

LITERACY FOR DEVELOPMENT IN MULTILINGUAL CONTEXTS: FIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF SUSTAINABLE PROGRAMS

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INTRODUCTION

Although the terms “literacy” and “development” are frequently used together in reference to adult education programs, the latter term is rarely used when referring to children’s education. However, to the degree that formal education aims to prepare children for useful and productive participation in the life and work of their community and nation, linking literacy and development in children’s education is as important as it is in programs for adults. It is even more fitting when the educational programs are situated in multilingual contexts. Especially for minority language communities that have been politically and economically marginalized.

This paper, which focuses on literacy and development programs for both adults and children in ethnolinguistic communities, has two purposes:

- [1] to address the language dimension of literacy-for-development programs, and
- [2] to describe the general characteristics of sustainable literacy-for-development programs.

LITERACY-FOR-DEVELOPMENT: DEFINING THE TERMS

Learners, whatever their age, live in complex contexts in which “literacy” and “development” take multiple and diverse forms. Brian Street (2001), in his Introduction to a recent collection of research articles titled *Literacy and development: Ethnographic perspectives*, reiterates his distinction between traditional and more recent definitions of literacy—distinctions he describes as “autonomous” and “ideological” models of literacy respectively.

In developing contexts the issue of literacy is often represented as simply a technical one: that people need to be taught how to decode letters and they can do what they like with their newly acquired literacy after that ... (Street, 1984). The ‘autonomous’ model of literacy works from the assumption that literacy itself—autonomous—will have effects on other social and cognitive practices. The model, however, disguises the cultural and ideological assumptions that underpin it and that can then be presented as though they were neutral and universal. The alternative, ideological model of literacy ... offers a more culturally sensitive view of literacy practices as they vary from one context to another. This model starts from different premises from the autonomous model—it posits instead that literacy is a social practice, not simply a technical and neutral skill; that it is always embedded in socially constructed epistemological principles (Street, 2001, p. 7).

Literacy, thus understood, becomes a complicated and unwieldy concept. For example, in their study of literacy acquisition among Gapun villagers in Papua New Guinea, Kulick and Stroud (1993) did not find a strictly linear process that had a predictable impact on the new literates, but instead that the villagers “took hold” of their literacy instruction and molded it to their own uses. Literacy means different things to different people in different contexts. In fact, literacy may mean different things to the *same* person, depending upon the context and purpose of its use. An auto mechanic might enthusiastically read an article in a news magazine about a newly designed internal combustion engine but find utterly perplexing an article on micro economics in the same magazine, even though the second article requires the same level of reading skill and contains no more difficult a vocabulary than the article on engines. Rogers (2001) maintains that

[c]hildren (and adults) cope with reading material *according to their experience*. One child will find one book easy because he or she knows and understands the background well; another child of the same age and level will find the same book difficult because he or she does not have experience of it. There is no such thing as a level of literacy, no such thing as ‘difficult’ words in general. Words depend on the context in which they are used. Adults will use any written words, however difficult, if they are engaged on a task, which they wish to complete. (p. 25; emphasis is in the original)

“Development,” as an over-all term for educational, social, and economic interventions of various kinds and purposes, has also undergone a re-definition in the past decade. Rogers (2001) suggests that traditional definitions of “development” focus on “needs” that are identified and defined from outside the learners’ communities. In that context, “literacy-for-development” often results in outside development agencies trying to devise ways to motivate the local learners to come to literacy classes, which Rogers claims is like saying, “We want you to learn literacy even though you don’t want to learn literacy” (p.28). Thus, Rogers, speaking as an adult educator himself, suggests a different understanding based not on needs but on what people want to do, their intentions. Even in literacy, we must accept the people’s own agenda, not impose our agenda on them.” (p. 26).

In this paper “development” is understood as a process that is rooted in the ongoing life and experience of the local community. A key concept within this definition of development is that the process--the intervention—is directed from *within the community* as community members link with outside agencies to foster planned change for their own specific purposes. Thus, “literacy-for-development” becomes an expanded concept in which the aims and apparatus of change are focused on the goals, aspirations, and resources of the communities in which the literacy-for-development activities take place.

ATTITUDES TO EDUCATION IN ETHNIC MINORITY LANGUAGES

Without acknowledging the decisive role of mother tongues, and without a more informed assessment of language questions in general, there is little hope to achieve Universal Primary Education and functional literacy (Skutnabb-Kangas, 200, p. 599).

In the past several decades there has been an increasing awareness throughout the world of the rights of indigenous minorities to resist “cultural genocide” in their efforts to take part in development (Tollefson, 1991; May, 1999; Fishman, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000).

Accompanying this rise in consciousness on the part of the indigenous and majority groups has been recognition of the problems associated with forcing minority language peoples into majority language education programs. The most common consequence of this mismatch between the learners’ language and the language used in education is high attrition rates of children (and adults) in majority language education programs. John Waiko, Minister of Education in Papua New Guinea, describes the perception of the minority groups themselves of this educational “failure”:

The failure of formal education for indigenous minorities [is] well understood by indigenous peoples all over the world. The so-called drop-out rates and failures of indigenous people within non-indigenous systems should be viewed for what they really are—rejection rates. (Waiko, 2001, in a paper published on the Papua New Guinea Internet site)

Although the situation is changing, many educational planners have tended either to ignore the reality of socio-cultural and linguistic diversity or, as Dr. Waiko suggests, have done what they could to eliminate it, often in the name of fostering national unity, by forcing students into a common mold. The choice of Kiswahili as the language of education in newly independent Tanzania in the 1960s is a case in point.

... our educational system has to foster the social goals of living together and working together for the common good ... Our education must therefore inculcate a sense of commitment to the total community and help the pupils to accept the values appropriate to our kind of future, not those appropriate to our colonial past. (Julius Nyerere [first president of Tanzania], 1968)

“Working together for the common good” in the minds of Tanzania’s leaders required a single national language, but not the one used by their former colonists. For them, Kiswahili, one of the Niger-Kordofanian (“Bantu”) languages, was the logical choice.

Mulenga (2001) extols Nyerere’s quite considerable contributions to the field of education in post-colonial Africa. However, it is interesting—even perplexing—that in his entire article, Mulenga includes no mention of Tanzania’s multilingual diversity,¹ the single reference to language in education being the identification of various key terms (*Mwalimu*, *Ujamaaa*, *Uhuru*) as Swahili words.² This omission comes despite the author’s characterization of Nyerere’s membership in the Zanaki tribe³ as integral to his intellectual and moral development.

Although Nyerere certainly broadened his horizon after introduction to Western education, it is evident that his way of thinking and his general philosophical orientation was strongly influenced by his tribal upbringing. (p.19)

With such an illustrious exemplar, one wonders why the diverse ethnolinguistic identity of Tanzanians is minimized in so much of the literature on education in that country. Suffice to say, Tanzania serves as a clear example of the tendency of governments in multilingual settings to promote “national unity” through the imposition of a single language and, in schools, a single curriculum, regardless of how inadequately it represents the linguistic, social and cultural reality of its citizens.⁴ This was recognized in Tanzania even in the early 1980s.

[Primary schools curriculum] is biased in favor of the urban and bourgeois class and is basically elitist. There is no evidence that the curriculum has been decentralized to be more sensitive to the demands of local circumstances. (Omari et al., 1983)

¹ According to Grimes (1996), Tanzanians speak 131 languages.

² Mulenga does not include the following reference with respect to gender concerns in Nyerere writings: “Some critics have also raised concerns about the sexist language of Nyerere’s writings. Some feminists, such as Fatma Alloo and Marjorie Mbilinyi, have argued that Nyerere failed to realize the extent to which ideology resides in language” (p. 23).

³ According to Grimes (2000), the Zanaki language claims approximately 62,000 speakers who demonstrate “a limited bilingualism in Swahili and some other languages” (p. 416).

⁴ It is of interest that the same issue of *Convergence* that carries Mulenga’s article, also includes an item labeled “Manifesto” and titled “Mpambo: The New Afrikan Agenda” that asserts “the centrality of language to development” (Kisembo, 2001):

Knowledge transfer or learning therefore is best in forms which are logically derivative from within cultural systems. Even where knowledge is imported it needs to be translated into cultural and linguistic forms which harmonize with the overall system of knowledge as understood by members of the receiving community. This is the only way imported innovative ideas, including technology, can transform the old instead of introducing separate, and parallel procedures with different language systems (Kwesi Kwaa Prah) (p. 11).

In the last several decades, an increased awareness of the political, social, and economic rights of indigenous minorities has been accompanied by a slowly growing recognition of the need for education programs that are sensitive to the context, goals, and needs of *all* learners. Such programs recognize that education promotes national development when it supports the development of individuals and communities, including those among the traditionally excluded minorities. This perspective is the basis for Papua New Guinea's education reform of 1995:

Papua New Guinea needs citizens who respect their traditions, are keen to develop the resources available within their communities, and who will work together for the benefit of their families and the nation. (Deutron et al., 1990)

From this perspective, whether the education program is for adults or children or whether it takes place in the formal or non-formal sectors or informally, the desired outcome is that learners can access ideas and information in a variety of media and have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to be active participants in development. The next section of this paper describes characteristics of these kinds of programs in multilingual contexts.

CHARACTERISTICS OF LITERACY-FOR-DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS IN MINORITY LANGUAGES

A description of these literacy programs in three different parts of the world will facilitate a discussion of the characteristics of sustainable literacy-for-development programs in ethnolinguistic minority communities.

Program #1. Literacy for language maintenance and development in Malaysia

Like many of the world's ethnolinguistic minorities, members of the Iranun community express concern about what they perceive as a decline in the use of the ethnic language among the younger generation. They are also concerned about the degree of bilingualism they observe among the children who do not demonstrate fluent control of either the mother tongue or the national language, Bahasa Malaysia. In addition, community members express concern about the amount of cultural heritage and knowledge that is being lost as the older generation dies.

In an effort to promote the use and appreciation of their mother tongue and to preserve as much of their cultural heritage as possible, the Iranun community began several language development projects: Iranun alphabet (orthography) development, collecting and writing down traditional oral literature, and developing skills in the use of computer technology to develop a written mother tongue literature. The key to all these activities is a development process that is people-centered and community-based.

For the past year and a half, people in the Iranun community have been working to develop an alphabet, collect traditional stories, become computer literate, and be involved in other language and literature related activities. They face many challenges but the community has been working together to overcome them, knowing that they are working to preserve their language and culture. They are striving towards nontraditional mother tongue learning, not only for their children, but also for adults who are not yet literate.

Program #2. Bilingualism and biliteracy in the Philippines

In the mid-1980s, the 30,000 Cotabato Manobo had a literacy rate of about two percent but were highly motivated to learn to read and write in their own language and in Filipino. They were also eager for health education and wanted to improve their living conditions in general. In response to

the community's expressed goals, members of a national NGO—the Translators' Associations of the Philippines (TAP)—working in the language community initiated an integrated literacy/health education program. Within several years the need for extending the education program was clear; many of the people who had achieved basic literacy in their mother tongue were now ready to learn to read and write in Filipino. Linkages were established with the Non-Formal Education Division of the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) who provided initial training and materials for the transitional program.

Through this program, a growing number of Cotabato Manobo people became literate in their own language and in Filipino. According to reports from the program facilitators, community members demonstrated a more positive self-concept, a greater sense of pride in their heritage language and culture, and a greater sense of their dual identity as Cotabato Manobo and Filipino. They also achieved greater respect among members of the majority culture. Finally, they were able to use what they learned to improve their lives and took responsibility for sustaining their literacy and development program (Apang, 2000).

Program #3. Pre-primary mother tongue education program in Papua New Guinea

In the mid-1980s, the 30,000 Kaugel people who live in the central mountains of Papua New Guinea were concerned because their children, most of whom were monolingual in Kaugel, were doing so poorly in the English-only education system.

To prepare Kaugel children more adequately for formal education, local leaders, with the help of SIL International, established a one-year pre-primary education program in which children learned to read and write in their own language before they entered primary school. The Kaugel Non-Formal Education Association (KNFEA), composed of community leaders, government workers, and church representatives, was formed. Community members wrote, illustrated, edited, produced (on hand-operated duplicator) over one hundred graded reading booklets for pre-primary classes. When these books had been tested and revised, community members learned how to prepare proposals for funding to produce larger quantities of the reading materials on off-set press. Experienced teachers became trainers for on-going literature production and teacher training workshops. An income-generating project was initiated and local people trained to maintain it. Relationships were developed with local churches, NGOs and businesses, and with the Provincial Non-Formal Education Division. Each of these entities supported the program by providing it with financial and/or other resources, especially classroom space and school supplies.

As of 2001, the children's education program continues to be maintained under the sponsorship of KNFEA. In the late 1990s, the program was incorporated into the government's reformed education system and children who complete the Kaugel language classes now move directly into the formal system.⁵

A review of the three programs above, combined with our experience and those of other researchers and practitioners around the world, suggests five common characteristics of sustainable-literacy-for-development programs: (1) individuals who are respected and admired in their communities take active leadership in the programs; (2) the programs are planned to meet the educational goals identified by community members; (3) essential components of the programs are institutionalized so they can be maintained even though leadership might change; (4) program leaders establish linkages with other institutions that support the program; and (5) the community program is linked with on-going formal, non-formal, and informal learning opportunities.

⁵ The author spent over five years living and working with the Kaugel people, helping them develop this program.

1. ACTIVE LEADERSHIP OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE RESPECTED AND ADMIRERD IN THEIR COMMUNITIES.

One feature of sustainable development program is the active participation of respected local leaders with a vision for their people, supported by individuals and agencies that help them make the vision a reality (Malone & Arrove, 1998; Robinson, 1992). Smith (2001) writes that the impetus for the Iranun program originated with one such leader.

A lawyer and senator, an Iranun, who is a Minister in the Government, felt for himself the concerns of his people. In 1995, he invited the Institut Linguistik SIL to work with his people to help with their language preservation and development (p. 91).

Iranun language committees made up of recognized community leaders are responsible for the different aspects of the program. The rapidity with which the program has become 'rooted' in the community can be attributed to the visionary leadership of one influential community leader and the partnering relationship that has been established between that person, other community leaders, and the outside agency.

Hornberger and King (1999) describe a community of Saraguros Quichua—speakers whose bilingual education program for their children evolved from a group of local educators:

In the mid-1980s a group of local indigenous teachers who were dissatisfied with traditional education formed schools in three communities, the second being the Inti Raimi school of Lagunas. One of the primary goals of the schools has been to instruct Quichua and promote its usage, with the larger aim of revitalizing Quicha language and 'traditional' Saraguro culture within the community. For more than a decade, the school staff has instructed Quichua to its students, encouraged parents to learn Quichua and use it with children, and generally attempted to promote language awareness in the community. (p.172)

The sustainability of this bilingual education program, which certainly qualifies as literacy-for-development, can be attributed, at least in part, to the collective leadership of a group of respected teachers.

In Hawai'i, local and state politicians took the leadership in implementing Hawaiian-medium education. Wilson (1999) describes the process:

Most important, however, was the election of a new governor, John Waihe'e—the very individual who championed the Hawaiian provisions of the 1989 Constitutional Convention. Chosen as new Superintendent of Education was Charles Toguchi, a young local Okinawan who had served as State Senate Education Chair and introducer of the bills that removed the bans on the use of Hawaiian in the Punana Leo and public schools.

Another Senate supporter, Hawaiian Clayton Hee, later to become chair of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, arranged for a meeting with the newly appointed Superintendent Toguchi. Senator Hee assisted us in presenting a proposal that the graduates of the 'Aha Punana Leo be allowed to continue their education through Hawaiian in a pilot programme in two public schools, one in Hilo and one in Honolulu. This proposal was supported by Superintendent Toguchi and also through resolutions from the 1987 legislature to the independently elected State Board of Education. (pp. 104-105)

Although this particular program has experienced ups and downs, the initial support by respected community leaders resulted in the Kula Kaiapuni Hawai'i (Hawaiian Environment Schools) that have been sustained for more than a decade:

As of the fall of 1997, there were ten Punana Leo sites, ten solely elementary sites, two intermediate school sites, one combined intermediate/high school site, and one comprehensive kindergarten through high school site. All sites but two are streams within English-medium schools. (p. 105)

2. PROGRAMS ARE PLANNED TO MEET THE EDUCATIONAL GOALS IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS.

Adult learners rarely, if ever, learn for the sake of learning. Nor do they want to read in order to become “literate.” Adults learn because they have a purpose, a specific use for literacy. In effective programs, the adult learners’ purpose for learning is the base on which the program is built (Rogers, 2001, pp. 23-24).

Aikman’s (2001) account of the “indigenous self-development” of the Harakmbut people of southeastern Peru includes a description of the process by which the ethnic minority community organized itself and linked with other entities to help protect their rights while simultaneously promoting development that fulfills their own aspirations.

Indigenous peoples have been discussing alternative development based on the ability of indigenous peoples to become self-supporting ... Therefore, if the new technologies or allopathic medicines can make life easier or cure new diseases, such as tuberculosis, they are welcomed, but the Harakmbut reserve the right to consent to their use or production. (Gray, 1997 in Aikam, 2001, p. 111)

Aikman also emphasizes that the Harakmbut “are currently being trained as linguists to begin the complex process of defining an orthography and producing written material in the Harakmbut language” (p. 112), thus enabling them eventually to participate in the production of curriculum materials for their own bilingual, biliterate education program, in conjunction with an indigenous regional development association (see point 4, below).

In the three programs reviewed above, the aspirations of members of the local communities provided the impetus for the literacy-in-development efforts: the Iranun wanted to take action to preserve and develop their heritage language, the Cotabato Manobo wanted better access to health information, and the Kaugel wanted to improve their children’s educational opportunities. In each of the examples, programs aimed at promoting “development” were built specifically on the hopes and desires expressed by the learners and their communities.

3. ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAMS ARE INSTITUTIONALIZED SO THEY CAN BE MAINTAINED EVEN THOUGH LEADERSHIP MIGHT CHANGE

Based on a study of programs around Asia and the Pacific, Malone (1998; 1992) identified eight common components of literacy and education programs in indigenous language communities:

- *Preliminary research* to identify the community’s educational goals, the development topics that will be the basis for literacy learning, the way in which the community members use literacy, and the resources that might be utilized to support the program.
- *Awareness raising and mobilization* to promote understanding of the purposes of the program and to mobilize political and economic support.
- *Orthography development and testing* (where needed) to ensure that an appropriate writing system is established.
- *Development of instructional materials* to ensure that the teachers have the resources necessary to meet the learners’ educational goals and to satisfy government education requirements.

- *Development of graded reading materials* to ensure that the learners have an adequate quantity and quality of reading materials that are appropriate to their reading ability and are relevant and interesting to them.
- *Teacher training programs* (pre-service and in-service) to provide initial and follow-up support to teachers
- *Monitoring, evaluation, and testing* to ensure that the learners, parents (in children's programs), teachers, program administrators, and other stakeholders are able to identify strengths and weaknesses of the program and make necessary adjustments to sustain the program over time.
- *Sustained funding* to purchase supplies, support training, and materials production (and, ideally, to provide remuneration for staff)

In programs that are sustained over time, these components have been institutionalized to ensure that they, and the total program, are maintained. For example, training programs are established and training curricula developed to equip and support new teachers as the program expands. A system for creating, testing, revising, and producing graded reading materials is established so that relevant materials are available to community members with different reading abilities and a variety of interests. Evaluation instruments are developed to ensure that the program is achieving its objectives and the learners are satisfied with their progress. And multiple funding sources are identified and community members equipped to prepare proposals and write reports. In the examples above, community leaders ensured the sustainability of program components through developing strong local infrastructures and through utilizing infrastructures already established by outside organizations (see point 4, below). Studies of other programs reveal that this emphasis on internal and external infrastructures is a strategy of other sustained programs.

4. PROGRAM LEADERS ESTABLISH LINKAGES WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS THAT SUPPORT THE PROGRAM

The theory and practice of establishing linkages are hardly new to traditional ethnolinguistic communities. In the highlands of Papua New Guinea, for example, even prior to the incursions of the Western societies in the mid-20th century, individuals and communities practiced extensive and extended linkages beyond their own clans and language groups because the clan and its individual members frequently found themselves in situations in which their needs exceeded their resources. Without the expanded network of associates in other communities, those needs could not be met.

In the case described above, the indigenous communities linked variously with government agencies, non-government organizations, business and language associations at the local, state or provincial, regional, and national levels. The Kaugel program, for example, invited local government officers and church leaders to serve on its support committee, conducted classes in local churches and Local Government Council chambers, and conducted cooperative training programs for teachers with the Provincial Division of Education, which also supplied classroom materials for the Kaugel program. Likewise, the Iranun program in Malaysia is a partnership between the local community and an outside supporting agency. The Cotabato Manobo program worked closely with the Non-Formal Education Division of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports in providing initial training and materials for their transitional program.

Aikman (2001) described a similar process by which the Harakmbut people of Peru established linkages to achieve their own education and development goals. The community joined with an indigenous NGO, FENAMAD⁶, and, through this NGO, linked with the Peruvian Ministry

⁶ FENAMAD is the Federation of Natives of the Madre de Dios, which in turn is "actively linked with a wider network of indigenous organizations at the Peruvian, Latin American, and international levels" (p. 105).

of Education's Intercultural Bilingual Education (IBE) program, which is supported financially by the European Union. To participate in this educational program, members of the Harakmbut community are being trained in orthography and literature development through Inter-ethnic Association for the Development of the Peruvian Amazon, "an Amazon-wide indigenous umbrella organization" (p. 112). In addition to their educational development, the Harakmbut were also concerned about the security of their land rights. As a result of linkages that the community has with FENAMAD, which in turn has links with the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) in Copenhagen, funding was secured from DANIDA, the Danish International aid agency, for Harakmbut participation in what is called the "Territorial Consolidation and Sustainable Development in Madre de Dios" (p.112). Thus, this well-motivated indigenous group, with limited resources of its own, was able to begin fulfilling two of its own community goals as a result of the linkages it had developed both horizontally (with other local indigenous groups through FENAMAD) and vertically (with international donor agencies through regional and international support organizations, like IWGIA).

5. THE COMMUNITY PROGRAM IS LINKED WITH ON-GOING FORMAL, NON-FORMAL, AND INFORMAL LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Individuals and communities who have achieved their basic educational goals are likely to desire further learning. Some learners (e.g., children and youth) may want to move into the formal education system; others may want to enter non-formal education or vocational training programs; and still others may wish to continue learning on a more informal basis, through reading clubs or a community learning center.

Unfortunately, the track record for on-going education is not good. Tuladhar (1997), in a paper on educational opportunities in the non-formal sector in Nepal, describes the basic education programs to pursue further education or training. However, according to the author, the problem, even in the case of children's programs, is the lack of strong infrastructure that actually enables learners to continue their education.

Program planners in the Philippine and Papua New Guinea case studies above linked their communities' literacy-for-development programs with other educational opportunities so that learners could continue their education and/or training. Leaders of the Cotabato Manobo adult education program established linkages with the government Non-Formal Education and Health sectors. The Kaugel leaders linked their pre-primary mother tongue education efforts to the formal primary education system with the eventual outcome being that the former became an official part of the latter.

Similar linkages have been established in other programs and in other countries. Durie (1999) describes the local Maori NGOs that were established for the purpose of Maori language revitalization and maintenance and to enhance educational opportunities for Maori learners in New Zealand. The linkages to existing learning opportunities are quite clear:

The promotion and retention of *Te Reo me ona Tikanga* (language and culture) through both iwi⁷-based and state educational initiatives is a key component of the plan. In this latter respect, central government is increasingly aware of the determination of the iwi organizations to adopt a greater measure of control over the provision of appropriate education for their constituents, whether provided in a Runanga-based⁸ initiative or by local schools or Polytechnics. (p.76)

⁷ The Maori are the indigenous people of what is now referred to as Aotearora/ New Zealand, and the Maori term "iwi" refers to "tribes" or "nations" of Maori, the traditional Maori collectivity.

⁸ "Runanga" refers to a Maori "council"

Linkages like these presuppose a minority group goal of participation in the larger society, but with the proviso that such participation does not imply forfeiture of ethnic identity and language.

CONCLUSION

Education programs that truly promote holistic, people-centered development can be planned, implemented, evaluated, and maintained only with full participation of the people who are meant to benefit from them. Granted, promoting participation, especially for the kinds of programs described in this paper, is not easy; it is always much easier for the ‘experts’ to do things themselves. And it is always much harder to work as a group. In the short run, it might cost more to develop programs in multiple languages, serving multiple purposes. But in the long run, the social, economic, political, and cultural benefits should be worth the cost.

The benefits of this kind of program to the members of the local community—and by extension, the national community of which they are an integral part—are described in the following quotation from a parent in Papua New Guinea whose child was attending a local language pre-primary program similar to the one described in the Kaugel program above:

When children go to school, they go to an alien place. They leave their parents, they leave their gardens, they leave everything that is their way of life. They sit in a classroom and they learn things that have nothing to do with their own place. Later, because they have learned only other things, they reject their own.

They don’t want to dig *kaukau* [sweet potatoes], they say it’s dirty; they don’t want to help in their mother fetch water. They look down on those things. There are big changes in the children now. They don’t obey their parents; they become rascals. And this is because they have gone to school and left the things that are ours.

Now my child is in [local language] school. He is not leaving his place. He is learning in school about his customs, his way of life. Now he can write anything he wants to [in the local language]. Not just the things he can see, but things he thinks about, too. And he writes about his place. He writes about helping his mother carry water, about digging *kaukau*, about going to the garden. When he writes these things they become important to him. He is not only reading and writing about things outside, but learning through reading and writing to be proud of our way of life. When he is big, he will not reject us. It is important to teach our children to read and write, but it is more important to teach them to be proud of themselves, and of us. (Parent, Laitrao Village Tok Ples School, Buin, North Solomons Province, in Delpit & Kemelfield, 1985, pp. 29-30)

Literacy programs, whether for children, youth, or adults, should enable learners to write anything they want to, both the things they can see and the things they can think about. But do such programs automatically lead to “development”? As noted at the beginning of this paper, the answer to that question depends on who defines the term. Rogers (2001) describes a Freirean literacy project for women in Brazil in which the participants used their newfound literacy skills, not for ongoing consciousness-raising, politically active education, “but for reading fashion magazines and writing Christmas cards” (p. 26). Who decides if that outcome does or does not constitute “development” for that group of women?

Sustainable literacy-for-development depends on the genuine participation of the intended beneficiaries in planning and decision-making, both in regard to the program itself and in regard to the program’s intended outcomes. Whether these are adults, youth, or children, the educational

opportunities available to them will lead to development only to the degree that the learners' goals and aspirations—their “intentions” as Rogers calls them—become an integral part of the program and only as the infrastructures needed for the continuation of those educational opportunities are set in place.

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