined. For example, when we talk about 'nubaq layaq' (lit. soft rice), we will immediately associate that with the Kelabit and the Lun Bawang ethnic groups. It is part of our culture and way of life. Associated with 'nubaq layaq', however, are other words like 'bugo/gugo' (flat wooden ladle), 'tareh bugo' (bamboo container for storing ladles), 'melamet' (mix dough thoroughly), 'miang ' (split/divide a nubaq layaq into two or smaller pieces), 'ngaur' (dish out using bugo), 'ngayut gerut' (dig out the crust), 'enet' (woven container for storing wrapped rice), and 'nenga lem da'un isip' (wrap rice in the isip leaves). Some of these words have little meaning outside the context of 'nubaq layaq'. And if our children do not know the meaning of 'ngaur' for example, they may lose the concept of 'nubaq layaq' which can only be wrapped in a leaf using a 'bugo' to 'ngaur' it. If we lose our language, we are in grave danger of losing our culture ! " (Lucy Bulan, Rurum Kelabit Sarawak, Malaysia)

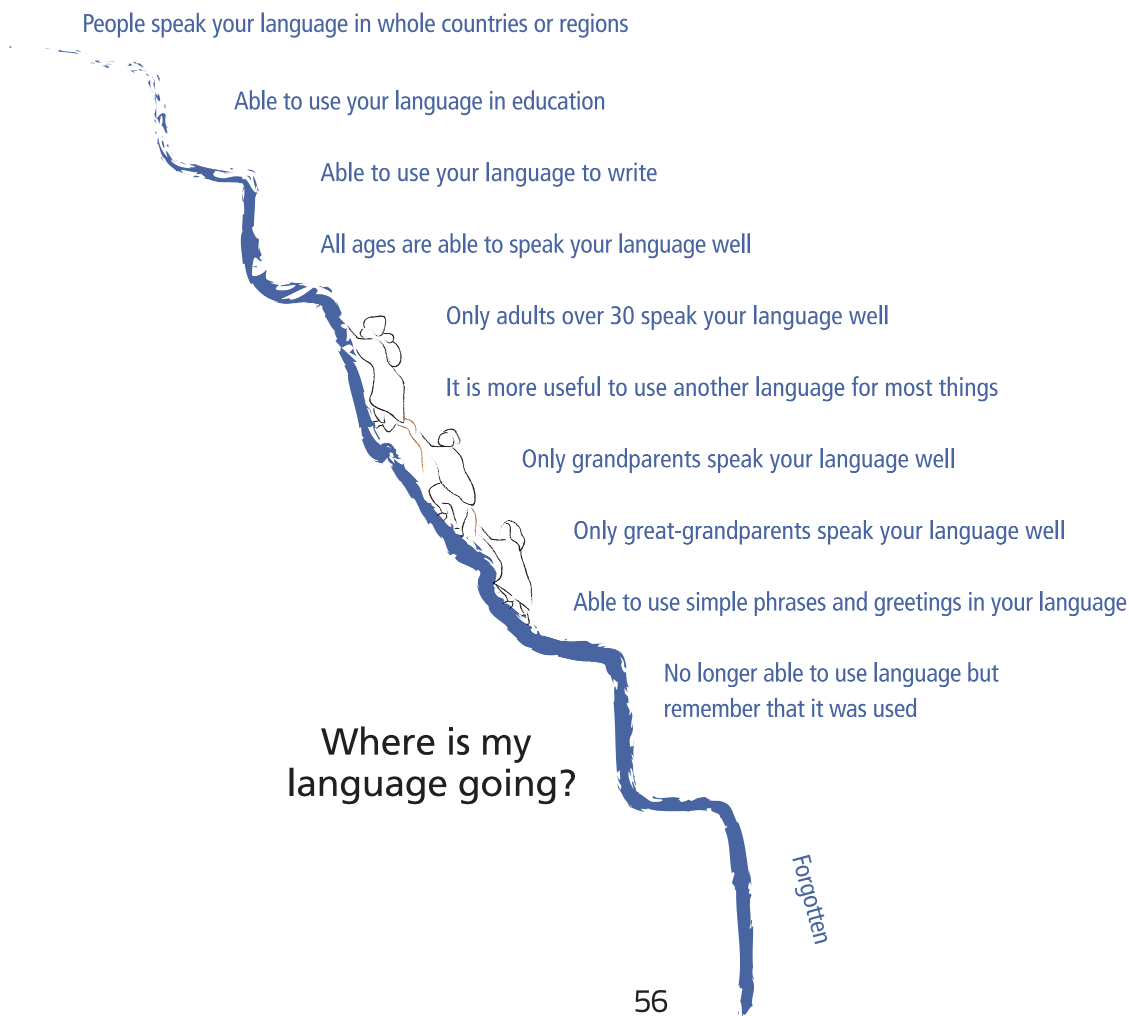
Isolated monolingual communities are now the rare exception, with globalisation creating pressure to assimilate into dominant languages. Communities again face a difficult choice: to maintain their language through resistance or adaptation, or to assimilate. After reflecting on their culture and identity, communities may express a desire to develop their language in order to ensure its sustainability. Many ethnolinguistic communities still have no written form of their language, so for languages that are widely used orally one helpful strategy is to capture their language in a written form in order to help maintain vitality and to keep the language relevant within a broader literate society. This is also, of course, an essential step before any mother tongue-based multilingual education can be established.

Typically, the process of developing a writing system (orthography) for a language includes understanding the boundaries of the language, helping communities explore how and where the language is used, researching the sound system of the language, then agreeing with the community on how the sounds of the language should be expressed in a written form (for example, often it is important that it relates to neighbouring languages). From this foundation dictionaries and materials in the language can start to be developed, with language committees established from the community to help ensure consistency in spelling.

SIL International and partner organisations have been working on language development for several decades, and have been developing approaches that ensure that the community is actively involved in each step of this process. As part of this, to help communities make informed decisions about their language, SIL is developing "*A Guide to Planning the Future of Your Language*".

This guide encourages communities to think about the sustainability of their language by helping them explore the 'Sustainable Use Model' (SUM), a theoretical framework that helps understand the current vitality of a language, and can help identify appropriate language development activities. The model highlights four sustainable levels of language use: sustainable history, sustainable identity, sustainable orality and sustainable literacy.

This can be visualised by the 'Mountain Model' of sustainable language use:



The approach then examines further the 'FAMED' conditions for language sustainability (Functions, Acquisition, Motivation, Environment, Distinct Niche), a set of reflective questions that help to build a picture of language use in the community. As the community reflect on questions such as how the language is used, how it is learnt, how people feel about using it, what influences its use and what distinct niche it fulfills within the community, it can serve as a foundation for exploring the vision of the community regarding their language as an initial step towards action. The guide then provides some practical guidance about what might be appropriate responses to the community's vision, and links to case studies about how these approaches have been used elsewhere.

Case Study: Having a 'real language'

"The language didn't have an orthography until 2011. It was difficult to explain the distinctness of their language and culture to outsiders - even some of the community people were not sure what name to give themselves, and are usually called by a name that is used for several language groups.

A literacy team first worked on an orthography in mid-2011, and produced an alphabet book to share in the village. At first there were only a few test copies produced - however, these books became so popular that people arranged with their neighbours to take turns reading them. When the books were finally published in larger numbers, they all sold quickly.

Now, a few communities have conducted initial workshops to learn the alphabet, and some pilot classes are starting. A few members of the community have remarked that now they have a 'real' language people can no longer tell them that their language isn't legitimate, as they now are able to read and write it. Older people have been happy to see a traditional name for their language community used again, as they assumed it had been forgotten.

These changes have been important because of the way they allow the community to be affirmed in their identity through these new ways of using their language. Their language no longer needs to have 'second class status'. Language development has been a key way that they are able to actively make their own choices about their identity – what they want to be known as, and how they want to communicate in writing."

Source: Most Significant Change story shared by a CoP event participant

Relevant Resources

By 2014, SIL will have been serving communities worldwide in language development for 80 years. A wealth of resources are now available at the SIL website, including data from communities worldwide, guides on language development and literacy and software tools to support language development.
http://www.sil.org/resources

Some specific participatory language development tools and approaches are highlighted below:

A Guide to Planning the Future of Your Language (SIL International, to be published)
At the time of going to press this was still under development. It will be made available through the SIL website when complete.

Bantu Literacy Tool (SIL International, 2010)
The Bantu Literacy Tool (BLT) simplifies primer-making by finding appropriate words and phrases for each lesson. It is available at:
http://www-01.sil.org/computing/catalog/show_software.asp?id=130.

Alphabet Design Workshops in Papua New Guinea: A Community-Based Approach to Orthography Development (Easton, 2003)
A paper presented at the Language Development Conference, Institute of Language and Culture of Rural Development, Mahidol University, Bangkok. It is available at:
http://www-01.sil.org/asia/ldc/parallel_papers/catherine_easton.pdf.

Participatory Research in Linguistics (Lojenga, 1996)
An article on participatory research from 'Notes on Linguistics 73' (13-27). It is available on LinguaLinks 5.0+ which is available through the SIL website.

So Orthography Committee and Revision Process (Markowski, 2009)
A working paper from Payap University. It is available at:
http://ic.payap.ac.th/graduate/linguistics/papers/So_Orthography_Development.pdf.

A new orthography in an unfamiliar script: A case study in participatory engagement strategies (Page, 2013)
An article in the Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development (34:5).

Bantu Orthography Manual (Schroeder, 2010).
An e-book from SIL on orthography development. It is available at:
http://www-01.sil.org/silepubs/pubs/52716/52716_bantuorthographymanual.pdf.

Integrating the arts into education

Incorporating relevant cultural art forms into education programmes offers students a chance to begin learning through the culture and language they know and experience every day. Through using the structure and forms that carry meaning within the culture, art forms can assist students in grasping educational concepts and ideas more quickly and effectively. Documenting aspects of these arts in the written form is another way to encourage reading. Since the material is familiar, it is easier for people to learn to read the text, and this approach can also bring increased value to a culture and language, both in the eyes of the community and others around them.

However, the arts can be applied further. Building on the Ethnoarts self-research and auto-genesis model introduced in Chapter 4, communities can be encouraged to think through how to introduce new information through appropriate art forms. As community members think about how best to communicate through relevant art forms, what types of arts to use and what context would be best for presenting those arts, new art forms can be developed that will meaningfully reach the hearts and minds of people from specific subcultures of their language group. Creativity, along with deep cultural understanding, is essential in applying this model.

Through applying this approach new messages can be communicated to promote greater discussion and dialogue. In some cases, the arts even allow communication on taboo topics such as HIV/AIDS or family planning which cannot be discussed in other ways. The art forms often attract a great deal of attention from both young and old, and can effectively capture the interest of communities.

Case Study: Using local arts experts

One group in Southeast Asia has decided to incorporate visits from the community artistic experts in their literacy program curriculum. These experts teach the young people in the literacy program traditional dances, traditional songs, information about the traditional instruments and more. The students are learning how to build and play traditional instruments, how to dance and sing in their cultural tradition, how to create textiles, how to tell stories and how to create songs and poems in their traditional poetic forms. These different topics, with the assistance of these experts, have been written into their literacy books in various forms, so the students have the written information alongside what they are learning orally. Both are used to reinforce the other in this process of learning more about their traditional culture.

When expressive art forms used in education programs come from within the culture or subculture, it allows for a familiar medium which functions as a solid bridge into a new concept or experience. With this approach, clearer communication will take place, since the language and medium for conveying the language are from within the culture. This results in not only greater understanding of the materials, but can result in greater motivation of participants as well.

Relevant Resources

Overview Workshop for Producing Culturally Relevant Language Development Materials for a Mother Tongue-Based Education Program (Foerster and Saurman, 2013).
As highlighted earlier, this is an extensive manual on producing relevant language development materials for an MTB-MLE programme was produced in 2013 building on SIL's experience in Thailand and elsewhere across Asia. This guide also includes more information about the auto-genesis model for communicating new messages through arts which we've introduced here. For the latest version of this guide visit: http://www.LEAD-impact.org/CoP/IBCD

Learning circles

Introduction

The concept of learning circles has been applied in a wide variety of contexts: community development, schools, online learning and even elderly health care! A learning circle is simply a group who gather regularly, usually weekly, in small 'meetings'. These groups are often single sex (where gender issues may prohibit participation), and they gather in a variety of locations (from church buildings to members homes) and at different times of day to fit with other activities. The groups themselves decide on the topics to discuss, choosing issues or subjects that are of interest or importance to them and the community. They usually sit for an hour or two, studying and discussing together, often with the support of training and materials. In Bangladesh, learning circles in villages where SIL is working typically involve ten to twelve community members. Each week, a volunteer from the community facilitates one lesson.

SIL Bangladesh has provided a curriculum of five books covering ten lessons each for the learning circles. The books are entitled Amrao Pari, meaning "We Can", and cover topics such as:

- "How do we learn in a learning circle" (Amrao Pari 1, Lesson 1)
- "Duck-Chicken rearing" (Amrao Pari 1, Lesson 3)
- " Savings" (Amrao Pari 1, Lesson 10 and Amrao Pari 2, Lesson 1)
- "Post-natal caring of mother and child" (Amrao Pari 3, Lesson 7)
- "How does the local government work?" (Amrao Pari 5, Lesson 5)

The lessons were written by SIL Bangladesh staff, who came up with the topics after identifying issues and needs in the communities through field visits, their own working experience and participatory rural appraisal (PRA) surveys. The staff compiled information from different sources and wrote the lessons using easy-to-understand wording and sentences. Some lessons were written based entirely on staff's own

knowledge and experiences. The books are written in Bangla, the national language of Bangladesh, but volunteers facilitate each lesson in their own, or the community's, language. Since the learning circle is normally formed from the composition of literate persons in the community, members can also read the learning circle lessons in Bangla themselves during the meetings.

The villagers select volunteer facilitators with the help of SIL Bangladesh. A volunteer should know how to read and write well, be accepted by community members, be able to motivate people and be willing to give his or her time for the learning circle. During the training provided by SIL Bangladesh, the volunteer learns how to run the learning circle: the qualities, skills, and characteristics of a facilitator; how to solve problems; how to ask questions during the discussion; how to maintain a friendly environment in the group and so on. SIL Bangladesh also arranges refresher trainings to address the volunteers' needs and problems when they have had the opportunity to facilitate a few lessons.

Benefits

These groups can be an excellent forum for exploring identity, culture and community development issues, giving each group member an opportunity to engage with a relevant topic. Adult literacy can also be integrated into the program; in the context of ethnolinguistic communities this can be done bilingually, following the same kind of process of bridging from the mother tongue to the national language as discussed in the MTB-MLE section. This creates a forum for learning literacy skills in the context of other issues relevant to the learner.

Although one member is designated as facilitator, assisting with the reading of any materials or encouraging discussions, as this facilitator is from within the group itself there are fewer issues around uneven power dynamics. Over time, the group builds its own vision, local leadership and the confidence to take steps toward development.

Case Studies: Civil Rights

Jishaio Hembrom lives in a remote village named Jogonnathpur, far from urban areas. He is a learning circle volunteer and helps the group to run smoothly. Through the weekly gatherings, he has been learning from the group's sharing and becoming more aware of his rights. This awareness was raised by a specific lesson on rights, which increased his confidence to communicate with the government in order to claim his rights.

In October 2012, Jishaio came to know that the government had allotted some rice for the indigenous people in his area. However, the people had yet to receive the rice from their local union chairman. Jishaio discussed this with his fellow villagers, and they decided to approach the chairman to ask for their portion. Voicing their rights, they told the chairman, "You have to give us what is ours. If you do not take

any action, then we will contact the District Commissioner." In the end, the chairman distributed the rice to the villagers. In this way, the sharing and learning that occurs through the learning circles in Jishaio's village has enhanced the villagers' awareness of, and initiative to act on, their rights with the local government. Jishaio says that the name of the books used in the learning circle, Amrao Pari, which means "We Can", always "encourages us [the villagers] and builds up our confidence."

Vegetable Gardening

Monica Hembron lives in a village called Khalippur. From the learning circle books, she learned how to grow vegetables in a small place. "It can fulfill the nutrition... of the family members," she says, "and it also saves money." Monica realised that her family could share their vegetables with their relatives and neighbors as well. She is now growing vegetables such as pumpkins, carrots, and chili in a spare space. She hopes it will reduce the disease rate of her family members and that she will also be able to save money. As she was encouraged by the lesson, she also shares what she has learned with others.

Source: Both from SIL Bangladesh, 2013

Relevant resources

Reflect (Action Aid)

Reflect is an approach to adult learning which fuses the literacy approach of Paulo Freire with participatory methods. The approach is over 16 years old and has been used in a wide variety of contexts. While not the same as the 'learning circles' described here from SIL Bangladesh, there are many similarities. A wealth of resources, including an extensive and updated Reflect manual, can be found at: http://www.reflect-action.org

Community learning centres (UNESCO)

UNESCO also has a strong commitment to lifelong learning and adult literacy. It has published a helpful report gathering experiences relating to community learning centres: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0016/001604/160492e.pdf

Many more resources for literacy programs and community learning centres are available at: http://uil.unesco.org/home/

Rights-based approaches for education and identity

Introduction

Ethnolinguistic communities have many legally enshrined rights to use and sustain their language and identity, with even more afforded to groups who are recognised as 'indigenous'. The Declaration on Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and ILO Convention No. 169 on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples outline rights which connect closely with IBCD:

- the right to determine and develop priorities and strategies for exercising their right to development,
- the right to revitalise, use, and develop their cultural identity,
- the right to education, including first-language instruction,
- land rights, including natural resources and the environment and
- rights to social security and health, including traditional health practices.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child highlights these rights clearly in the context of education:

> *States' Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:(c) The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate and for civilizations different from his or her own; (Article 29)*

> *In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language. (Article 30)*

When governments sign these conventions, it provides a legal framework by which communities can appeal to their governments, as 'duty bearers' (those who have a legal obligation to ensure the fulfillment of rights), to uphold the rights they have been promised as part of state.

Rights-based approaches seek to support communities in this process, by building awareness of rights, helping communities communicate with governments and other 'duty bearers', and ensuring that there is capacity and collaboration in efforts to fulfill these rights for the 'rights holders'.

The rights-based approach to education advocates the treatment of education as a human right and not a development target; the former provides accountability and immediacy while the latter implicitly allows room for failure in meeting targets and goals. The conceptual framework of education as a right sets out three core elements:

- the right **to** education (education that is available and accessible),
- rights **in** education (education that is acceptable and relevant), and
- rights **through** education (education that is adaptable and achieves the goals of society).

While rights-based approaches should not be seen as the only solution, rights-based approaches can: support more holistic thinking in organizations' planning and action, ensure that activities fit in the context of broader social change processes, promote more strategic engagement with government, and better support local groups and communities (Chapman, 2005). Ultimately, the goal of a rights-based approach is to mitigate against aid dependency and ensure that the legitimate 'duty bearers' in society are delivering the services they have promised to deliver.

Case Study - how a rights-based approach has impacted ActionAid's use of resources

Strategic vs. Conventional Approaches to Education Reform:

1. A conventional way of spending £20 to increase access to education might be to purchase a school uniform to enable one child to attend school in Kenya.

   ActionAid used the same £20 to support two children to speak before the national parliament in Kenya as part of Global Action Week, leading the Minister to write to 17,800 primary schools saying the lack of a uniform should not prevent access to schooling.

2. A conventional way of using £200,000 to increase access to education might be to rebuild a primary school in Pakistan following an earthquake.

   ActionAid used the same £200,000 to build a broad national alliance, the Pakistan Coalition for Education, to help make education a top national priority, thus securing a commitment to increase the government budget for education from 2% to 4% of GDP.

   Adpated from a presentation at the CoP event by Tanvir Muntasim (Senior Manager, Education and Youth, ActionAid) entitled "Rights Based Approach to Education, Concepts and Practices" is available online here: http://lead-impact.org/cop/ibcd

Relevant Resources

More information about a rights-based approach to education, including country-specific information about its implementation and enforcement, is available at:
http://www.right-to-education.org

The UN declaration of Rights for Indigenous People is available at:
http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf

Other Helpful Resources

Minority Rights Group has a lot of helpful material on rights and rights-based approaches for minority groups, which often include ethnolinguistic communities:
http://www.minorityrights.org

The International Labour Organization: a handbook for minorities and indigenous peoples (Roy and Kaye, 2002)

Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities: Opportunities for NGOs and Minorities (Syposz, 2006)

Applying a rights-based approach: an inspirational guide for civil society (Boesen and Martin, 2007), available at:
http://www.humanrights.dk/files/pdf/Publikationer/applying%20a%20rights%20based%20approach.pdf

A Human Rights Based Approach to Education For All (Craissati, Devi Banerjee, King, Lansdown and Smith, 2007), available at:
http://www.unicef.org/publications/files/A_Human_Rights_Based_Approach_to_Education_for_All.pdf

Voicing our identity

Using education to help develop a stronger sense of identity, and with that the confidence with which to explore and interact with the world, is an excellent starting point. Whilst there is clearly inherent value in those things alone, further benefits to the wider community are dependent on an opportunity (both practically and within societal attitudes) to express that strengthened identity to others. Without this opportunity there is the potential for this to remain as just an 'internal' change, restricted to the individual or the community.

At the same time, building on ideas earlier on in this Guide, real communication is not one-way. It is a dialogue allowing communities and individuals once marginalised because of their differences to engage with those around them as equals. As peoples' identities are strengthened and they have the opportunity to interact proactively with others who are different from them, they are better placed to make connections, share knowledge, build bridges and grasp opportunities. In this section we briefly highlight some approaches that marginalised ethnolinguistic communities have taken to make their voice heard, to share their identity with others and to develop that identity in the process.

Cultural festivals

Cultural festivals can be a way to celebrate cultural diversity while reaching out to other cultures. For ethnolinguistic communities who have suffered marred identity, these festivals can help affirm their identity, and by reaching out to others can help cultivate dialogue about cultural diversity. In some regions, festivals have also been used as a means to sustain the culture, as described in the case study below.

Pesta Nukenen

The Kelabit are one of the smallest ethnic groups in Sarawak, East Malaysia, originating from the remote Kelabit Highlands. We number about 6,000 people worldwide, with only about 3,000 fluent native speakers left. Many have migrated into the towns and cities and some overseas in search of education and employment. This has given rise to the issues of loss of identity, language and culture.

In 2005, we started a unique community-owned Kelabit Food and Cultural Festival (Pesta Nukenen) in Bario. The yearly festival consists of exotic and traditionally farmed foods, wild foods, jungle trekking, cultural tourism and traditional games, dances and songs. It provides a chance for the young Kelabits and visitors to learn first hand and immerse themselves in indigenous Kelabit culture and traditional food.

Participatory community radio

Local radio can support minority ethnolinguistic communities on multiple levels. People's identities can be promoted and strengthened through the use of their language on the radio and through airplay of traditional music and other forms of oral culture. However, community radio seeks to actually give the microphone to communities, allowing them to determine what is aired, creating a platform to voice their own concerns and interests. This can also build solidarity between remote communities, enabling them to have a stronger collective voice on advocacy issues. Challenges and solutions can be shared, allowing successful local innovation to spread more easily. This can be supplemented by technical advice (e.g. on health and agriculture), which is especially powerful when shared in conjunction with stories from community members about their own experiences in implementing the ideas. Al Hayat Foundation, Inc. (AHFI) provides a good example of the benefits of community radio.

Radyo Gandingan

AHFI, established in the Philippines in 1994, has been using participatory community radio to empower Maguindanaon communities to contribute towards peace and sustainable development in Mindanao. Mindanao is an area of the Philippines that has endured decades of civil turmoil and conflict between Islamic groups fighting for independence from the Philippine Government. With civil conflict a regular occurrence in the region, health and social services are limited, leaving this region significantly marginalised and consequently one of the poorest regions in the Philippines. In response to these interconnected issues of conflict and poverty, AHFI has been exploring ways to build dialogue in the region, to overcome the negative stereotypes which perpetuate the conflict, while helping to empower communities to address some of their basic development challenges.

One of AHFI's main strategies is Radyo Gandingan (RG). Supported by Health Communication Resources, RG is a peace-building community-based radio program that provides a venue for information, education and advocacy, social learning, dialogue and capacity building among Maguindanaon communities. The gandingan is a traditional musical instrument that was used by the Maguindanaon people in the Philippines to communicate with each other, allowing them to send messages and warnings over long distances. Radio Gandingan uses community volunteers in a participatory approach to generate social change from the individual community member to the wider community. Volunteers receive foundational training in social change and communication, and develop radio programs which address critical health and social issues at the community level.

Community Radio for peace and sustainable development in Mindanao

"We had no voice without RG.

"We have good farming here only because we have good farmers who are willing to work and learn, we had no partners from outside. The government agencies who have technical skills to offer in farming could not reach us because they could not hear our voice. Aside from that, we had no source of entertainment and good news about social issues and the community life of other people.

"I can still remember when an RG anchor approached me to be his community resource person for their farming segment on the program. He interviewed me about the situation of my fellow farmers here in Sitio Damagui. Everyone in our community was very surprised after my interview had been aired.

"A number of people are now regularly coming to see and check our farms, they want to see how we grow vegetables, to replicate them in their communities. But the biggest blessing we received was when we received the support of our Municipal Agricultural Office and the Provincial Agricultural Office. They heard the voice of our farmers through the RG program, otherwise they would not know anything about our community.

"Through RG, our partnership with other groups has grown here in Sitio Damagui. This is very significant because it opened the opportunity for us to work together, not just among the community people but with other groups outside, so we have become stronger and developed as a community."

(Most Significant Change stories shared at the CoP Event)

Relevant Resources

Health Communication Resources (HCR)
HCR is a not-for-profit incorporated body which works with communities to design, develop and implement a community-centred media response to meet community needs for information, education, social learning, advocacy and entertainment. More information is available online at: http://www.h-c-r.org

How to do community radio: a primer for community radio operators (UNESCO, 2002)
This Primer is developed through the experiences of a community radio program supported by UNESCO in the Philippines. It is available at: http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001342/134208e.pdf

Social networks and new media

Minority ethnolinguistic communities, even in the remotest places, increasingly have access to the internet, allowing them to participate in social networks and new media (for example Facebook and Twitter). Like radio, this can be used to promote and document their unique culture and connect with others. Social media promotes a participatory approach allowing multiple voices to join, providing an easy way for community members in different parts of the country or world to (re)connect, and for those outside the community to learn about the culture of the community. Personal posts provide a direct route of communication, representing the individual voice of the users, not just the voice of an organization speaking on behalf of community members. Of course, while mobile connectivity and internet cafes are increasing access, not all communities yet have access to the internet.

Technology connecting generations in Malaysia

Getting youth involved in research and documenting their culture can be an important way of rebuilding connections with the older people in their communities. One community member, Sylvia, learned about Facebook from her 21-year-old daughter, and started a mother tongue language group which now has over 700 members. Sylvia also involved her mother in a workshop about the language. Although she was not initially interested, Sylvia's mother became passionate about their language when she discovered she had so much traditional knowledge to contribute. Now her mother helps with managing the Facebook page and provides valuable insight into the language for the next generation. This approach is creating intergenerational connections, enabling Kadazandusun youth to learn about their language and culture from older members of the community but in a way that is familiar and accessible to them. (Experience shared at the CoP event, March 2013).

Documentary films

Connected with increased access to online social networks, short films made by minority ethnolinguistic community members - with or without outside technical assistance - provide another avenue for them to begin a dialogue with others outside the community. The ease with which video can be captured on mobile devices and then shared via the internet, or even directly between phones using bluetooth, enables the sharing of experiences, challenges and successes.

Case Study: The Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Center

The **Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Center (APC)** was legally established in 2004 as the first formal indigenous people-based education center. Its work was started in 1992 under Environmental Science for Social Change and continues as a Jesuit Institute committed to right relations to the land. Bendum is an indigenous mountain community in Mindanao, in the south of the Philippines.

In August 2003, the Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Center was in the middle of a complex school accreditation process. Talks were held with Department of Education (DepED) officials at the regional and national levels. During the talks, ESSC (Environment Science for Social Change) realized that in order for these DepED officials to truly understand the situation in Bendum, they had to see it for themselves. Given the relative difficulty of bringing them to Bendum, why not bring Bendum to them?

Thus began the Bridging the Gap documentary film, produced by ESSC in cooperation with Jesuit Communications (JesCom), the communications apostolate of the Society of Jesus, Philippines Province. It took a week of shooting and five months of post-production to finish the film. Bridging the Gap, 28 minutes long, was produced in both Bisaya and English in order to reach a wider audience. Featuring interviews with several students of the center and the center's history, the film harnesses the power of the media to spotlight the education concerns of the Bendum community.

The film was shown to DepED secretary Edilberto de Jesus and his officials, and to other organizations working in the field of IP education, such as the Episcopal Commission on Indigenous People (ECIP), Education Network, and Assisi Foundation.

On February 2004, after a long process of coordination and advocacy, the Center received a permit from DepED to operate an elementary course. Four months later, June 17, 2004, DepED Undersecretary Fe Hidalgo read to the Bendum community DepED Memorandum Order #42, Recognition of Schools for Indigenous Peoples and Cultural Communities. These two events not only signalled the formal acknowledgement of APC as an educational center, they also paved the way for Indigenous Peoples to gain greater access to quality education and for civil society groups working for Indigenous peoples to broaden their areas of engagement with government.

Source: Story used with permission from the Apu Palamguwan Cultural Education Center. Available online at: http://apc.essc.org.ph/images/stories/about_us/DUMA/p15-16.pdf.

Relevant Resources

DUMA: A Decade of Engagement in Bendum
(Sandoval, 2009), available online at: http://apc.essc.org.ph/content/view/28/13/

Unity through identity

As should have already been made clear up to this point, it is essential that adopting IBCD is not interpreted as encouraging separatism, disharmony or conflict. Quite the opposite. Referring back to Dr Jayakumar Christian's framework of poverty as 'marred identity' (Christian, 1999), right relationships with others can only become a reality when building from a strong foundation of a healthy identity.

Without confidence in one's identity, relationships can often be unhealthy, dependent or abusive. Right relationships (both between people and place), however, develop when people have the space and opportunities to develop confidence in their own identity.

When people have a clear sense of who they are and the freedom to express that identity, they are better able to establish healthy and balanced relationships with the environment, their family, the wider community and outsiders. It is from these healthy, interdependent relationships that real community can ultimately grow and a sense of unity and wholeness can be established. A community of interdependent people are better resourced to operate sustainably within, and interact healthily with, the wider world.

It is crucial therefore that IBCD recognise the place of relationships across the wider society, not just within minority ethnolinguistic communities. It must understand the complete range of relationships that surround any community, encouraging and supporting unified multicultural societies. The cases that follow here, therefore, briefly highlight the different ways in which people can establish and strengthen their own identity while encouraging dialogue and communication within and between different communities. They are not so much tools as examples of how healthy identity can be foundational for both peace-building and the formation of networks and organisations which can work towards the vision of the community.

Peace-building

In many contexts people have used religious or ethnic differences to create rifts in society, which has led to conflict and, in the worst cases, the destruction of communities, villages, and families. Peace-building is a complex process which reaches far beyond the scope of this guide. However, by promoting dialogue and reflection, peace-building can be integrated with IBCD, providing an opportunity for mutual understanding, breaking down prejudices and encouraging mutual learning and acceptance of 'otherness'. During the CoP event some examples were shared about how organisations have supported peace-building practically throughout different regions of Asia by integrating dialogue into programs and helping those in conflict to seek understanding and forgiveness.

AHFI Peace Camps

As discussed earlier, AHFI is an organisation in the Philippines working towards building peace and sustainable development in the troubled area of Maguindanao. In addition to AHFI's peace-building radio program, every year, AHFI conducts youth peace camps where Christian and Muslim youth come together to forge relationships across their religious boundaries. During this time they paint their vision of peace in Mindanao, either concrete or abstract. The camp has an intentional focus on peace building through activities such as:

- Group activities designed to combine teamwork skills and individual commitment, in order to reinforce trust, team spirit, cooperation and communication,
- Collaborative 'peace paintings' and songs that reflect the shared experience through the creative process,
- In groups, youth participants discuss the most painful and divisive issues of their conflict in facilitated dialogue sessions, challenging inherited prejudices with real stories and experiences expressed openly by peers,
- Prayer meetings and sharing of key verses of peace from the Bible and the Qur'an, giving youth participants the opportunity to learn about each other's faith and beliefs.

The program aims to give these children and youth tools and skills to make their communities a better place to live. In a fun and friendly environment, youth campers build practical skills and meet new friends from other faiths and cultures. At the end of the camp participants leave with a sense of optimism, having learned how they can 'speak their peace' and build friendships cross-culturally with a changed mindset about the cultures of others.

Catalysing networks

Networks can play a key role in sustainable community development. By helping people to connect with one another, indigenous communities are able to share information – their own solutions to local development issues - and build the solidarity needed to claim their rights.

For these networks and committees to be legitimate, active and recognised by the community, they can not be instigated from the outside. However, through helping facilitate connections, practitioners can help bring like-minded and passionate people together.

Bunong community networks

International Cooperation Cambodia's (ICC) 'Building Community Involvement in Bilingual Education' action research project discovered the importance of catalysing networks.

ICC worked alongside communities, using participatory approaches in the mother tongue, to help communities reflect on culture and education issues, make plans and organise action in the communities. However, even seemingly small plans often failed. The pressing issues of deforestation, the loss of their livelihood and culture, created an atmosphere of helplessness and resignation.

Through their close work with the communities, ICC came to know several individuals who were passionate about their culture and the wellbeing of their communities. As part of the action research, ICC brought this group together to discuss the challenges they each faced. These meetings took a life of their own as the group discovered that other villages struggled with similar issues, and that they all had different ideas and perspectives to share with each other. ICC helped the group to continue to meet together. They met to study their rights, discuss their pressing concerns, and make plans for how to fulfill their rights with those in authority. Back in their communities, these individuals gathered their own circles of community members to raise awareness of these rights and to start taking steps towards their goals.

ICC also brought together some passionate mother tongue teachers in a similar way, with similar results. Teachers discovered the common challenges they faced and that they all had experience and methods to help each other. The teachers are now working with their students and communities to see effective bilingual education become a reality in their locations. Some teachers are preschool teachers, others literacy teachers, and others government teachers in the school system.

ICC staff have been encouraged at the level of personal commitment these community members have and their willingness to make personal sacrifice. So they decided to take this this one step further, and brought the two nascent bilingual education 'committees' together.

Through meeting together, individuals felt that they had support and strength to engage in dialogue both on the local level with local authorities, and with the different levels of the education offices. With an awareness of their rights to education, the committees planned and requested additional measures by the government to meet the educational needs of their communities. The committees were encouraged by the welcome they received from the director of education, who recognised the importance of community involvement in education.

Now, whenever there are opportunities, such as meetings or visits by official representatives, these individuals and their newly formed groups are voicing their concerns and speaking of the need for culturally and linguistically relevant education. The Provincial Office of Education director has in the last few months been contacting

these individuals to discuss new initiatives, with plans to expand bilingual education and support community learning centres in the mother tongue. The committees have also been working with issues of culture and livelihood, speaking with governors, commune leaders, and other local authorities about their rights and the importance of the forest for their children's future.

Encouraging and developing local agency was crucial. This was slow and ICC needed to be careful not to take on leadership, even when this was what the communities requested. ICC needed to let the group form their own course.

At the community level, ICC saw that the first people to interact with them, and often the most vocal persons in the communities, were not necessarily the most passionate. Finding the right people and supporting them multiplied the impact in that community. As these families saw that they had dignity, and connected with other families of similar vision, they were courageous and effective.

Establishing and supporting networks, such as these bilingual education committees, was expressed by the communities as one of the BCIBE project's best contributions. The community members and teachers felt empowered by having greater awareness about what other initiatives were taking place in the province, and they felt valued when they saw they could help to solve one anothers' problems.

Developing community-based organisations (CBOs)

Over the past decade there has been a significant focus in development on building civil society in support of strengthening democracy. This comes in recognition of the fact that many changes in societies have happened through the passionate work of local organisations and local movements for change.

Societies are made up of these building blocks of different formal and informal organisations. From this perspective it is not only what organisations do that changes the world, but also 'The kinds of organisations we create and the way we organise ourselves does so much to determine the nature and quality of human society. 'We' are 'organisations' (Barefoot Collective, 2009).

Cultural sustainability links very closely to local organisations. As we have discussed throughout this guide, decisions about culture, change and development can only be legitimately made by ethnolinguistic communities, which are themselves a form of organisation, and are built up of different organisations. While there is always a danger of organisations being co-opted for personal or political gain, or used as a 'pawn' by development NGOs and donors, 'sovereign' local organisations are the rightful location of power:

The word sovereignty is well-used by small-farmer organisations and allied practitioners when they speak of food sovereignty or seed sovereignty as a right to be self-reliant, of local ownership, of decision-making from a stance of consciousness and free-choice, not subject to the will and whims of those outside who may seek to control or exploit. Sovereignty is a particularly powerful concept when applied to organisations, suggesting the same authentic qualities, describing a home-grown resilience, an inside-out identity, the idea of an organisation being the expression of the free will of its own constituents. (Barefoot Collective, 2009)

Supporting local organisations therefore needs to be a foundational aspect of IBCD, supporting communities to organise themselves to run their own programs, develop their own voice, and work with governments and NGOs to realise the rights which governments have promised to fulfill. How to support local organisations is another topic which reaches beyond the scope of this Guide. However, by focusing on reflection and exploration of identity, this Guide makes an important contribution to the process of developing local movements and organisations: 'Perhaps the greatest contribution that anyone can make to the development of an organisation is to help it become more conscious of itself' (Taylor, 2002).

Case Study: Kadazandusun Language Foundation

The Kadazandusun Language Foundation (KLF) is a community-based organisation governed by a Board of Trustees and set up from the community, by the community and for the community—for the preservation, development and promotion of indigenous languages in Sabah and the Federal Territory of Labuan, Malaysia. Since its establishment in June 1995, KLF has been working with the Kadazandusun community and various partner organizations in four main programme areas: Linguistics and Anthropology; Literacy and Literature; Translations; and Community Services, Training and Development.

KLFs programmes have included:

- Workshops on language, culture and book publication
- "Learning the Kadazan Language" radio programmes, with RTM Sabah (Sabah's local radio broadcasting station)
- "Kadazandusun Language Week" (MGMBK) with the Sabah State Library
- Kadazandusun teacher training workshops (on the linguistic aspect of Kadazandusun), a joint cooperation with the Curriculum Development Division of the Ministry of Education, Malaysia and the Sabah State Education Department (1997 – present)
- Moyog Family Literacy Project, under the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU)-UNESCO Asia Pacific Innovation Programme for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) for Malaysia (October 2006 – September 2008).

- Dictionary development in related languages, including the publication of Timugon Murut-Malay Dictionary (2004).
- Murut Language School Pilot Project (January 2011 – December 2013).
- Kadazandusun Novel Writing Competition 2012, jointly organized with INDEP Education Foundation (IEF).
- Mother Tongue Use at Home Campaign (MTUse@HomeCampaign) 2012-2013, jointly organized with INDEP Education Foundation (IEF).

This brief summary of KLFs work shows how local organisations who are rooted in ethnolinguistic communities can be a voice for the community and can help raise awareness about language and culture. Furthermore, local organisations help to open up opportunities for cooperation with other organisations, to ensure that development programs are relevant to the community, and can improve access to resources in support of cultural sustainability.

Relevant Resources

The Barefoot Guide to Working with Organisations and Social Change (Barefoot Collective, 2009).
This guide is an excellent resource exploring the challenges and strengths of working with local organisations, and tools and reflective practices which help to ensure that practitioners work in ways which respect and build the sovereignty of local organisations. This publication and other Barefoot guides can be found at: http://www.barefootguide.org

Organisations and development: towards building a practice (Taylor, 2002).
The Swedish Mission Council, in collaboration with Community Development Resource Association (CDRA), have produced a number of valuable publications in the area of organisational development in a community development context. This publication and further resources can be found at: http://www.cdra.org.za and http://www.missioncouncil.se/om-smr/rapporter-och-publikationer/?lang=en

CHAPTER SIX

IBCD and the environment: a pressing issue[7]

As we have already discussed, in our interconnected world the impact of globalisation is increasingly being felt in even the furthest-flung places. Nowhere is this more keenly and dramatically felt than through changes to the places where we live; the place where we were born or grew up, the land we farm, the place we call home. Changes to the land impact us to our very core.

So far in this Guide our emphasis has been focused on the importance of connections between people, understanding who we are as individuals and as a group, how we are similar and different from each other, and how we relate to one another. However, the importance of connections between people and the land, and how this shapes their view of themselves and their future, is equally important. This issue was mentioned by participants on a number of occasions during the CoP event and so we wanted to introduce some of the key issues here. As authors we recognise the need for this area to be explored more fully so that IBCD connects with ethnolinguistic identity more holistically, and speaks to the challenges that many of these communities are facing. We therefore encourage further dialogue around these topics and appropriate ways to address the challenges that they present.

A sense of place

For many reasons it makes sense for IBCD to closely consider the environment. Humans have always had a strong connection with the land, be it as a means for sustenance, an object to respect or worship, a resource to exploit, a space to enjoy, or a societal and psychological anchor for being. Our relationship to a place is a foundational element of our identity.

In an early exercise at CoP event, participants were asked to list the five most important features that they felt made them feel a part of their particular ethnolinguistic community. Predictably, given the interests of the majority of participants, common language and shared culture (costumes, food, music, etc.) were near the top of everyone's lists. Another identifier, however, was that of geographical origin or environment, or having 'a sense of place' (Feld, 1996). Where we are from, our homelands or traditional lands, is culturally very important to all of us, affecting many things about who we are and how we view the world. Removing, or dramatically changing, that sense of place can have a huge knock-on effect. For example, the Ambai of Papua, Indonesia, refer to themselves

7 Special thanks to David Price, Daniel Murdiyarso and Doug Sheil for providing much of the content for this chapter.

as "Sea People", since their culture and means of livelihood almost completely revolve around the sea, fishing and gathering, and tidal patterns. Take the sea away from the Ambai, or the Ambai away from the sea, and their very identity is severely threatened, regardless of any other benefits or costs.

Given this deep connection to the environment, when life in a specific place is no longer viable – because it has been taken or changed by someone else – it becomes a major driver of change. Minority ethnolinguistic communities are often closely linked to their environment and correspondingly are more severely affected by any changes to that environment. Such changes, by external or internal factors, can result in previous uses of the land no longer being possible and communities' livelihoods being adversely impacted, sometimes irrevocably. Whilst in many cases change is inevitable or unavoidable, due to global issues as we go on to explore, the degree to which it impacts a way of life or a community's sense of identity (both positively or negatively) depends very much on the resilience of that specific community -- their ability to absorb shocks and changes. Below, we begin to explore some specific examples of environmental changes which are effecting ethnolinguistic communities' relationship to place.

Winds of change

Land rights

One of the most significant issues facing ethnolinguistic communities throughout Asia is the issue of land ownership. In many countries communities have had traditional lands taken from them, often because traditional rights to land are not recognised as valid by governments (Ostrom et al, 2002). Many communities face overwhelming change due to government-mandated or enabled infrastructure developments, such as hydroelectric dams, mining operations, or from commercial agro-industry. Forced relocation from these 'initiatives' invariably results in poorer living conditions and fewer livelihood options, as well as the loss of access to and connection with traditional lands and resources.

The process of land privatisation can also leave communities disempowered and vulnerable to exploitation (Heltberg, 2002). Without an awareness of the legal systems and their rights to land, and literacy skills (in the national language) and political negotiation, communities are left vulnerable to 'scare-mongering' and false claims to land.

One other challenge linked to land rights, is that of deforestation, which is becoming more prevalent with the improvement of infrastructure and greater interconnectivity. Deforestation rates in Southeast Asia were the highest across the entire tropics between 1990 and 1997 (Achard et al, 2002). Forest peoples—those dependent to some degree upon access to forest resources, such as non-timber forest products—are particularly threatened as those resources are destroyed or co-opted (Basuki et al, 2011; Colfer et al, 2006; Rist et al, 2012). New road access enables settlement by immigrants who

deforest to use land (Dove, 1993) and increased access to markets also increases rates of unsustainable resource use in other ways too, for example with over extraction of non-timber forest products such as orchids, resin, and wildlife.

Squeezing the land

Population growth throughout Asia has driven demand for increased food production, increasing pressure on forests and ecosystems important for minority ethnolinguistic groups, biodiversity and other ecosystem services (Sayer and Cassman, 2013). Intensified agribusiness is taking over large areas of traditional lands for intensive monocropping, with resounding impacts upon local communities and their environment (Sayer et al, 2013). Largely ignoring traditional land tenure, international agribusinesses, usually enabled by governments, convert traditionally owned lands where communities are powerless to oppose them.

In Indonesia and Malaysia vast tracts of traditionally owned lands have been deforested and converted into oil palm plantations, and there are plans to dramatically increase this area, doubling Indonesia's production by 2020 (Koh, 2011). Not only does this bring serious environmental and land use problems, it also disenfranchises traditional land owners (Koh, 2011; Marti, 2008), leading to conflict and reduced livelihood capacity (Parker, 2013; Skinner, 2013). Sometimes local communities can find employment on such plantations (Rist et al, 2010) but rarely of any desirable kind or in desired conditions (Naylor et al, 2007). Rubber tree plantations are causing similar issues in Laos, Cambodia and China (Li et al, 2007).

Sometimes intensive agroindustry is community-led but externally-instigated. In the Philippines, agribusiness companies have introduced genetically modified crops to local smallholders, with the result being that farmers become caught in a circle of ever-deepening debt (story from CoP event participant). In Cambodia, the government has enabled industrial agricultural companies and initiatives from the outside, such as intensive monoculture cassava cropping. Economic returns from labouring in cassava farming is extremely low— estimates by local farmers in Cambodia suggest that basic day labour may actually be more profitable (story from CoP event participant). Local people express dismay that while formerly they worked for themselves on their traditionally-owned lands, now they work for others, doing undesirable work for less income on that same land, over which they have no recognised rights. At the same time they are faced, literally daily, with the reality that the land is being degraded, destroyed, no longer suitable for its original purpose.

Formerly these communities comprised of swidden farmers, practicing rotating slash and burn agriculture. Swidden agriculture can be environmentally sustainable (Ducourtieux et al, 2006), having limited impact on the forest environment, at least while population density is low (Brady, 1996; Thrupp et al, 1997). Now much of their land is cleared and they are being pushed out by external forces. They want to retain their independence, rather than become 'slaves for others'.

Agroindustry and monocropping impacts the land, the individuals working it and the communities surrounding it. Regarding the land, it has been shown to ruin productivity and to reduce biodiversity (Koh et al, 2013), destroying any inbuilt margin towards resilience against environmental disasters (Liswanti et al, 2011). For individuals, many studies have shown that Asian workers in agribusinesses or on intensive smallholdings are constantly exposed to extremely high concentrations of unhealthy chemicals and often show symptoms of pesticide poisoning (Van Den Berg and Jiggens, 2007; Kishi et al, 1995). For communities, in addition to the health threats of intensive chemical use, removing connection and responsibility for the land from those who know and understand creates a cycle of dependency, and in worst cases an environment of disenfranchisement and unrest (Basuki et al, 2011).

Changing weather

Wicked Problems

Wicked problems are:

- complex – they involve many different actors (e.g., citizens, businesses, governments, scientists and NGOs).
- no single solution – often partial solutions cause new, unforeseen, problems and conflicts.
- time critical – will get worse if not addressed soon.
- result of missing governance/institutions.

Source: Hughes et al, 2013: 262

Climate change and the corresponding changing weather patterns, are sometimes referred to as 'wicked problems' (Rittel and Webber, 1973; Levin et al, 2009), that is, they are big, complex, externally driven and seemingly solution-less problems. Some of these drivers are global in nature, some are more regional, but most are well outside the ability of affected communities themselves to address, let alone control. Many groups throughout Asia have perceived local or regional climate shifts and changes in weather patterns, most likely as a result of global climate change (Dasgupta et al, 2009; Nicholls, 2002, 2004; Corlett, 2012; Vermeer and Rahmstorf, 2009; Bollasina et al, 2011). In particular, recent concern has highlighted Asian societies and communities—perhaps numbering up to one billion people (Turner and Annamalai, 2012)—that are largely dependent upon a historically reliable monsoon and are therefore especially vulnerable to changes in that system (Fu et al, 2008).

The impact of climate change

When seasonal patterns become unreliable crops and harvests can be lost (Gross, 2013; Mendelsohn, 2009). For example, the Ifugao group from Batad in the Philippines is a rice-growing culture and globally renowned for the rice terraces the people create. Their cultural values, beliefs and learning all revolve around the different cycles of rice growing, with the different activities of rice growing forming the means by which traditional knowledge and skills are passed down from generation to generation, specifically through stories, song, and other arts as the work proceeds. Historically, when the climate was more settled, they could usually count on three crops of rice annually. In recent years, however, because of the unpredictability and failure of rains, they have been fortunate to harvest two crops annually. This level of agriculture can barely sustain the Batad and therefore more and more are forced to seek alternative livelihoods, invariably taking them away from their traditional lands. In this case, the slow demise of the rice-growing agriculture is directly robbing them of their culture, their means of traditional education, as well as their economic stability. Similar accounts have emerged from Malaysia and elsewhere in SE Asia (Story from a CoP Event Participant).

The intensity of climate-related events is another source of concern (Mendelsohn, 2009). Climate change effects are not realised uniformly across the region—in some places there are predicted increases in temperature or in rainfall, in others, decreases. Most places are likely to be experiencing more intense weather events (Pender, 2010), for example, previously rare heavy rainfall events are now becoming common, leading to land slippage, flooding and other problems, especially where land degradation has already occurred. The unpredictability of weather patterns is a major issue for minority communities traditionally dependent on the land for regular resources. Ethnolinguistic communities throughout the world are facing ever-decreasing delivery from the ecosystem services that sustain them, impacting their livelihoods, traditions, culture and ultimately their identity.

Environmental refugees

A recent phenomenon that can only become more and more common is that of environmental refugees, where displaced and marginalised peoples are suffering from the impacts of social upheaval from their displacement (Myers, 2001; Gray and Mueller, 2012). As sea levels continue to rise and land degradation accelerates, this will become more common and is already a significant issue in places like Bangladesh (Pender, 2010).

Lacking care

Pollution in all its forms, an issue that is worse in places where there are rapidly expanding populations and industry, was also an area of strong concern at the CoP event. In the case of solid waste, and in particular plastics that are difficult to dispose of, much concern was felt around the aesthetical effects on the environment. While this is certainly a problem faced in both urban and rural environments, solid waste can have serious environmental impacts on wildlife and certain vulnerable ecosystems such as wetlands and mangroves. Even "biodegradable" plastics do little to alleviate concerns since they only break down to microplastics - with microplastics being identified as a top environmental emerging issue of concern in 2010 (Sutherland et al, 2010).

Of more concern, though often less obvious, is chemical pollution of water bodies and soils, especially in countries undergoing fast track industrial development such as China and India. Decreasing levels of water security is now a nearly universal and increasingly critical fact (Vörösmarty et al, 2010). All countries face pollution issues to some degree or another (Koh et al, 2013), and throughout minority communities in Asia effluent from mills, palm oil processing plants and the mining sector are serious problems. Bangladesh, India and Vietnam are facing serious problems through arsenic pollution due to over utilisation of limited artesian water sources for unsustainable irrigation systems (Nahar, 2009; Erban et al, 2013). Human wastewater treatment was also mentioned as an issue, particularly for health where water sources are limited in populated areas (Koh et al, 2013).

Invasive species

Finally, the issue of invasive alien (non-indigenous) species is a pressing issue throughout the world, but even more so in developing nations where national biosecurity institutions are not well developed or poorly implemented. Damage caused by invasive species can cause significant economic impacts locally and nationally, and reduced biodiversity, which is generally accepted as leading to a loss of resilience (Salick and Ross, 2009; Cardinale et al, 2012).

> ***[It is] in times of disaster and climate change that people depend on diversity—diversity of crops and their varieties, of wild plants, and of environments (Berkes et al, 2000).***

There certainly appears to be a positive relationship between biodiversity and human health and so it would appear natural that indigenous knowledge within minority ethnolinguistic communities about their environment should be maintained and valued. Knowledge of the status and level of threat of invasive species within Asia is still rudimentary (Peh, 2010; Sheil and Padmanaba, 2011), but impacts are generally recognised to be severe and developing (Corlett, 2010). This is an area where community education programs are likely to have significant positive impact.

Making a difference

Despite the overwhelming weight of environmental problems that were raised by CoP event participants, there are still some signs of hope, examples of initiatives where environmental resources and ecosystem services are being protected, utilised sustainably or restored.

For example, event participants from Bangladesh demonstrated their intention to face environmental issues head-on by reporting on their initiatives in the area of corporate social responsibility (CSR), particularly by carrying out carbon footprint studies and developing corporate environmental policies. Such policies are essential for development initiatives to take responsibility for the environmental impact of their work in and with minority communities.

Though "governance issues and those of poor institutional capacity" are still acknowledged as fundamental problems for sustainable resource management in many Asian and Southeast Asian countries (Sayer et al, 2013), there is strong and growing appreciation of ecosystem services among local communities themselves (Sodhi et al, 2010). There are strong Community-Based Resource Management (CBRM) initiatives to restore degraded or destroyed mangrove ecosystems (which confer tremendous services in the form of fisheries), or to sustainably manage marine resources through Marine Protected Areas and No-Take Zones. The Philippines has emerged as a world leader in this. Some communities are relearning the importance of native trees and other vegetation in land resilience and replanting. Nepal is now recognised in the environmental world for its success in restoration of forests through community forestry initiatives (Pokharel et al, 2006). Some initiatives are rehabilitating formerly forested Imperata (grass)lands (Friday et al, 1999; Lamb et al, 2005; Purnomosidhi et al, 2005) or helping communities choose sustainable agricultural practices, such as greater efficiency of nitrogen fertilizers, use of organic fertilizers and integrated pest management. Village-based or small-community sustainable sanitation systems utilising 'phytoremediation technologies', such as constructed wetlands planted with vetiver grass or local aquatic plants, are also becoming more common. And there are sustainable bamboo initiatives making dramatic differences to formerly degraded land in India and the Philippines.

For initiatives such as those described above to become more widespread and successful, concerted effort is needed on multiple fronts:

- Community institutions need to be built and strengthened to empower communities to regain control over their resources and guard over ecosystems at threat, including where possible capacity for restoration initiatives.
- Increased focus must be on influencing national, regional and international policy on environmental issues.

- Collaborative initiatives are needed to continue to build resilience within communities, encouraging the sharing of knowledge and the application of local solutions.
- In many cases, but particularly in areas where irrevocable damage has already been done, affected communities need assistance to focus on adaptation strategies in order to manage inevitable change in the best possible way.

'Sustainability' and 'resilience'

Widespread land degradation and unsustainable land use (Lal, 2009) has resulted in many of the issues highlighted already, such as flooding and loss of soil nutrients due to upland deforestation, the loss of productive lands to fire-prone Imperata grasslands, or the loss of protective coastal ecosystems such as mangroves and marshes to unsustainable aquaculture and urban development. In all these environmental challenges facing minority communities two ideas are central – sustainability and resilience.

For communities to continue to use and benefit from the land, a level of sustainability is necessary. Taking its original ecological sense (rather than the generally adopted economic sense of "ongoingness"), this means 'not challenging ecological thresholds on temporal and spatial scales that will negatively affect ecological systems and social systems' (Berkes and Folke, 1998). Essentially, not upsetting the balance. The second key concept, resilience, refers to 'the buffer capacity of the ability of a system to absorb perturbations; the magnitude of disturbance that can be absorbed before a system changes its structure by changing the variables and processes that control behavior' (Berkes and Folke, 1998). It also reflects how fast the system variables return to equilibrium following perturbation (shocks and stresses) and its ability to maintain structure and patterns of behaviour in the face of disturbance (Costanza, 1992).

Considering the pressing issues of climate change and the impact of environmental disasters, both issues where biodiversity is critical in providing a buffer for communities, it is essential that minority ethnolinguistic communities are empowered to continue to develop their culture and heritage as they desire. The knowledge and connections embedded within these communities is key to managing the natural resources in a responsible and sustainable way. Ensuring that community development occurs in a way that does not negatively affect these community systems is essential.

For too long economic development, culture and the environment have been unhelpfully separated, considered as unconnected issues run by different factions of the 'development community'. This hasn't worked, resulting in development initiatives that are at best unsustainable or ineffective, and at worst destructive. While some efforts have been made to address these often opposing camps (Raworth, 2012), progress has been slow. Joining these dots is essential for any effective development, and for IBCD this might mean:

1. Explore the connections of identity, natural resources, and the environment with communities to help inspire action and organisation.
2. Integrate and embed environment issues and local knowledge about natural resources (including how to appropriately manage them) into education and schooling so that valuable local knowledge is passed on generationally, and greater awareness is developed in younger generations about environmental issues.
3. Build collaborative initiatives between education and cultural organisations (like those in the LEAD CoP) and environmental and livelihood NGOs in order to incorporate these issues more effectively.

As we think back to the importance of people's 'sense of place', it is important to remember that the environment holds very strong emotional and spiritual connections, as well as economic, for the communities that live in it. Ensuring that communities are in a place where they are empowered to make proactive decisions around the future of that land is essential, not just for the economy or environmental 'sustainability', but also for social cohesion and peace. Merely providing communities with a 'role to play' in a 'modernised' use of land is not only unsatisfactory, but also an injustice to those people who have lived from and managed the land all their lives.

Communities are increasingly aware of the local or regional environmental issues they are facing, along with the impact those issues are having on their ongoing economic and cultural resilience. However, their strong sense of place, knowledge and love of their environment, inspite of so many challenges, can be a means by which to protect environmental resources and affirm ethnolinguistic identity. As ethnolinguistic communities throughout Asia stand up to face the environmental problems in front of them, they are potentially presented with an opportunity to embrace their identity in ways (and domains) that have not previously been possible or seemed appropriate.

Resources

This section merely scrapes the surface of the issues relating to ethnolinguistic communities and their environment, and barely starts to explore the possible solutions. However, in the hope that this section has inspired further reflection and research, we include a few links to help begin this journey, and hope that future discussions in the LEAD CoP will explore these issues in more depth:

The Apu Palamguwan Centre in Bendum, Philippines, has been integrating environmental issues as part of culturally relevant education for over a decade. They have compiled many reflections on this process, and several resources which are available at: http://apc.essc.org.ph

Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact have produced some excellent videos to help build awareness about indigenous peoples land rights and REDD+, which can also be used with the community:

http://www.aippnet.org
http://vimeo.com/54351
http://www.iapad.org/toolbox.htm

Participatory approaches for resource management:

http://community.eldis.org/.59c6ec19/
http://www.cifor.org/conservation/_ref/research/research.2.htm

Echo asia is a network of small-farm researchers dedicated to developing sustainable and appropriate agricultural solutions:

http://www.echocommunity.org

Assessing Social-Ecological Resilience:

http://www.resalliance.org/index.php/resilience_assessment

Participatory GIS (geographic information systems) and mapping:

http://www.iapad.org/toolbox.htm

CHAPTER SEVEN

Concluding thoughts

Joining together: a real community of practice

This Guide has focused on the need for practitioners and minority ethnolinguistic communities to understand each other better. For this to become a reality both parties must take steps to reflect on their own separate journeys, dialogue openly and honestly together as they work out (and walk out) their shared experiences together, and then be prepared for their paths to once more diverge at an appropriate time. This is what Myers (2011: 206) calls the 'convergence of stories' and emphasises the equal importance of each parties previous 'story' alongside their current and future experiences as they engage in this learning process together.

Alongside the importance of individual and joint learning we hope this Guide, as a product of the LEAD community of practice, also demonstrates the value of corporate or community learning. Providing space for practitioners and organisations to come together in a supportive learning environment is essential. As practitioners who work in similar contexts come together, they are able to share challenges, successes and solutions, and 'deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis'. Communities of practice are not only about members exchanging knowledge, but also about the creation of new knowledge by 'interpreting context and experience together' (Barefoot Collective, 2011: 117).

Through this ongoing sharing and improvement upon collective knowledge, communities of practice can be catalysts for change and as such we would encourage everyone to find a way to become an active participant in one. We therefore repeat our invitation for you to join the LEAD community of practice (http://lead-impact.org/cop), to help us continue this conversation on Idenity-Based Community Development.

Setting a new course

Returning to the metaphor of a journey, we also hope that over the course of this Guide that you will have seen that IBCD is as much about the process, the journey, as it is the destination. It is about ensuring that in any interaction with minority ethnolinguistic communities we, as practitioners, are positioning everything that we are and do in a way that fosters dialogue and encourages reflexivity. It is about creating space to help ethnolinguistic communities explore their identity in light of their history and in the face of new challenges and changes, so they can step into the future confident of

who they are. Ultimately, it is about supporting communities to find a place of cultural sustainability within vibrant multicultural societies.

Adopting a term from the Quechua peoples of the Andes used in recent Rio+20 discussions (Walpole, 2012), at the heart of IBCD is the desire to enable all communities to find a way to embrace 'sumak kawsay', or 'buen vivir'. Poorly translated into English as 'good living', this philosophy or worldview describes a view of life that puts the community at the centre, not the individual, that sees the land and its resources as something to care for not consume, and that recognises culture as a fragile but essential component that must be protected. As you consider how you might apply IBCD in your own context we encourage you to keep this view in mind. To strive to bring about not a 'better' life, a promise so often encapsulated in much rhetoric around development, but a good life that cares, protects, understands and loves.

CHAPTER EIGHT

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ANNEX ONE

IBCD event information

Details about the March CoP event and the Toyota grant

In 2012 The Toyota Foundation released a call for proposals for a special purpose grant entitled 'Prospects for the Future'. This special purpose grant invited *"people who have been working in Asian countries to address issues and compile a record of past activities and a "Prospect for the future" to show an encouraging vision for future Asian societies, including Japan."* To form this record applicants were asked to run an 'experience sharing' workshop, bringing people from across Asia together to share and learn from each others experience, and to compile a report based on the findings of that workshop detailing lessons learnt, findings, challenges, vision and recommendations for future Asia. The grant was split into three project areas under which applicants could apply; 'Dealing with changing livelihoods', 'Strengthening social mechanisms to support individuals' lives' and 'Exploring multi-cultural societies'.

SIL International's (SIL) successful proposal was granted under the third project area, 'Exploring multi-cultural societies', and was entitled:

'Identity Based Development[1]: Exploring how culture and identity can be a springboard for relevant and sustainable development among Asia's ethnolinguistic minorities'

In 2008 SIL International (SIL)[2], through its Asia Area administration, formed LEAD (Language, Education and Development) Asia[3] to focus on the educational and development challenges facing minority ethnolinguistic communities. One way LEAD Asia has done this is by facilitating a 'community of practice' (CoP) – made up of Asian based NGOs, SIL teams, and other development practitioners – to promote the sharing of information and experience around topics relevant to minority ethnolinguistic communities. Communities of practice are "groups that share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge and expertise by interacting on an ongoing basis...[CoPs are] not only about knowledge exchange, but also about making sense of and interpreting context and experience together, and through this creating new knowledge" (The Barefoot Collective 2011, 117).

1 Later changed to 'Identity Based Community Development'.

2 SIL International is a registered 501(c)3 organization with operational experience in 100 countries globally with an annual budget of $142 million and 5,500 staff worldwide. See www.sil.org for more information

3 For more information see www.leadimpact.org

It was through this CoP that LEAD Asia conducted an experience-sharing workshop in March 2013 in Bangkok, Thailand. The event ran for three days (5-7 March) and was attended by 59 participants representing 27 Asian ethnolinguistic groups from 12 different Asian country contexts. Modelling a participatory model from the outset, participants knowledge and experience was central to the design and structure of the event itself. As part of the application process for attendees LEAD Asia asked relevant organisations to conduct a group discussion, pre-event surveys if you like, around a number of key questions and then to submit those to the organising team. This process provided both valuable input for designing the event so that it focused on the most relevant topics whilst also enabling the team to identity the most interested organizations and participants, thereby increasing the transparency of the selection process of those benefitting from the grant. It also helped to provide a broad level of input to both the event and this Guide, allowing organisations to contribute their knowledge and experience even if they were unable to send a representative to the event itself. The grant provided a full scholarship, including flights, for 35 national staff from the represented organisations.

The event ran for three days, running from 9am until 5:30pm. An introductory meal and session were also included on the 4th March, allowing participants to familiarise themselves with the venue, the topic and each other.

The event was divided into four topics: Changing Identity; Working with Identity; Identity as a Resource/Asset; Identity Based Community Development for the Future. As participants moved through these topics it was expected that they would be encouraged to reflect on their own experiences of working with minority ethnolinguistic Asian communities. This is a key feature of the CoP, providing a way for key commonalities to rise to the surface through discussions and sharing, but ultimately recognising that all learning must be contextualised for it to be put into practice effectively. A brief explanation of each topic follows.

A. **Changing Identity:** this topic was made up of three sessions and was aimed at encouraging participants to reflect on the changes they had observed in the communities over the time with which they have been working with them. Each session focussed on a different tool helping participants explore this from a different angle, including creating cultural timelines and examining most significant change stories. The intention was to understand that change is happening, to try and highlight some of the key features in each context, and to reflect on some best practices for identifying these ongoing changes.

B. **Working with Identity:** this topic was made up of two sessions which were combined into one activity based on a 'World Café' style theme. The 'World Café' is a 'creative process for facilitating collaborative dialogue and the sharing of knowledge and ideas to create a living network of conversation and action [wherein] proceeding conversations are cross-fertilised with the ideas generated in former conversations with other participants' (Slocum 2003) (Slocum 2003, 141-151 has more details on the procedure of the World Café). Participants rotated through four ~30-minute table groups of their choice sharing

their own experiences around the following five topics: identity and the environment, belief and identity, youth and intergenerational connections, conflict and identity, and unity (developing community based organizations and networks). After the four rotations, table facilitators were asked to synthesize what was said at their tables and share this with the larger group. The rationale for this topic was to encourage participants to reflect on how peoples identity impacts the ways they engage with these different subjects and, at the same time, how these subjects are affecting their identities. And then, moving on from this, to think about how what we as practitioners do can help or hinder how minority ethnolinguistic communities engage with these issues.

C. **Identity as a resource:** the focus of this topic was primarily on the role identity plays in maximising the resources presented by education, both in terms of the resources it can provide/withhold from communities, but also in terms of the way it can help unlock in communities. The topic was split into two sessions, the first exploring the legal framework around the right to education and the second looking deeper into what education can/does mean for minority ethnolinguistic communities. Whilst education is clearly not the only route through which identity can be seen as a resource, many of the participants in attendance had hands-on experience with education programmes and so this was a natural example to explore. The impact of education on communities and their identity is massive and so it was felt that it was important to focus on the challenges around providing access to appropriate education for minority ethnolinguistic communities and the implications of failing to do so.

D. **Identity Based Community Development for the future**: the final topic was deliberately less structured than the previous three to allow it to adapt appropriately to the previous days' discussions. Due to the centrality of the arts in many discussions up to that point, time was taken to consider how different art forms could be used to assist organisations to better engage with communities. The arts form and influence a large part of most individuals' and communities' identity and so are key to understanding and then involving communities in their own development. Time was also spent with organisations evaluating their own networks, exploring who they interact with and how they could better work together to address the needs of the communities with which they are working. The final session was spent with participants putting in practice what they have learnt, sharing their highlights in a creative form.

Each day concluded with a time of reflection on key themes identified through organisations' pre-event surveys, including: language development, multicultural societies; cultural understanding (e.g. through the arts); participatory/empowering methods; environmental impact; and relevant/inclusive education. It was intended that these times would allow participants to reflect on the day's sessions from a different perspective, considering the impact/implication for a specific area of life/community development work rather than a specific geographical context.

Participating organisations

- The Foundation of Applied Linguistics (FAL), Thailand
- Payap University Linguistics Unit - Northern Training Centre, Thailand
- Food for the Hungry Bangladesh (FH)
- SIL Bangladesh
- SERVE Afghanistan
- Institute of Applied Linguistics (IAL), Pakistan
- Forum for Language Initiatives (FLI), Pakistan
- International Cooperation Cambodia (ICC)
- Translators Association of the Philippines (TAP)
- Al Hayat Foundation, Inc. (AHFI), Philippines
- Apu Palamguwan Centre (APC), Philippines
- SIL Philippines
- Kadazandusun Language Foundation (KLF), Malaysia
- Dayak Bidayuh National Association (DBNA), Malaysia
- Rurum Kelabit Sarawak (RKS), Malaysia
- SIL Malaysia
- Nepal Lhomi Society (NELHOS)
- Nepali National Languages Preservation Institute (NNLPI)
- SIL International

LEAD
Language, Education and Development

SIL
International