



Position on HB 2188

31 August 2022 | Submitted to the House of Representatives Basic Education and Culture Committee

Suspension of the implementation of the Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) as medium of instruction in the Kindergarten to Grade 3 and that includes Filipino sign language used by individuals with pertinent disabilities counters government's commitment to provide and ensure learner-centered, culture-sensitive, quality, and inclusive education.

The Mother-Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education (MTB-MLE) is at the heart of inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning for all. It advocates making education systems more responsive to cultural and linguistic diversity and respects the rights of children and learners. The core value of institutionalizing MTB-MLE in Republic Act 10533 otherwise known as "Enhanced Basic Education Act of 2013" is a recognition that language plays a strategic role in shaping the formative years of learners.

All children have the right to quality education in a language they speak and understand. They learn when they can use what they already know to help them understand what is new. Forcing them to learn in an unfamiliar language creates an educational handicap that many cannot overcome. This is the situation faced by many children from non-dominant language communities when they enter the formal school system. Thus, in the MTB-MLE program, the regional or native language of the learners shall be used in kindergarten and the first three (3) years of elementary education instruction, teaching materials and assessment.

Implementation issues - teachers' training, availability of instructional materials and textbooks, and budget are educational deficits that the government has to resolve not only in the context of implementing MTB-MLE but in the entire gamut of our education system. The pre service outcome-based education must be embedded in the curriculum that contains local history, languages spoken, skills in multi-lingual education, and appropriate educational materials reflective of the local culture of peoples. This will pave the way in equipping and producing qualified teachers and in determining the quality of education.

Whatever flaws and limitations in the implementation of MTB-MLE must be addressed accordingly and seriously. Its suspension will further hold back progress and gains we have achieved so far, most especially in placing inclusive education at the center of the Education Agenda.

Our Recommendations:

1. Conduct a legislative inquiry on how the Department of Education is implementing the Mother Tongue Based-Multilingual Education to identify the strenghts and challenges and improve its execution;
2. Revisit the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA 10533 or the Enhanced Basic Education Act Of 2013 to determine the gaps and ways forward ; and
3. Gather existing researches or conduct a study on the implementation of Mother Tongue Based Multilingual Education that can be used as resources in knowledge management.

On Implementation:

1. Awareness-raising and mobilization for MTB MLE must be ongoing at all levels if the program is to be implemented successfully and sustained within the formal education system.
2. Development of curriculum and instructional materials must involve local stakeholders, especially local leaders and elders who have a mastery of local languages.
3. Teacher recruitment from the local language communities and training must be supported.
4. Monitoring and evaluation must be built into every part of the MTB-MLE program and use the results to strengthen and sustain it.
5. Cooperation and support from multiple agencies – government, universities, research institutes, NGOs and others – working with language communities to plan, implement, evaluate and support their program must be established to support strong and sustainable MTB-MLE programs. #####

*Envisioning a Philippine society where quality education is a basic human right;
where everyone has access to multi-cultural, gender-fair, liberating, lifelong education.*