An Evaluation of the Literacy and Basic Education (LABE)

Mother-Tongue Education (MTE) Project

UGANDA

Final Report

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List of Acronyms

AET – Africa Educational Trust

CAO – Chief Administrative Officer

CASAS – Centre for Advanced Studies of African Society

CCT – Coordinating Centre Tutor (teacher educator)

CDOs – Community Development Officers

CPD – Continuous Professional Development

DEO – District Education Officer

DIS – District Inspector of Schools

DLG – District and Local Government

EfA – Education for All

GoU – Government of Uganda

HLC – Home Learning Centre

HT – Head Teacher

IDPC – Internally Displaced People's Camps

LABE – Literacy and Adult Basic Education

LBs – Language Boards

LC5 – District Chairperson (most senior district government official)

LL – Local Languages

MLEN – Multi-Lingual Education Network

MoES – Ministry of Education and Sports

MoI – Medium of Instruction

MT – Mother Tongue

MTE – Mother-Tongue Education

NCDC – National Curriculum Development Centre

PE – Parent Educator

PO – Programme Officer

PTA – Parents and Teachers' Association

PTC – Primary Teachers' College

RTI – Research Triangle Institute

SHRP – School Health and Reading Programme

SIL – Summer Institute of Linguistics

LABE MTE Final Evaluation July – August 2013

SMC – School Management Committee/Council

UNATCOM – Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

UNESCO – United Nations Education, Social and Cultural Organisation

UPE – Universal primary education

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Kathleen Heugh and Mathias Mulumba

Executive Summary

This is the final evaluation of a four-year Mother-Tongue Education (MTE) project conducted by Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) in Uganda, supported by Comic Relief (UK) and Africa Educational Trust (AET). The project has been conducted in 240 schools in six districts (40 schools in each of Arua, Kakwa, Yumbe, Adjumani, Gulu and Amuru districts) located in the North Western and Northern regions of Uganda between 2009 and 2013. This is an area which has recently emerged from nearly 30 years of civil conflict and war. LABE's contribution has been to assist in the reconstruction of the area via an educational initiative which is aimed at supporting the implementation of the national Primary School Curriculum in the first three years of lower primary, Primary 1, 2 and 3. Until 2006 the curriculum had been delivered through English, even in lower primary. From 2007, the national education authorities, Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) have required the curriculum to be implemented through the use of the local language (mother tongue used by most people) of each district.

The following table provides a summary of the data collected between 5-19 July, reviewed in August, and analysed during September 2013.

Table 1: Summary of Data Collected for the MTE Project Evaluation

Summary of Primary Data Collected	Number
Interviews with Senior Officials in MoES, NCDC, UNESCO	7
Interviews with District Officials	26
Interviews with Language Board Members	17
Interviews with Centre Co-ordinating Tutors (CCTs)	8
Interviews with School Administrators, Teachers & Parent Educators	74
Interviews and consultations with LABE staff and LABE Board members	15
Meetings/consultations with AET staff	1
Total Number of Respondents(see Appendix 3)	**213**
School Visits	20
Classroom observations (lessons, joint sessions)	53
Home Learning Centre (HLC) visits	8
HLC learning observations (literacy, numeracy, & parent discussions)	12
Questionnaires – district stakeholders and MLEN members	25
Secondary Data Reviewed Financial statements 2009-2013; the Project Log-Frame (Appendix 5); Correspondence between NCDC, MoES and LABE in relation to collaborative engagement on MTE and national training of teachers to use the local languages in P1-3; Mid-Term Review; several LABE reports; several AET reports on capacity development; additional documentation provided by senior LABE staff including the Executive Director, Head of Programmes, Head of Finance, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. See list of References and Appendices.	

There is little doubt that the LABE MTE project has had significant success, has achieved most of its objectives, has exceeded some of the objectives, and its work has led to unexpected outcomes which are regarded as of particular importance to the participating communities in the six districts.

Key Achievements

The key achievements and challenges or risks related to the project between 2009 and 2013 are discussed in relation to the major objectives of the MTE Project below.

Improved learner achievement in literacy and numeracy

A key indicator of successful implementation of the thematic curriculum, which uses the local language as medium for lower primary learners in the six districts in which the MTE project is being conducted, has to do with enrolment. Overall there has been an improvement in enrolment of P1-3 learners between 2010 and 2013. The increase has been from 104,502 in the six districts to 141,733. This is an increased enrolment of 35.63% overall. The enrolment of girls during this period has increased by 38.7%. This is an extraordinary achievement.

The second indicator for success has been in relation to learner achievement. A baseline study of learner achievement was conducted in 2010 with annual follow-up assessments. Significant improvement in literacy and numeracy were achieved in 2011 and 2012 when the assessments were conducted in November-December. Owing to the imminent closure of the project in late 2013, these tests were administered in May-June so that the data could be analysed and reported before the project closure. However, these instruments were administered when only about one third of the year's work had been covered and there is a sharp decline in achievement compared with 2011 and 2012. The evaluators are satisfied that timing of the assessments has resulted in a negative anomaly and that the 2013 achievement data are not valid for comparative purposes. However, owing to a finding of the paucity of reading and learning materials in the schools, and high incidence of children without pencils and paper to use for reading, writing and numeracy tasks, the likelihood that students will derive the full benefit of the use of MTE or any direct intervention in the curriculum delivery is at serious risk.

Increased community and parental awareness of the value of local languages in education

Co-ordinated public awareness strategies, 'sensitisation', have been conducted in an on-going manner in each of the six districts since the inception of the project, particularly cohering around annual celebrations to mark UNESCO's International Mother Language Day. The ways in which the MTE project has involved parents (grandparents) and communities in school learning, through joint parent-child classes each week and through adult literacy classes are significant indicators of the success of this project. Of 20 722adults who are registered as participating in these classes, 12 698 are women and 8 024 are men. Growing out of the adult literacy and numeracy classes has been the establishment of community or village saving schemes. An unexpected, yet most significant development to emerge from the MTE project has been the establishment of 551 home learning centres (HLCs) attached to the 240 schools. These centres provide conveniently located spaces for adult learners as well as after school hours learning spaces of primary children. In several instances, they also provide an opportunity for the establishment of pre-school/kindergarten early childcare.

Initially reported ambivalence or resistance towards MTE in the six districts appears to have dissipated or was initially over-reported. Rather, there is evidence to suggest that there is acceptance of MTE or local language education.

Increased capacity of language boards

LABE has played a significant role in capacity development, orthographic development, and materials development training of five language boards, for Aringa, Kakwa, Madi, Lugbara and Acholi languages identified as the local languages in the six districts. The orthographies of two languages have been finalised, two are awaiting official finalisation by NCDC and the fifth has submitted its revised orthography to NCDC for acceptance. The language boards need further support in order to become independent and fully-fledged structures which have the capacity to take over the writing and translation of educational resources.

Production and use of sample reading materials

There is ample evidence of LABE's role in the development and printing of sets of story books in each of the five languages. The main challenge is that while these were only intended to be sample and supplementary materials, in the absence of other reading and learning materials for learners in P1-3, these are often the only reading texts for children and adults in the MTE project schools. Whereas LABE has produced approximately 1 book for each of 3 learners, the books have been divided between schools and the communities (either in story-book bags or later to the HLCs) thus the actual numbers available to learners in classrooms are not adequate for effective reading and writing. The paucity of reading materials results in children learning to recite stories off by heart rather than learning to read. A major challenge for the national system is how best to assist NCDC to resource (produce, print and distribute) sufficient reading materials for children in the system.

Production of children's magazines

LABE has produced children's magazines which contain learners' stories written in local languages, drawings and other artefacts, and these have been well-received by school children. Even if most children's work cannot be included in the magazines, the fact that some children's work is included offers encouragement to others. Not all of the volumes that were intended to be published were completed. Partly this is because of rising printing costs and a reallocation of expenditure on this item towards the anticipated costs of the teacher's guide, the *Pedagogy Handbook for Teaching in Local Language* (see below).

Teacher education

Each of the stakeholders consulted indicated the positive contribution of LABE towards the work of the Centre Co-ordinating Tutors (CCTs), involving capacity development in relation to MTE, evaluation and assessment, on-going support for teacher education, and in relation to the training and support of parent educators (PEs). The value of this work is acknowledged in the District and Local Government stakeholders (DLGs) and by NCDC and MoES. What has been learned from this work has informed LABE's contrition to the *Pedagogy Handbook for Teaching in Local Language*, in collaboration with NCDC, and which is due for publication in the last quarter of 2013. This publication, in conjunction with a national forum on teacher education to be convened by LABE at the end of 2013 extends LABE's work to a high level national platform. That LABE's work is so highly thought of at a national level is indicative of the quality of expertise which resides within the organisation.

Dissemination of experiences to policy makers

LABE staff have maintained a participatory and collaborative approach with district and national levels of government. LABE participates in the Multi-lingual Education Network (MLEN) as does

NCDC. Through this network, the lessons learned by all stakeholders are circulated and shared by a wide set of interested parties, including language associations, writers' guilds and language boards in other Ugandan districts. A mature working relationship with NCDC and MoES, which has resulted in the production of the *Pedagogy Handbook* is a strong indicator of the extent to which LABE's work is being disseminated amongst policy makers. The Minister of State for Primary Education made a particular point of emphasising the value which government places upon LABE's work during a meeting with the project evaluators in July 2013.

Significant challenges and risks

The main challenges and risks to the successful implementation of the MTE Project are more to do with the national and district level conditions than they are to do with LABE's work and delivery. The MTE Project sits within the national MoES and NCDC commitment to implement the Primary School Curriculum, and specifically the thematic component for Primary 1-3. LABE's interventions pave the way for the wider implementation across the Ugandan primary school system and demonstrate the advantages to community and broad stakeholder involvement in education. However, it is at the end of the day incumbent upon the state to provide adequate learning materials (reading /story-books and textbooks) for each child in the system and to ensure that each child has pencils and paper on which to write. While LABE's initiation and supply of sets of story-books and children's magazines have made a significant contribution, an NGO cannot take over the responsibility of the national education system in this regard. While LABE has made contributions to teacher education, the system of transferring teachers from one school to another has meant that the human resources have not remained constant within the project schools and it has been difficult for LABE to maintain stability within these schools. Teaching children in the language that they know best, is undoubtedly the best policy and approach, but it has to be well-resourced, and this is an issue for the state.

Recommendations

Extend timeframe, or initiate a second phase for the MTE Project

It is recommended that the MTE Project is extended at least for another four years or that a second four year phase of the project continues without a break in activities in each of the districts. Each of the relevant stakeholders at national, district and school community level have argued that a four year MTE project in this part of Uganda needs to be extended for at least another four years.

Consolidate objectives, possibly focussing on fewer objectives and fewer activities

It is recommended that a second phase of the MTE Project should include fewer objectives in order to permit a deepening and consolidation of areas in which LABE has the capacity to make the greatest impact. It would be advisable for LABE to focus on teacher education at the school, district and national levels as well as the capacity development of parent educators at community and school level.

Language Boards

It is strongly recommended that a national conference on orthographic development be convened. The purpose of such a conference or forum would be to guide agreements on consistency of theoretical and practical trajectories of orthographic development over the medium to long term.

Parent Educators and HLCs

It is recommended that LABE focus on continued support and further capacity development of parent educators to strengthen the home-school connections; and to build the internal capacity of the home learning centres to offer early childcare opportunities and micro-economic skills' development for adult learners.

Reading and learning materials production

It is recommended that LABE focus on transferring materials development activities to the language boards and NCDC as soon as possible. Alternatively, it would be recommended that LABE enter into partnerships with other agencies engaged in materials development, e.g. via MLEN.

Electronic resources in local languages for schools, language boards and the national system

It is recommended that each language board, in the short term, and each school in the medium term, develop capacity in information technology. The sustainability of development in each of these sets of stakeholders is reliant on this capability. At the national level, it is recommended that an open-access National Databank for Local Languages is established to increase opportunities to access learning and teaching materials at district and school level.

Relationship between community stakeholders and LABE

It is recommended that LABE ensure that communities have a clear understanding of the boundaries between LABE's responsibilities and contributions and those responsibilities and contributions expected of the community, the DLGs and national government stakeholders.

Language education policy monitoring and review

It is recommended that MoES and NCDC have an on-going language policy review process which is responsive to changes as these occur on the ground.

1. Introduction

The final evaluation of the four year Mother-Tongue Education (MTE) project conducted by Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) in Uganda, supported by Comic Relief (UK) and Africa Educational Trust (AET). LABE is an NGO that is highly regarded in Uganda for its contribution to women and girls' education. LABE initiated the MTE project in 2009 in order to address urgent educational needs of communities in the aftermath of nearly three decades of appalling civil conflict in North and North Western Uganda. The MTE project is specifically geared towards supporting the implementation of the national curriculum for lower primary school learners, particularly the use of the local language(s) as medium of instruction in the first three years of primary education, Primary 1-3 (P1-3). It was initially intended that the national curriculum would implement the use of the local language of learners as the medium of instruction in P1-4, with the P4 year being regarded as a year in which learners are prepared to transition into English medium, effectively learning through English only from P5 onwards. There have been various iterations of debates and decisions regarding the implementation of local language medium in primary education. At present, this is interpreted by most stakeholders as the use of local language medium of instruction for P1-3. The transition from local language medium to English medium during P4 and or by P5 falls outside of the scope of the MTE project and thus it falls outside of this evaluation.

The LABE MTE project is located within 40 schools in each of six districts in the West Nile region (Arua, Koboko, Yumbe, and Adjumani) and two districts in Northern Uganda (Gulu and Amuru). Subsequent to the establishment of the project, Amuru, a particularly large district, has been sub-divided into two districts, Amuru and Nwoya. For the purposes of this evaluation, Amuru and Nwoya are treated as if they are still one district because the project infrastructure was built around the conditions as they pertained in 2009.

The 240 schools (40 in each of six districts) and their communities are located in areas which have experienced between 15-30 years of civil conflict, including: armed insurgencies, gross human rights violations (mutilations, abductions, rape and genocide), since 1979. Communities have been fractured and suffered indescribable torment. Up to 1.8 million people were either forced to flee to neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and into the southern regions of Sudan, or they were obliged to relocate to Internally Displaced People's Camps (IDPCs) which removed them from their agricultural activities and decimated local economies. Schooling was largely disrupted and few of the current generation of parents went to school or developed skills in literacy and numeracy.

The LABE intervention has several purposes. The following list of priorities arises both from explicit LABE, AET and Comic Relief documentation, and also from a contextual analysis of educational needs in the northern part of Uganda. Firstly, this intervention has been intended to strengthen the restorative (post-conflict) provision of education and to strengthen the learning outcomes for primary school children in these districts. Secondly, this intervention has been knitted into and aligned with the national education policy of Uganda in relation to a number of imperatives. These include active participation in the UNESCO Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Education for All (EfA) which include Universal Primary Education (UPE) for all children. UPE, in turn, places emphasis on increased enrolment and retention, especially for the girl child. UNESCO's EfA framework includes an emphasis on the fundamental significance of 'quality' delivery and literacy education (UNESCO 2004, 2005). LABE's work dovetails closely with the EfA goals and the NGO has had a substantial track-record of working with women, girls' and family literacy and education (e.g.

Nyamugasira, Aanyu & Robinson 2005). Finally, this intervention is a significant contribution to the implementation of the national curriculum in the six northern districts, and particularly in relation to the introduction and use of local languages as the first language of literacy development. A cornerstone of this intervention has been the involvement and participation of parents and families in their children's education.

The Government of Uganda (GoU) prioritised UPE from 1996, and began attempting to implement this from 1998.Primary enrolment had increased in other sub-Saharan African countries in the two decades post-independence, i.e. between the 1960s and the 1980s, reaching approximately 79.5% by the late 1980s. However, Uganda's enrolment for primary had remained largely unchanged at approximately 50% during this period (Appleton 2001; Penny, Ward, Read & Bines 2008). Low general enrolment in primary, particularly for girls, had become a serious concern by the 1990s.The concerns of: gender parity in the enrolment and retention of girls in education; quality delivery, and ensuring strong foundations for literacy are fundamental to the UNESCO frameworks (UNESCO 2004, 2005; UNESCO-UIS 2005). LABE's work is characterised by close alignment with the EfA framework principles.

There is a considerable body of research which shows that children require strong foundations in literacy and numeracy in order to negotiate the school curriculum, to remain in school through primary, and to have access to and a chance of retention through secondary school. This is nowhere more important than in linguistically diverse contexts and in countries of Africa (e.g. Bamgbose 2000; Penny et al. 2008; Ouane and Glanz 2010, 2011). However, long periods of colonial rule have been followed by a perception that education is worthwhile only when delivered through one of the international languages of wider communication (usually English, French or Arabic in Africa). This perception, evident in other post-colonial contexts in South Asia (e.g. India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal) and South-East Asia (e.g. Indonesia, the Philippines, East Timor, Cambodia) often undermines the successful implementation of education which begins in the language best known by learners and their teachers (e.g. Coleman 2011). Informed community participation in language education policy is a key criterion for successful provision of education. So too is government ownership of reforms and implementation (Higgins & Rwanyange 2005). Successful education in complex settings, especially in remote and rural contexts, therefore requires effective articulation amongst community stakeholders and local government authorities. The extent to which the LABE MTE project is likely to leave a lasting imprint upon the stakeholders in the six districts depends upon the extent to which the communities and local government stakeholders participate in, perceive themselves to have some ownership over, and are engaged in collaborative and supportive mechanisms likely to strengthen and sustain empowering educational practices.

This project has been supported with development aid from Comic Relief (UK), and managed with strong capacity-building procedures by Africa Educational Trust (AET) .A mid-term review of the project was conducted in 2011, and a final review was scheduled for 2013, to be completed at the end of the project. This final review includes an evaluation of the project objectives, listed below, as well as project activities and outcomes:

- o To establish reliable baseline indicators from 60 schools in 6 districts against which planned future gains in children's literacy will be measured.
- o To increase community and parental awareness of the value and importance of educating children in their local languages.

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o To increase the capacity of 5 district language boards to work towards standardizing the local language orthography, grammar and vocabulary in the targeted districts.
o To support the production and use of sample children's educational materials in 5 languages (Acholi, Kakwa, Aringa, Madi, Lugbara) for use in primary classes 1, 2 and 3.
o To support children in 240 schools to practice MTE literacy skills by producing local children's magazines and picture story books.
o To work with CCTs and promote teaching using mother tongue in pre- service training for primary teachers.
o To disseminate the experiences from the targeted districts to education policy makers in other minority language communities.

(See also Appendix 1, and Appendix 5.)

This report begins with a brief discussion of relevant education policy documentation and a contextualisation of this study within the international literature and research on the use of local languages in education in developing and linguistically diverse contexts. This is followed by discussions of methodology used to collect and analyse the data, a discussion of the findings, and a set of recommendations.

2. Contextualising MTE and the use of Local Languages in Education

2.1. The History of the Language Policy in Education

The language question in Uganda, particularly as this relates to education, is complex (e.g. Penny et al. 2008). The complexity of the matter partly stems from the linguistic composition of Ugandan society. Three major language families namely Bantu, Nilotic and Central Sudanic are represented within the linguistic ecology of Uganda. In addition, English was introduced during colonial rule and is regarded as a second language for high level economic, political and educational matters. Owing to the mobility people from Europe and from within Africa, there are several other languages (including German, French, Arabic, Kiswahili) spoken by relatively small numbers of people as their 'first language/s', and sometimes by larger numbers of people where these are (second or additional) languages of wider communication.

In 1901, Stanislaus Mugwanya (the Chief Justice in the Government of Buganda) requested missionaries to start an English medium school. To the missionaries, this request meant offering an academic/theoretical education geared towards building the character of pupils. The Phelps-Stokes Commissions in West and East Africa during the 1920s, however, recommended the use of the mother tongue for the first few years of primary school across the continent. In regard to Uganda, the Commission found the missionary education too literary and therefore recommended vocational education in addition to an academic education. This was to be offered in a familiar language especially in early years of the learners' education. The de Bunsen Commission of 1952 also emphasised a familiar language if learners were to grasp concepts from the teaching-learning situation, and this chimed with Africa-wide recommendations in the 1953 UNESCO *Report on the Use of the Vernacular in Education*. The subsequent policies did not explicitly contextualise the issue of language in education until the Kajubi Report of 1989 (i.e. the Report of the Education Policy Review Commission of 1987-89). The recommendations from this Report were later adopted into the Government White Paper on Education of 1992. This document has become a guiding policy for mother-tongue education, also known as the use of the local language as medium in Uganda. A chapter on the language policy in the White Paper clearly stipulates that children from Primary One to Four (P1-4) (later revised to Primary Three/P3) should be taught in their mother tongue. From Primary Five (P5) onwards, the White Paper recommends that the medium of instruction should be English. Students in secondary school are expected to study English, an area language (the term used to denote a domestic regional language of wider communication in Uganda), and a local language (if different from the area language). The policy places emphasis on Kiswahili as a language of wider communication in East Africa (i.e. cross-border language of wider communication) and sets out an elaborate strategy to teach this language in schools and institutions.

Successive post-colonial governments, including the present one, have attempted to promote Kiswahili in the education system; however, this has been accompanied by controversy. According to one view, the socio-linguistic nature of Ugandan societies has proved a stumbling block to this initiative. In Uganda, although Kiswahili is the second official language, after English, it is seldom used in official settings. The 'area languages' (e.g. Luganda, Lugbara, Runyankore-Rukiga, Runyoro-Rutooro, Luo, Ateso/ Karamojong) serve useful communicative functions across different language communities. The proponents of one view argue that Kiswahili, therefore, has little functional value within Uganda. On the other hand, whereas there are very few (2330) native speakers of Kiswahili,

according to *Ethnologue* , up to 80% of rural communities, especially those living in greater proximity to neighbouring countries, have some knowledge of Kiswahili as one of the additional languages in their linguistic repertoires (http://www.ethnologue.com/country/UG/languages).While government appears to have given emphasis to Kiswahili at a national level, its emphasis on local languages in education has confused many parents. To date there have been insufficient resources to implement a policy which insists on the use of local language for the first three years of primary school. In the context of low retention and throughput to secondary, parents may believe that a local language policy may hinder learners' access to English (and or Kiswahili) and are thus likely to be distrustful of policy. This distrust is likely to be exacerbated in rural and remote areas in which local language is implemented in primary rather than in districts closer to the country's capital where pupils are more likely to have English medium education throughout or education in Luganda, a language of power. Muthwii (2002) suggests that many parents believe that the introduction of local language as medium in the national curriculum has been imposed for political rather than sociolinguistic and demographic reasons. The contested positions of those who wish to promote the use of Kiswahili and those who wish to promote the further development and use of indigenous languages has complicated the language situation in Uganda and casts a dark cloud on the language question (Pawlikova-Vilhanova, 1996).

2.2. Education and Curriculum Policy in Uganda

Before the introduction of formal education in Uganda, communities that came together to form Uganda in 1926 had had an informal curriculum tailored along gender roles and heavily entrenched in the cultures of the indigenous people. During the colonial period, an apparently elitist education was offered for the sons of chiefs and prominent persons; although in reality this was intended to prepare a cadre of clerical staff and low-ranking officials to resource the colonial administration. After independence, a new Primary Curriculum came into effect in 1967. This was largely academic in nature and intended to prepare pupils for secondary education (Muyanda-Mutebi, 1996). It was the Kajubi's Report of 1989 (discussed above) which proposed a vocational primary curriculum alongside the academic component. With the incorporation of many of the recommendations of the Kajubi Report in the Government White Paper on Education of 1992, the MoES set up a Curriculum Review Task Force chaired by Basil Kiwanuka in September, 1992. Although the new primary curriculum was completed by 1995, it was another several years before the curriculum was introduced into schools (between 2000 and 2002). Implementation difficulties were addressed in a further review, particularly in relation to what was considered to be an over-emphasis of subject-based curriculum for the lower primary (Primary 1-3/P1-3). The recommendations of the Curriculum Review Report in 2004 resulted in what has come to be known as the 'thematic curriculum' which gives prominence to the use of local language for the development of literacy and as medium of teaching and learning in lower primary. This new approach was piloted in several districts and then rolled out across the country in 2007 (see Ward, Penny & Read, 2006; and Penny et al. 2008).[1]

2.3.   International Research on Mother-Tongue, Bilingual and Multilingual Education

There are three sets of relevant international research which are addressed briefly below. Firstly, there is the literature on the relationship between mother-tongue education, also known as first

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[1]The authors thank Godfrey Sentumbwe and NCDC for clarifications regarding the history of the curriculum.

language (L1), home language and local language education, and literacy in multilingual contexts. Secondly, there is a body of literature which focuses on bilingual and multilingual education. Thirdly, there is a set of literature which examines the role of English in education, particularly where English is used in linguistically diverse settings as the target language of education. To begin with, it is important to distinguish between the literature written in the global north, where most school students continue to have mother tongue (L1) education for the duration of their educational experiences, and the literature which concerns education in the global south, where the majority of children who reach school are offered second or foreign language (L2 or FL) medium education. In countries of the global north, such as the UK and the USA, English is the de facto language spoken and used by the majority of citizens, with high visibility in print and other media; and it is clearly the language used in governance, the legal system and the mainstream economy. In the global south, in countries like India, Uganda and other former British colonies, English has high level significance in governance and the mainstream economy. However, it has limited functional or practical use for local rural and remote communities. In such countries, local languages have higher traction and functionality. In other words, the majority of the population speak and use local languages which are indigenous (or endogenous), whereas only a minority of people are able to communicate effectively through English. The status of English, owing to the colonial history and the last twenty years of globalisation which has been associated with the spread and use of English in the electronic media and information technology, has risen exponentially. These influences and changes have given rise to the belief that in order to be educated one needs to become proficient in English as quickly as possible (e.g. Coleman 2011). Inclusive methodologies introduced into schools in the UK, Europe and the USA, which accommodate early use of community (minority) languages go a long way towards addressing educational needs of the global north (Blackledge and Creese 2010). However, these methodologies are insufficient for the needs of communities of the global south where the concerns lie with the majority of school learners, not the numerical minority of pupils (Ouane and Glanz 2010, 2011; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh 2012).

The literature on the value of mother tongue/local language education from the global north tends to focus on the languages of (indigenous) minority communities, such as the Saami in Scandinavia, or Breton in France. It also includes the languages of migrant communities from South and South-East Asia, the Middle East and Africa in Europe or North America (e.g. Blackledge and Creese 2010). Discussions of mother tongue and multilingual education in these contexts are valuable, but they are not in themselves always adequate for the realities of children in the global south. The main reason being that education systems of the global north have not yet found ways to accommodate the language of the child's immediate community as a substantive medium of instruction unless this is the majority language of the country/nation state. The examples of systems which have accommodated the local languages of indigenous communities in both successful experimental and mainstream education are mostly found in Africa and South/South-East Asia (e.g. Ouane and Glanz 2010, 2011; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh 2012; Arthur Shoba and Chimbutane 2013; Sleeter, Upadhyay, Mishra and Kumar 2012; Benson and Kosonen 2013).

The main finding of the relevant contemporary research is that because education has been delivered mostly through an international language which is not commonly used in African countries, or at least not commonly used in rural and remote settings, most learners fall out (are 'pushed out' Mohanty 2012) of the formal school system before, or by, the end of primary education. Attrition

occurs largely because school pupils do not understand lessons and often teachers are not able to teach effectively in the international language. Of most significance to this study, most primary children do not learn to read and write well enough in the first three to four years of primary in order to cope with the demands of the curriculum from the fourth year onwards. A twenty-five country study of mother-tongue and bilingual education in sub-Saharan Africa (Alidou et al. 2006) and a system-wide study of the implementation of mother-tongue education across the eleven regions of Ethiopia from 1994 onwards (Heugh et al. 2007) show that learners need to have strong mother-tongue education support to the end of primary education. The longer learners have mother-tongue education, the stronger their literacy skills and the better their chances of reaching secondary school and remaining in school until the end of secondary (also reported in Ouane and Glanz 2012). This means continuing the teaching of reading, writing and academic literacy skills in the local language for a minimum of six years, while also ensuring good provision of the international language, first as a subject, then as a joint medium of instruction for as long as possible. There is evidence from Nigeria, South Africa and Ethiopia that learners, who are taught the international language as a subject by specialist teachers and with ample supply of reading materials, are likely to develop their first language and their second language well enough to make a complete switch at the end of six years of primary. Learners in poorly resourced contexts may only be able to learn enough of the international language to be able to make a complete switch after learning this language as a subject for up to eight years of formal education. There is also evidence to show that strong bilingual programmes which begin with at least three years of MTE plus good teaching of English, and the continued teaching of the local language at least to the end of primary, may also show positive learning outcomes for school pupils, especially if they are learning a third language simultaneously in the school system (Heugh 2013).

There are certain conditions which are necessary for successful learning through the local language and the eventual transition to English. The first is that parental and community support of children in education is fundamental. Parents need to be involved in the school, visit the school regularly and participate in school development programmes, and they need to be supportive of the language policy. The second is that teachers need to be trained sufficiently well to feel comfortable with the curriculum and also the language demands of the curriculum (i.e. to be able to use the medium of instruction, whether the local language or English or both, competently). The third is that there should be sufficient resources to assist the teachers and the learners. This means that learners need to have adequate access to reading materials in the language/s used in the classroom. Learners need to be able to take reading materials home and to be able to do homework tasks outside of the school hours. The fourth is that external conditions and stakeholders should be sympathetic to and encouraging of the use of the local language and a systematic resourcing of the primary school system. This means that there needs to be an enabling curriculum and language policy, an implementation plan which includes adequate resources to accomplish implementation, and that this plan needs to be accompanied by regular monitoring and evaluation. Lastly, there needs to be a consultative and participatory process which accommodates: top-down decisions of national government and those which emerge from the ground and the spaces between these. This means that macro-level factors (i.e. national education system levels); meso-level factors (i.e. regional or district level responsibility and engagement) and micro-level factors (community engagement and language planning from below) are significant (Bamgbose 1987, Alexander 1992, Ouane and Glanz 2010).

It needs to be emphasised that MTE needs to be delivered well, with adequate support from the system, adequate resources and adequate teacher education. Without these, MTE will not help children to learn, to develop adequate levels of reading, writing and numeracy, and will be able to develop adequate expertise in English (or another second language for education), and ultimately it will not result in improved retention and progression through the system. Poor implementation planning and delivery of MTE will result in poor outcomes for school pupils (see also Penny et al. 2008).

In reality, at least some of the necessary conditions for success are likely to be absent in most contexts, and this means that important stakeholders, whether at the local or community level or at other levels, often attempt to make the system work by using systems and approaches which are often localised, and these may have an important influence on success.

3. Methodology

The final evaluation of LABE's MTE project was conducted under the auspices of Africa Educational Trust (AET), acting on behalf of Comic Relief (UK), and LABE. Guidelines for the evaluation are included in the terms of reference (TOR) for the study (Appendix 1, slightly abridged).

Subsequent to a consultative meeting with LABE and AET staff, the lead evaluator with assistance from the co- evaluator developed a set of field instruments subsequent to negotiations with AET and LABE and meetings in early July 2013. The instruments to be used during the fieldwork part of the study (9 – 17 July) were primarily qualitative in nature. The first set of instruments were designed to be used in observing teaching and learning in primary school classrooms in 20 of the 240 project schools, and eight of the 551 home learning centres (HLCs) attached to the schools, and in which parents and children participate in various literacy and numeracy development activities (Appendix 6).Two criteria were used to select schools in each district. LABE's collection of baseline and other achievement data revealed three tiers of schools: those which are regarded as 'high' achieving, those that are 'middling' and those that are 'low' achieving. At least one school from the high and one from the low achieving categories were visited in each district. Mostly there was also one 'middling' level school visited, and in some cases a second high achieving school was visited. The second criterion was that as far as possible, schools which were beyond the urban limits were visited, and where possible, schools in fairly remote rural areas were selected (e.g. in Amuru, Nwoya and Adjumani). It was hoped that by making decisions about which schools to be visited in each district, with a day or two's prior notice, teachers and schools would not try 'to put on a show' for the researchers, and the evaluators requested that no special lesson preparation should occur. School visits were mostly organised during mornings in order to avoid arriving in classrooms where very young children (P1-3) might be tired. The visits also occurred during the Islamic month of fasting (Ramadan) which may have reduced the efficiency of some teachers, although the researchers were informed that young learners were not fasting.

The evaluators expanded the TOR for the data collection to include interviews with district government officials in each of the seven districts (the seventh district, Nwoya, has been established by dividing Amuru into two), and increased the number of schools visited from a 5% sample to an 8.3% sample. Several of the HLCs were connected to schools in which there were no school visits, thus the evaluation in fact included at least 10% of the school communities involved in the MTE project. Four out of five language boards were consulted, and CCTs in four out of six districts were interviewed.

A series of interview/focus group questions were designed for different stakeholders: school administration staff (head teachers/principals and deputy head teachers) and teachers (Appendix 7); district government officials, language board members and CCTs (Appendix 8); and parent educators and parents (Appendix 9). These data were triangulated with a questionnaire administered to a sample of respondents in each district (Appendix 4). The evaluators met with the LABE Financial Manager and the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager in order to check the degree to which the projected objectives and activities matched actual outputs (Appendix 5); and the degree to which the projected budget and actual expenditure have been aligned.

LABE staff prepared the logistical arrangements for travel, accommodation, and the setting up of meetings with stakeholders in each of the districts: Arua, Koboko, Yumbe, Adjumani, Gulu and

Amuru. The LABE Team Leader for West Nile and the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager together with the Programme Officer (PO) from each district facilitated arrangements with the stakeholders and schools selected upon arrival in each district. In each location the evaluation team split into two sub-teams in order to visit schools and home learning centres (HLCs). As far as logistically possible they interviewed and consulted district government officers and language board members together.

Interviews were conducted and consultations were held with LABE staff in the field and in the Kampala office. In Kampala, the evaluators were participant observers in a meeting of the Multilingual Education Network (MLEN) on 5 July and they were accompanied by a senior LABE staff member who has set up appointments to meet with senior officials within NCDC and MoES, including the Minister of State for Education and Sports (Primary Education) as well as the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary General of the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO on 18 July. The collection of primary data included the period between 5 and 18 July 2013. In summary, the instruments included: a classroom/teaching observation schedule, seven interview/focus group question schedules, two questionnaires, and semi-structured questions used with LABE staff and senior government stakeholders in Kampala.[2]

Table 1: Summary of Data Collected for the MTE Project Evaluation

Summary of Primary Data Collected	Number
Interviews with Senior Officials in MoES, NCDC, UNESCO	7
Interviews with District Officials	26
Interviews with Language Board Members	17
Interviews with Centre Co-ordinating Tutors (CCTs)	8
Interviews with School Administrators, Teachers & Parent Educators	74
Interviews and consultations with LABE staff and LABE Board members	15
Meetings/consultations with AET staff	1
Total Number of Respondents(see Appendix 3)	**213**
School Visits	20
Classroom observations (lessons, joint sessions)	53
Home Learning Centre (HLC) visits	8
HLC learning observations (literacy, numeracy, & parent discussions)	12
Questionnaires – district stakeholders and MLEN members	25
Secondary Data Reviewed Financial statements 2009-2013; the Project Log-Frame (Appendix 5); Correspondence between NCDC, MoES and LABE in relation to collaborative engagement on MTE and national training of teachers to use the local languages in P1-3; Mid-Term Review; several LABE reports; several AET reports on capacity development; additional documentation provided by senior LABE staff including the Executive Director, Head of Programmes, Head of Finance, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. See list of References and Appendices.	

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[2] At the request of senior officials in MoES and NCDC, the LABE Funding and Partnerships Manager provided a set of semi-structured questions, arising from the TOR, to the National Stakeholders ahead of the evaluators' meetings.

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Additional, secondary data, including several LABE reports (LABE 2010; 2011a, b; 2012; 2013), the Annual Financial Statements, and the Mid-Term Review (Harvey and Muhwana 2011) for this project have been included in the discussion of the findings. AET's contribution towards capacity building of the LABE staff has been considered in the evaluation. LABE staff provided their own evaluation of AET contributions during interviews and consultations, and via email correspondence. These data are discussed in relation to documentation provided by AET and in relation to a series of training workshops conducted by or on behalf of AET (AET 2011; 2012a, b, c) (see Section 6.4 below).

4. Findings

4.3. Schools and Home Learning Centres by District

More than 10% of the school communities involved in the LABE MTE project were visited and data were collected on site from these. Although there had been an attempt to provide as little warning as possible to each individual school ahead of the visits, the arrival of the evaluation teams was not unexpected. As is only natural, most schools did try to put on a show in that several lessons were observed where teachers were clearly trying their best and had prepared new lesson materials (on large newsprint) or had managed to have the learners arrive with samples of appropriate vegetation for science lessons to coincide with the arrival of the evaluator/s . At only one school, a particularly low achieving school, did it appear that no special effort had been made 'to put on a show'. When the team arrived at 9:20am, although children should have been in class, many upper primary children were outside of class, tidying up the school yard, as if the concept of 'time on task' was not of much concern to the school administrators. While several lessons observed did show signs of over use of new posters, for example strung across the classroom and preventing learners at the back from seeing the board, mostly, the lessons appeared to be a genuine reflection of actual classroom practice. A striking feature of all schools visited is that in these districts, while the classroom buildings are shabby and in need of a good paint and some patching of crumbling cement floors and plastered walls, the buildings are strong, made of brick and plaster and adequate for successful learning. In most schools that were visited learners do have a seat and a desk to work from – even if the conditions are crowded with up to 180 children in some P1 classes and even 150 children in P3 classes. However, one of the evaluators came across schools without adequate seating. The most important classroom resource is the 'chalkboard' (or 'blackboard'). In most cases, the teachers made excellent use of the chalkboard as a space upon which to introduce learners to written text and as a space for learners to contribute written answers to questions. Although this resource may be regarded as old fashioned in the global north, it is invaluable, inexpensive and extraordinarily efficient in poor contexts of the global south. Other classroom resources, such as reading materials (story books and text books) were present in each classroom, but in such small numbers in comparison with the numbers of children who would have to share them, that the inadequacy of supply is a major concern. LABE produced story books were found in each school and HLC visited, as were copies of literacy and numeracy charts/posters (although these were invariably well-worn). A serious concern is that not all children have pens or pencils and exercise books in which to write during the school day. P1 and P2 learners are least likely to have sufficient stationery to go around. Parents are responsible for supplying stationery, and many are simply too poor to do so.

In general, the evaluators found that teachers were enthusiastic and provided many opportunities for the learners to engage in a variety of reading and writing tasks in each lesson. The data collected

from the school visits is presented below per district. Where exercise books are in evidence, they are clearly used frequently. This indicates that teachers understand the importance of practising writing and that learners have frequent and regular opportunities for this activity. It needs to be mentioned that in P1-3 classes, most of the writing is at word level, and possibly not enough at sentence level. P3 learners need to become used to writing short paragraphs, and these were not frequently noted in any of the districts.

4.3.1. Arua

Visits were made to four primary schools and two home learning centres (HLCs), each attached to one of the primary schools in Arua District.

Interviews/Discussions with School Administrators and Teachers

School administrators indicate that parents are willing to come to the school to participate in joint learning sessions with their children and they participate in adult literacy classes either at the school or in the home learning centres (HLCs). Communication with parents is usually via spoken messages sent home with school children; however, the parent educators (PEs) play a significant role in mobilising parents and acting as a go-between school and community. The language used in this district for MTE is Lugbara. The schools have received direct support from LABE in the form of MTE training, monitoring and assessment training, story books, posters and children's magazines. Indirectly there has been assistance in the form of orthographic interventions with the Lugbara Language Board and through the training and support of CCTs in MTE.

The school administrations indicate, however, that while the training which is seen to support the implementation of the use of local language in the Thematic Curriculum, especially for P1-3, most teachers do not feel that they are confident in their use of Lugbara, and a frequent refrain is that teachers need more 'refresher' courses. This is particularly an issue where the system of teacher transfers often results in a teacher who has been trained to use MTE is transferred to another school and this depletes the trained human resources of the MTE school. (This matter became a regular theme in each of the other districts in which data were collected.) In one of the schools visited in this district, staff claimed that only the HT and two other teachers were actually able to teach through Lugbara, which poses a challenge for the school in terms of meeting the requirements of the thematic curriculum for P1-3. In one school at least one-third of the teachers claim that they are not speakers of Lugbara, and that this may complicate matters where Lugbara is required.

In terms of what teachers need to know in Lugbara, the consensus appears to be that teachers need more assistance in developing their own reading and writing in Lugbara, greater familiarity with proverbs and tongue twisters, greater familiarity with the Lugbara spelling system, and how to make 'interesting' learning materials for the classroom.

In general, the teaching staff believe that MTE has resulted in increased enrolments and retention in primary school (see Tables 2 & 3 below, Section 8).Staff report that more girls enrol in lower primary than boys, however they do drop out during adolescence because of early marriage or because the girls decide to go into 'petty marketing' (i.e. need to become financially independent) whereas boys leave school early because they focus on getting a motor-bike (boda-boda) which they will use for informal transportation and income generation.

Teachers are generally are happy with the progress of learners in terms of their reading proficiency, suggesting that at P3, learners are able to read sentences independently, and most are making progress with their writing. Some teachers suggested that Lugbara should continue to be taught as a subject to P7 so that learners can continue to develop their reading and writing skills in their local language. However, the pressure of the school exit exams being conducted through English in P7 makes teachers uneasy about using Lugbara beyond P3. Teachers report that although LABE has provided readers, children's magazines and posters, the supply of learning materials from the District Education office and or NCDC is not sufficient for the needs of schools.

Issues which may be of particular concern in Arua District include the lingering aftermath of civil conflict. Many people fled to DRC or Sudan during the insurgency and upon their return, do not necessarily feel that they identify with Lugbara or Lugbara only. Many, for example speak Kakwa and this means that there is a linguistic mismatch between teachers and the language identified as the local language. A second issue is that Arua has become a trading centre with diverse communities and this diversity may account for some of the resistance to the use of Lugbara as the medium of instruction from parents, and it is claimed that many parents would prefer English as medium throughout primary school. Teachers claim that many people in the communities are multilingual, speaking Kiswahili, Arabic, Nubi and Kakwa, owing to migration to DRC and Sudan during the period of armed conflict. Given that Lugbara is a majority language, learners do pick up Lugbara even if it is not their home language. Although one of the HTs claimed that learners were ready to switch to English by P4, teachers at the same school say that they do not think that using Lugbara as medium for P1-3 is sufficient. Learners are not ready to switch to English medium in P4 and many may only be ready by some point between P5 and P7. Teachers say that they use bilingual pedagogical practices, i.e. they use both Lugbara and English when teaching learners in P4 and above. Teachers confirm that they have valued LABE's provision of training and request for regular and on-going 'refresher' courses in MTE and related pedagogical practices to implement the thematic curriculum. There is a consensus that teachers are concerned if the MTE project were to come to an end by the end of 2013 that they will be left vulnerable. They requested that the following message be included in this report:

> Can you give a blessing to LABE for the work that has been done and ask them to renew the project because it has been good for us? (Parent Educator).

School observations- Lugbara Language

As is the case in all districts, school buildings are shabby, but strongly built of brick; walls are plastered and floors are usually cemented. They are therefore strong and serviceable. Learners do have wooden benches to sit on and long wooden desks. Most learners in P1-3 do not have readers or any obvious textbook. Some, but not all learners have exercise books and either a pencil or pen. Reading and writing resources are therefore minimal, and this situation is similar in each school visited in the six districts. The most significant classroom resource is the chalkboard, but even then, chalk is not always readily available, according to teachers. P1 classes are typically mainly oral in format. Very little writing is undertaken by learners, and even when required to write, many pupils simply do not have a pencil/pen and exercise book. Teachers tend to vary the tasks every few minutes in order to ensure learner participation, and a typical response is clapping to affirm the correct student responses in class. Song and movement are integrated into most lessons. P2 classes

tend to have more emphasis on reading and writing and in one P2 class, pupils actually had up to five exercise books (including for Religion, General work, Lugbara literacy, Numeracy). Some of the books were already completed, indicating regular use of writing exercises. P1 and P2 classes usually have posters which include numerals, the alphabet and lists of common words in both Lugbara and English, and many posters are hand-made. In several classes, student work is also displayed on walls or on string stretched across between two sides of the class. A P3 science class was observed, with local plant samples having been brought into the class for use by the learners. The purpose of the lesson was to teach and learn the names of parts of the plants, and to learn how to read and write these.

Joint parent-child classes were observed for each of P1-P3. In each case, while some parents were in class from the beginning of class, others drifted in during the class. Parents include mothers, fathers, and grandparents, and they try to sit next to their own child/grandchild. Often babies and younger children accompany the parents. Joint classes are co-facilitated by the class teacher and a parent educator (PE). Parents are encouraged to learn alongside the child learner, helping where possible and also to participate in offering answers to questions from the teacher. Some teachers specifically ask parents to participate in parts of the class and the children in other parts of the class – taking turns. Just as children are rewarded with clapping and often chorused praise, so too are parents if they provide appropriate responses. Teachers and PEs report that children want to please their parents, and that the parents' presence in class increases student motivation.

The research team also visited P4 classes in order to monitor whether or not teachers and learners were able to transition from the local language to English and also to collect data on the extent to which learners are writing in exercise books and the nature of texts that they are able to generate. It was found that most of the teachers are able to maintain the teaching-learning process in English although learner participation in the lesson was relatively low. Learners had exercise books and there was evidence of written material in the books. Most of the textbooks cited in classes belonged to the teacher, and in very few classes did the researchers find learners with textbooks.

Home Learning Centre visits

Visits to HLC centres included observation of a children's after school class and a meeting with parents. In the children's class the PE worked with children of all ages to further their reading skills. Parents report that they support their children to attend school by buying school uniforms and stationery and by giving their children breakfast before sending them to school. LABE's original system of providing story bags with story books to several homes in each community was eventually modified by the communities themselves. The communities in this district, as in the others, decided to establish home learning centres (HLCs), so that learners could go to these and use them at night and over weekends in order to do homework and study. Initially, a parent or parent educator (PE) would make space for the HLC in his/her home. As the idea of the HLC has taken root so too has the nature of the space, so that in some communities, a dedicated house has been set aside for the HLC or especially constructed for this purpose. Learning materials, posters, *papier-mâché* or clay learning aids and other resources are kept in these spaces. However, classes conducted during daytime and in good weather are usually held outside under the shade of a large mango tree.

> Some of the older parents indicate that they really appreciate the adult literacy classes because:

> Some time back I could not write, now I can (Grandmother).
>
> It has improved. I can write to relatives – back and forth…. (Young mother).
>
> Now LABE has come with home learning centres and made it easy for children to learn mother tongue (Grandmother).
>
> Is it possible to have a teacher who can teach English and Lugbara together?
>
> We would like to have a proper centre? This is only a room (Young mother).

One of the HLC's was housed in a relatively big room where about 30 parents/children could sit comfortably and learn. The structure was fully built with bricks and roofed with iron sheets. However, by the time the researchers visited this centre, the number of parents and children had increased to more than 60. The researchers learnt that one of the PEs had surrendered this room to the community to be utilised as a HLC. This showed the extent to which the community had embraced MTE.

A complaint in this district, and repeated in the other districts is that the PEs do not have sufficient resource materials (manila paper for posters and other stationery) and the learners do not have enough of the LABE provided story books. Solar panels sourced by LABE via another intervention and used to provide light for school and adult learners have been very helpful and changed people's lives, however, some of these are no longer functioning well. Parents had a long list of requests for resources and additional skills enhancement projects. Some parents indicate that they do not require literacy classes and would find self-help and income generating projects (e.g. craft-work) more helpful. Many of the parents in this community are multilingual, having had to flee during the armed conflict, and having learned KiSwahili, Kakwa, Lingala, Arabic and Nubi. They claim that in Arua District, they need to have proficiency in English, Kiswahili and Lugbara in order to ensure that they are able to communicate with people in key local government offices and in order to receive adequate services.

4.3.2. Koboko

Visits were made to four primary schools and a home learning centre, attached to one of the primary schools, and providing early childcare for pre-school / kindergarten children in Koboko District.

Interviews/Discussions with School Administrators and Teachers

At least one of the head teachers (HTs) interviewed is exemplary. The HT works closely with teachers, is obviously highly organised, involves parents in building houses for teachers, and has facilitated excellent provision for early childcare in the village adjacent to the school. The PE in charge of the pre-school children in the HLC is herself a trained teacher and is providing excellent early childcare education for the young children of the village. This frees up the parents to continue with tending to planting and harvesting.

The HT indicates that one of the difficulties faced is that although Universal Primary Education (UPE) funding had been used to purchase exercise books and stationery for learners in the past, lack of

resources now means that parents are responsible for these resources and not all are able to afford these for children, especially in P1-3.

LABE's contribution is noted for training and support of teachers for MTE and monitoring and assessment of MTE. The CCTs do also provide training. LABE has provided story books and school pupils have been involved in producing stories for the children's magazines. School management believe that LABE's contribution has been significant, and together with the enthusiasm and commitment of at least one principal, MTE is being implemented successfully.

> What LABE has done for us is that MTE has become a culture for us. We will continue (HT).

In other schools, head teachers attested to the valuable support LABE has extended to their schools. This support is in form of training P1-3 in MTE, providing supplementary readers, and involving parents in their children's education.

School observations- Kakwa Language

Primary classes, P1-4 were visited and observed in Koboko. Two P3 joint parent-children sessions were observed and other classes observed included: two P1, P2, P4; and one P3 class. In the joint sessions it was clear that there was an interesting dynamic in which parents and children were playfully competing with one another and parents were also playing a useful role in helping to maintain classroom discipline amongst the children closest to them in the classroom. In a typical joint parent-children class, the parent educator (PE) assists the teacher by using slates with vocabulary items to refresh the memory of the learners while the teacher writes on the board. Approximately 20 parents try to sit as close as possible to their own child (grandchild) in a class of 180 learners. Several babies join the class with their mothers, and some parents are clearly grandparents. There is one book for every three to four learners. The teacher is able to vary reading and writing tasks, using the chalkboard for lists of vocabulary items. Parents and children read the items aloud, go up to the board and write individual words on the board, the teacher provides gapped exercises, and learners complete these in their exercise books (except where some children do not have exercise books or other stationery for this purpose). All learners (adult and children) read from the shared LABE story books. A register of attendance for joint sessions is shown to the researchers – this register was kept up to date until the end of 2012, but there is no room for further entries and the PE does not yet have a new register to keep track of records.

In another joint parent-P3 class of learners, the topic is domestic and wild birds. This allows parents to contribute their knowledge of birds (names, habits and habitats) to the class. The relationship between local knowledge and school learning is evident in signs that both parents and learners appear subdued when referring to a falcon, a bird associated with death according to local custom. Individual and whole class reading exercises take place – progressing from individual items (names of birds) to whole sentences written on the board. The teacher and PE have prepared posters, and strips of sentences which the learners have to rearrange into chronological sequences. On the walls of the classroom there are posters in Kakwa and English and bilingual Kakwa-English. As in other schools, there is a shortage of readers, exercise books, pens and pencils. This means that reading and writing for many children are activities which are mostly connected with text on the chalkboard.

Numeracy classes observed involved counting, addition and subtraction. All arithmetic is conducted entirely in Kakwa. Learners appear enthusiastic and want to show that they can do the problems, signalling their wish to go up to the chalkboard in order to have an opportunity to demonstrate to the class that they can do the problems.

A very large P1 class of approximately 300 learners with two (three for part of the lesson) teachers was held under a large tree where it was much cooler and more pleasant for the children. Despite the number of learners, and despite the presence of a researcher and a LABE staff member, it was surprising to see how many children were engaged in the class activities which were varied and interesting. The class observed was a literacy class, involved letters of the alphabet, story-telling (story about a lizard and a frog). A very talented teacher found innovative ways to make the lesson fun by teasing children and he is clearly an expert story-teller. The teachers took it in turns to conduct part of the class while the other teacher kept control at the back of the group. The children were given physical exercises to do from time to time (pointing to parts of the body), getting up and sitting down, singing, and responding to questions, and predicting the outcome of the stories. All of the activities were conducted entirely in Kakwa.

Classrooms tend to be over-crowded, but there are benches to sit on and to use as desks. The learners simply squeeze into the available space. As was found in most districts, the classrooms are old with peeling paint, chipped cement flooring and grubby, but sufficiently robust for useful teaching and learning. The significance of the chalkboard as the primary teaching and learning resource cannot be sufficiently emphasised.

Home Learning Centre visits

Provision for infants early-childcare occurs in one of the HLCs visited. As mentioned above the early childcare teacher is a fully qualified primary teacher who is excellent. Her only remuneration is through LABE's support of PEs which is minimal. There are two other PEs who assist the teacher and the children in this HLC receive excellent early literacy and early numeracy tuition, story-telling, educational games which develop motor-skills and memory. A portable easel with chalkboard is used extensively as are small hand-made posters with labels and which are hung from branches of a large tree under which the class is held. Two older children described by the teachers as 'mentally confused' are allowed to participate in this class and learning activities, and these children move freely between the primary school and the HLC. In each setting their presence is accepted as part of the regular daily teaching and learning rhythm of this community.

The researchers noted that HLCs had almost similar characteristics. The seating arrangement in the HLCs was quite different from those in school classrooms. In most of the HLCs, learners sat in the compound under a huge tree which provides shade during the teaching-learning situation. In one of the parent-children sessions in a HLC, the researchers noted that parents sat on one side of the 'class' and children occupied another side. Although they sat differently, their involvement in the teaching-learning situation was unhindered by the seating arrangement. As noted above, they all competed to respond to the teacher's questions and comments. It was also observed that during the teaching-learning process both parents and children 'accept to be learners' and whenever a parent or child gives a wrong answer, another would chip in to provide a correct one without any feeling of shame or embarrassment. This is quite a unique learning situation.

4.3.3. Yumbe

Interviews/Discussions with School Administrators and Teachers

The schools communicate with parents by sending spoken messages via the learners. Parents are involved in school activities through PTA meetings and through the joint parent-learner sessions established with the assistance of LABE. Many children have Aringa and some Arabic (for faith-based reasons) in this district. Although the MTE project focusses on local language instruction from P1-3, schools continue to use the local language for much of P4 (at least in terms of explaining difficult concepts to learners) and even into P5. The book-child ratio is 1:5 (but can decline to 1:10). Material resources are scarce although LABE has contributed story books, posters, children's magazines and other learning resources. School administrators and teachers agree that teachers need further and on-going refresher courses. While the District Education Office, NCDC, 'Here is Life' (an indigenous community and faith- based organisation in Yumbe) the CCTs and LABE have been providing training and teacher support, this needs to continue. Several aspects of the MTE programme are working well and children are making progress more rapidly than was the case previously. In particular, parental involvement in the joint sessions and Home Learning Centres in the villages seem to have had a positive impact on student achievement. Interestingly, some teachers suggest that since the MTE programme has been in place, learners' achievement in English has improved. Teachers are concerned that Aringa is not being taught officially as a subject from P4 onwards and believe that parents would support the extended teaching of Aringa because children would be able to assist their parents in letter writing and translation of letters.

There are constraints which have to do with the rhythms of rural life and the need to have children assist with planting, harvesting and caring for animals. At times children are kept out of school to scare animals away from ripening crops. Each of these activities could keep children away from school for one to two weeks (possibly 6-8 weeks a year). The few textbooks which are in the schools are usually kept for safekeeping in a storeroom close to the HT's office; and schools are short of footballs and netballs. A particular concern among teachers is the practice of teacher transfers. This has implications for a school in which teachers have participated in MTE teacher development programmes which add capacity to a particular school, and then one or more of these teachers are transferred to another school thus undermining the progress of MTE in schools subjected to transfers. In addition, some teachers are not natives of the area and therefore find it difficult to use Aringa in infant (P1-3) classes.

School observations- Aringa Language

Observations of P1 and P3 classes revealed appropriate language and content teaching methodologies in the local language, Aringa. Teachers used the question-answer technique which elicited learners' responses. Use of local environmental materials (including plants, i.e. a science/biology class) were innovative, authentic and of immediate value. Learner involvement in the lesson is fairly high, and teachers employed a variety of teaching aids. Parent involvement in joint sessions revealed some parent-child negotiations over answers to questions. P1 and P3 teachers appear to be particularly talented and well-prepared for MTE. Some classes had parent educators (PEs) who normally assisted teachers during the teaching-learning process. PEs supervised pupils' work and were instrumental in classroom management. In Yumbe, the classroom structures met the minimum standards whereby the building materials consisted of bricks and cement, and the

classrooms were spacious with desks for each learner to sit comfortably. The walls had charts written in both Aringa and English.

Home Learning Centre visits

A visit to a HLC with a group of parent educators revealed that communities in this area are often multilingual (one particular group of parent educators spoke Aringa, Kakwa, Madi, Arabic, Luganda and English). This group was well-informed about MTE, the value of local language in education in the home, in offering home-school linkages, and in primary school. The PEs believe that Kiswahili is becoming increasingly important in the West Nile and Northern parts of Uganda – particularly for business-related purposes. There is a significant proportion of people practising Islamic faith in this district and one of the reasons people volunteer to be PEs is because they believe that:

> Because in our Koran … we will be rewarded…. Also, because I am a teacher, people respect me when I am teaching. And later they might help me (Parent Educator).

LABE has provided significant support to the community in terms of training PEs to develop schemes of work and lesson plans. LABE has also supported the development and finalisation of the Aringa orthography as well as a spelling and writing guide. PEs would like to have more teacher development and would attend any that might be offered by LABE. There is a concern that were the MTE project to end at this point that the educational stakeholders, including teachers and PEs, do not yet have sufficient capacity to continue. They 'beg' LABE to continue, referring to progress which they fear will cease if LABE's role were to terminate in the near future.

> For years when there were the wars, no-one could read and write. Now because of the support of LABE, parents can read and write, and check their children's books.

To illustrate what has happened to people in the community, one of the PEs said:

> My teacher training was in progress but the war [1979-1986 war followed by rebel insurgencies] interrupted my training. I had to flee to Sudan I lost my life and I am jobless (Parent Educator).

The responses received from the second HLC were similar to those given above.

4.3.4. Adjumani
Interviews/Discussions with School Administrators and Teachers

School administrators are supportive of the MTE programme and of LABE's contributions to the schools in this district. Most children, parents and teachers are Madi speakers although there are also some speakers of Lugbara in the community. There has been an improvement of communication with parents and their involvement in the schools has increased owing to the MTE intervention in the school. Communication from the schools to the parents is usually by word of mouth unless in relation to meetings of the School Management Council (SMC) or the PTA, in which case a letter is written. LABE has assisted teachers to understand the thematic curriculum, and to establish HLCs with solar lights and these facilities are jointly used by parents and school children in the evenings and over weekends. School Administrators are concerned about the lack of resources, and believe that: each class should have a Madi dictionary, a copy of the official orthography of

Madi, an increase in the number of readers; that schools need to have a computer; and that there needs to be an adequate supply of stationery. In one example of problems with supplies of learning materials, a school was sent Lugbara readers instead of Madi readers by MoES in 2012.There also needs to be regular refresher courses for teachers and on-going training for P1-3 teachers in MTE because regular transferring of teachers from one school to another often leaves schools without teachers trained to implement MTE.

Teachers interviewed claim that learners are learning to read and write more quickly in the local language than previously in English from P1 onwards. Teachers believe that parents are coming to the school because they know that they can use the local language and are not afraid that they would be expected to use English. There is a sense that MTE has resulted in improved enrolment and retention. The transition to English in P4 is regarded as difficult and teachers would prefer this to begin in P5, but they recognise the downward pressure of the exit examinations in P7 which are in English. A significant problem is the shortage of textbooks and readers. Learners in P4-7 have an average of one book to three learners. LABE is commended for its contribution to teacher development, provision of readers, other teaching materials and children's magazines. Not all children have pens/pencils and exercise books owing to poverty or parental 'neglect' of this issue. Teachers believe that MoES or NCDC needs to provide on-going teacher development in the form of 'refresher' courses and more substantial supplies of learning materials (textbooks etc.).

School observations- Madi Language

Joint parent-learner sessions were observed. Class sessions from P1-3 were conducted in Madi. Most of the teachers communicated effectively in Madi, and learners seemed to follow each step during the teaching learning situation. Teachers also laboured to use teaching aids in the teaching process. The majority of teachers employed learner-centred methods which encouraged learners to participate in the lesson. Both children and parents are invited to read and write on the chalkboard. When children write on the board, parents become animated. The parents who join the class tend to sit near their own children and help to keep order amongst their own and other children in close proximity. This helps the teacher with classroom management. Parents also appear to become involved with providing feedback on their children's reading.

Home Learning Centre visits

Visits to HLCs included observing parent literacy classes and discussion/focus group interviews with parents and parent educators. Parents indicated that the main reason for their participation in literacy classes was to ensure that they could support their children's education. The following are excerpts from parents' comments:

> When we go home we will read to the children.

> When we go home we will tell the children we should sit together and learn.

> We should tell the children not to stop learning. They need to know A-E-I-O-U!

> With this learning we can follow the children's learning and know if they are passing or failing.

Parents expressed appreciation for the support LABE has extended to their community in form of establishing HLCs and training people (PEs) to manage and facilitate learning.

4.3.5. Gulu

Interviews/Discussions with School Administrators and Teachers

The head teacher (HT) and teachers of a particularly low achieving (poor) school in Gulu indicate that MTE appears to be contributing towards improved learning outcomes for learners. However, learners are not ready to make the transition to English in P4. Some teachers believe that the learners are ready by P5 or P6, but other teachers say that learners appear to be able to read but this is still without meaning in P5 and P6, when this takes place in English. It is necessary for teachers to use code-switching between Acholi and English in order to ensure that learners can understand. All teachers and learners in the school are reported to be speakers of Acholi.

Teachers say that they know that before independence (i.e. 1962) children were taught in Acholi for the first few years of primary before the transition to English, and some teachers admit to having been taught through the medium of Acholi. The HT believes that Acholi should continue as a subject to the end of P7. LABE has provided welcome support to the school; however, the teachers indicate that they feel that they need to have on-going 'refresher courses' in MTE and in the new curriculum. They would like these to be at the school since access to the Primary Teachers' Colleges (PTCs) is difficult.

The teachers indicate that in addition to continuing professional development (CPD), the school requires a more regular and ample supply of textbooks, equipment to support learners sporting skills (footballs and netballs), and educational games for younger children (puzzles, charts, cards).

Enrolment, retention and access present issues for this school. Children enrol in Term 1, but when the rainy season comes, many cannot reach school because they have to walk between 4 and 10 kms, the paths are bushy and not safe for small children.

School observations- Acholi

Lessons are supposed to begin at 9:00am, however in a low-achieving school, several learners were involved in tidying the school yard until 9:20am. The classrooms are particular*ly shabby and dusty and there are insufficient desks for the children in the lower primary. The* quality of teaching in this school was uneven: some excellent teaching in two early primary classes and very weak teaching in one class. Enrolment in this class (P2) was low; few learners had exercise books; and learners were restless through the lesson. Teacher motivation appeared very low. The P1 and P3 teachers were competent and enthusiastic; they varied the activities during the lesson and the learners in their classes appear to be making significant progress. The amount of written work (literacy and numeracy) in the exercise books of P3 learners was impressive. A P4 class was observed, even though this was in English rather than Acholi, in order to see whether or not the learners seemed to manage the transition to English medium. The P4 learners were clearly lacking textbooks and the teacher was obliged to write out material for purposes of reading in English on the chalkboard. Pupils appeared to be able to read (or at least sound out the words on the board) and to complete written exercises in the workbooks. Again, the frequency and amount of written work in the exercise books of learners in this class was impressive. In the high achieving school, the teachers were able to

sustain communication in Acholi and the learners' participation was generally high. P1 had more than 250 learners distributed across two streams. All learners were seated on the dusty floor; which seemed to be uncomfortable especially when writing down notes. The only furniture was the table and chair that belonged to the teacher. All enrolments in other classes were equally high. In P2, the teacher had 22 readers which she distributed to learners. However, the books were too few and the majority did not get an opportunity to follow the text in the book. The reading skill of learners who read out loudly was fairly good, and the class showed enthusiasm to learn.

4.3.6. Amuru and Nwoya

Amuru, a particularly large district has recently been subdivided into Amuru and Nwoya. Since the MTE project was established when this was a single district, the data from these districts are treated together here.

Interviews/Discussions with School Administrators and Teachers

The head teacher of a rural school indicates that all teachers and learners speak Acholi in the school. LABE has apparently played a significant and supportive role in the school in terms of supporting teacher development, provision of reading materials, charts, numeracy materials etc. The main challenges facing the school are that there is insufficient funding from Kampala. This affects textbook provision and on-going teacher development and support for the implementation of the thematic curriculum, including the local language component. Distances between schools and the teacher education colleges is an issue in this district. While the HT supports the use of the local language, there has been some low level resistance from teachers and some parents, although this is beginning to dissipate. Some parents and teachers now recall that they used to have access to the Bible as translated into Acholi (Luo) prior to the insurgency, and this has encouraged teachers to support MTE. Parents do support and participate in the joint parent-learner sessions on a weekly basis. However, it is difficult for them to do this always on account of other responsibilities. Grandparents wishing to learn to read and write also participate in the joint sessions as well as in the HLC classes for adults.

Parent educators and parents requested a meeting after the joint sessions at one school. It is clear that they wish to be involved in their children's education and that they view the home-school linkages as very important for the rebuilding of the community. An issue that was raised here and in other settings was that of the stipend for the parent educators in relation to how much time, effort and personal expenditure with the PEs make on behalf of the community. Some school administrators are planning to form an association including stakeholders within and outside the school to foster MTE in their schools.

Observation of teaching and learning

Since Amuru has recently been sub –divided into two: Amuru and Nwoya, the team visited one school and one HLC in each of these (i.e. two primary schools and two HLCs in the area known as Amuru at the time the MTE project was initiated). Primary 1-3 classes, including joint parent-learner sessions at one school and in one HLC, and a parents' literacy-numeracy class held in a village HLC were observed. Discussions and informal focus group interviews were held at both schools and in the HLCs. Interestingly, the researchers received a written submission from teachers, parent educators and parents from each of the two HLCs in this district. These submissions were written in

the form of requests for further support to implement MTE and adult education classes in the HLCs. The medium of instruction in infant classes was Acholi, and in one of the schools, the mathematics teacher for P3 was able to sustain the teaching-learning process in the local language. With the assistance of a PE, the learners' (pupils and parents) involvement was quite high. Some parents attended class with their babies. As much as babies sometimes cried and interrupted the teaching process, their presence seemed to make the mothers comfortable and attentive.

The class sizes were particularly large, ranging from 100 – 150 in one school, and particularly crowded in classes which accommodated approximately 20-25 parents for the joint sessions. Notable was the quality and expertise of the P1 and P3 teachers. In the P3 class in one school, approximately 10 learners were trying to read from one reader, some of these in from an upside down vantage point. Learning to read in such circumstances involves the teacher reading, learners individually reading, whole class 'reading'. However, in reality, most learners recite from memory and are not really able to read. Many children do not have pencils or exercise books in which to write, particularly those in P1 and P2. Most P3s observed did have exercise books and an inspection of these revealed regular writing (i.e. several times per week) from each sub-district.

Some of the parents in this district are very young women with babies – and appear to be teenagers; others are older (grandparents). The younger parents are keen to demonstrate their reading abilities in class – in front of children and other adults. Children, likewise, are keen to demonstrate their reading abilities. Mostly the teachers appeared confident and clear about the structure of a lesson. Some teachers, however, need some assistance with how to use flashcards and small posters so that these do not compete with handwritten information/lesson material on the chalkboard.

Home Learning Centre visits

A parent literacy-numeracy class was observed with approximately 80 parents (mostly women, approximately 6 men) and two parent educators participating. Parents had counting sticks and berries and used these to assist them with addition and subtraction problems which were completed in exercise books. The parents have started a village savings scheme and they make contributions at the end of the numeracy class.

Parents emphasise that participating in literacy classes has helped their self-esteem and that simple matters of signing their names carry enormous significance. Numeracy has helped them to know when someone is trying to cheat them with transactions involving money and literacy is helping them to read text messages sent from relatives living elsewhere, even overseas.

Excerpts of women's comments on the literacy and numeracy classes:

> I had forgotten how to write.
>
> I want to get some knowledge and to read signposts.
>
> I wanted to learn to write my name. Before, I had to thumbprint.
>
> When I got married, one time my husband wrote me a letter chasing me back to my parents, but because I could not read, I did not go. [Everyone laughs.]
>
> My father never sent me to school and I did not know how to write. Now I can write myself.

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I want to help and to follow my child at school.

A similar scenario was found in a second HLC. However, this was a joint parent-children session and participation in the lesson revealed meaningful competition between parents and children. Two parent educators systematically conducted the lesson using learner-centred approaches, encouraging learners to respond to questions, write on the chalk board, ask questions and read passages. The reading activity excited the learners because some of them (learners) were fast readers whereas others were slow readers. The class was conducted under two huge mango trees that provided a shade for both parents (and grandparents) and learners. The parents sat on one side on the shade and the children sat on the other side – separated by a corridor/passage. The majority of the parents were women (16) and only three men attended the session. The children were forty two in number. In general, the learning environment in the HLC was favourable and learning seemed to have taken place (see Section 8 for data on learner attendance).

Participating in parent classes and in joint sessions in the school has allowed parents to feel involved rather than alienated.

4.4.   District and Local Government Officials

It was not originally intended that district government officials would be interviewed, rather the intention had been to pay courtesy visits to local and district government offices. However, because one of the underlying objectives of the evaluation was to identify and analyse issues of sustainability, the researchers recognised that district and local government (DLG) officials are key informants and this required substantial interviews.

4.4.1. Arua

Five senior officials, including the Acting CAO, the District Inspector of Schools and the Chairperson of the Social Services Committee, in Arua District were consulted and interviewed. The district officials were in agreement that LABE's contribution towards enhancing primary education in Arua has been substantial and very much appreciated. The most significant benefit of LABE's intervention has been the increase in parental involvement in children's education. The intersection of MTE and adult education classes for parents has helped parents to feel that they can become involved in monitoring the progress of their children. LABE's engagement with community sensitisation about the importance of the mother tongue in education has been very important because, as is the case in each of the six districts, parents had come to believe that English is most important and they did not understand the role of the mother tongue as the foundation of all successful learning in primary education. At the same time, the officials say that 'people treasure local languages' and that Lugbara is used as both the home language and as a local lingua franca: 'even Sudanese migrants speak Lugbara in the markets'. People apparently request local government officials to hold meetings in the local language.

A particularly important issue has been the status of the Lugbara Language Board, and the finalisation of the Lugbara orthography. LABE has encouraged and supported the Language Board and it would be important that NCDC completes the process of recognising the Lugbara Orthography. Nevertheless, the Language Board still requires further empowerment, and it needs to have office space. Language Board members and District officials are concerned that if the LABE MTE project were to come to an end soon, that the Language Board would be left in a vulnerable

situation. Although the panel of writers and board members are competent, they still need LABE's support.

The District supports the implementation of local language as part of the thematic curriculum by ensuring that the school inspectors check that lesson plans and schemes are in Lugbara; that lessons are actually taught in Lugbara; that children are learning to read and write at the required levels; and that assessment occurs in Lugbara. The social services arm of local government ensures that LABE and the other partners are meeting their responsibilities, and thus it serves a monitoring function. The CCTs support MTE and the implementation of the curriculum by contributing towards community sensitisation, supervising teachers and through continuous professional development (CPD) for teachers. The officials report that there is evidence that MTE has greatly benefitted children and their educational achievement, and that whereas before children found it difficult to express themselves through English in class, now they are confident and able to respond in class. In other words, children are more obviously engaged in learning and this appears to support longer retention in the primary system.

LABE's contributions in regards to community sensitisation, particularly in relation to the organisation and support of events which lead up to and take place on International Mother Language Day each year are significant. International Mother Language Day has raised the level of awareness of people about:

> …the value of local languages and that education in local languages does not demean or devalue the capacity to succeed at school (Senior District Official).

When the officials were asked how they intended to continue to strengthen MTE once the LABE project terminates towards the end of 2013, the officials were anxious to set out a case for why the needs of Arua are special and why they believe that there is a need for the MTE project to continue. The social fabric of communities in Arua has been severely affected by years of on-going civil conflict and displacement of large numbers of people. Recovery is going to take a long time and student achievement in education is particularly dire. A strong argument was mounted for why LABE's MTE project should be extended:

> LABE's contribution has been tremendous. We propose that LABE extend its project….In terms of disadvantaged communities, we are ranked very low… and coming up requires special support. We have to rescue education here otherwise we render their [school learners'] futures bleak….We appeal for continuity. The gap of a pull-out will be really problematic. Our parents have gained a lot from literacy skills. And also for children to learn together with solar light and to study together … and although children are our primary concern, LABE has helped parents to learn, and they have helped to establish the Language Board. Most of our booklets which have been produced before had errors, now the Language Board has writers and books can be edited and good materials can be published. Many more children can read and write. LABE has a multiplier effect and it would actually be a disservice to other schools in the district if LABE's project were to end now (Senior District official).

4.4.2. Koboko

Six senior District Officials including the LC5 (District Chairperson) and District Education Officer (DEO) were consulted in Koboko.

LABE has an excellent reputation in the district and has made a considerable contribution towards capacity development within schools and in relation to capacity development amongst related stakeholders concerned with MTE. The officials referred to the training and support of teachers and drew particular attention to LABE's role in supporting the establishment and functioning of the Kakwa Language Board. The Kakwa orthography has been developed, language board members have been trained, and the NCDC in Kampala is using the Kakwa orthography as developed in Koboko. There is evidence of LABE story books and children's magazines in the schools and the DEO says that there is evidence all over his office of LABE's contributions. There is evidence of improved learner enrolments, retention and achievement.

> Now children can read and write. Parents are now much more interested in schooling and come to meetings and joint sessions (Head teacher present at meeting of District Officials).

There has been some resistance towards MTE from parents who have tended to express concerns about English and whether or not MTE would hinder their children's progress towards attaining high level proficiency in English, particularly in the primary school exit examinations in P7. However, LABE's sensitisation and awareness programmes, especially the involvement in International Mother Language Day celebrations have included opportunities for children to demonstrate their expertise in Kakwa. This has apparently impressed parents and has had a powerful effect, increasing the symbolic capital of Kakwa in the district.

The education officials plan to have at least four Kakwa speaking teachers in each primary school so that if one is subject to a transfer, the school will still have a back-up person to teach MTE in Kakwa.

In terms of the sustainability of MTE upon the departure of LABE, the officials indicated strong views supporting a continuation of LABE's involvement in this district. The officials detailed why, in their view, the stakeholders in Koboko district are not yet ready to continue to support MTE in schools without LABE. They offered a number of reasons why Koboko deserves special consideration for an extension of the MTE project. Communities were displaced and forced into exile in DRC and Sudan because of serious human rights abuses and genocide which began in 1979, and many people only returned after 15 years. In addition, owing to civil conflict in neighbouring states, Koboko now receives refugees whose children need to be accommodated in schools.

> We are also serving Congolese and Sudanese learners [refugees from these countries], therefore our resources are stretched across more than our own communities.

> We are more than 15 years behind other districts. Whereas others began in 1979 [after the fall of Idi Amin], it took us another 15 years. Most people have never had any education. The communities were destroyed and people have been traumatised – they have been very afraid of being killed…. We are very grateful for where we are and from where we have come, but we ask for another term for the LABE project. LABE would leave a gap – we need another four years (Senior Officials).

Although the officials recognise that they were aware that the LABE project was to end after four years, they emphasise that the district does not receive adequate budgetary support from Kampala and they are short-staffed and simply do not have the human or material resources to provide adequate support to schools and thus LABE's intervention continues to be very much needed. There is a wish that LABE might be able to increase its support to all schools in the district.

4.4.3. Yumbe

Three senior officials, the District Chairperson (LC5), the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the District Education Officer (DEO) were consulted in Yumbe.

LABE has worked with 40 schools and trained 120 teachers to implement MTE in Yumbe. Teachers have been trained to develop lesson plans and schemes according to the thematic curriculum. The training of the P1-3 teachers is regarded as a key intervention and the teaching of children in a language that they can understand has resulted in improved achievement and learners are developing the confidence to do even better at school. However, the LC5 believes that MT needs to continue as medium of instruction at least as far as P4 because learners are not ready to switch to English in P4. LABE has also developed the capacity of the Aringa Language Board. The local government has known that the LABE project would come to an end, but if it were to end now there is a risk. Owing to low budgetary provision from Kampala, the district has limited funding capacity and what is available is unlikely to be adequate for the needs of MTE in P1-3.

A significant recommendation from the officials is that the head teacher (HT) at every school needs to be on board in relation to MTE and therefore training of P1-3 teachers should also include training of HTs to ensure smooth implementation in each school.

The District Chairperson noted that one of the significant benefits of the LABE MTE project has been the establishment of the home learning centres (HLCs). Approximately 20 of those established in Yumbe are for nursery/early childhood education. This is particularly important because Yumbe had been caught in the war-zone for twenty years and at least one generation of children missed school altogether, and this generation (now parents)has not been able to support children who are now in school. Children who are receiving early childhood education will be in a better position to achieve well in P1-3 and this is likely to have positive effects on their achievement and retention to the end of primary. There are community benefits to early childhood education in the villages and rural areas, and these include quality child care while mothers are freed up to engage in income generating activities (mainly agriculture).

The Aringa Language Board is organising itself and is highly rated by other districts and language boards. While Aringa is the designated local language, other languages are also commonly used in Yumbe, including: Arabic, Kiswahili and English. The District Chairperson is in favour of the children learning international languages and those which are closely connected to religion and culture. In this district, Arabic has a strong presence because most of the communities follow Islam and Arabic is used for faith-based practices.

LABE's strength has been that it is good at consulting and keeping all the stakeholders informed and involved in all development. Most importantly, its modus operandi is transparent. There is a concern about the imminent withdrawal of LABE from the MTE project in that the impact on the Language Board and HLCs may be significant because they are not yet in a position to be independent. The

officials of this district offered a special case for the consideration of an extension of the MTE project, as was the case in each of the other districts.

> Because of the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency and the presence of Joseph Kony and army [i.e. movement of troops through the district and across the border with Sudan], this area has been very badly affected and needs special consideration [for an extension of the MTE project].

4.4.4. Adjumani

Three senior officials were consulted and interviewed in this district (CAO, DEO and Deputy DEO).

The local government has supported the establishment of the Madi Language Board, and the training of P1-3 teachers in local language. LABE has played a significant role in the establishment of the board and in the development of the Madi orthography to the point that it is close to being approved by NCDC. Obvious benefits of the implementation of MTE in P1-3 include increased enrolments and retention. Increased retention is ascribed to: the removal of a language barrier for many school learners through the use of MTE; reducing the psychological distance between the home and school, and thus eliminating anxiety and increasing confidence; the observation that learners enjoy using their own language and hearing stories in the local language. The CAO reported that previously there had been shortcomings in P1-3 reading achievement with most learners not being able to understand English. Now learners are no longer afraid of learning to read and write in Madi because they already know the spoken language and student achievement in numeracy has improved since MTE has been introduced. Teachers have also benefitted from the project because of the training in methodologies and teaching strategies which are up to date. Local government has also benefitted from the use of this language, because information brochures (e.g. for good health practices) can now be published in the local language. The main constraint appears to be lack of available funding from NCDC and MoES in Kampala.

Parents were initially hesitant or resistant to the idea of Madi medium education, because of the status of English in the end of primary education examinations. However, with increasing parental involvement, parents' attitudes are reported to be changing. The local government encourages the writers' club to continue to produce stories and reading materials for all levels, with the understanding that the Madi Language Board will be responsible for editing all texts prior to publication. The development of written information in Madi is considered to be relevant not only for school and adult educational purposes but also for written information from district government to the villages. For example, important health-related information, particularly HIV-AIDS, can now be written using correct Madi, whereas before, some words had been borrowed from Lugbara or other languages and this may have led to miscommunication/erroneous messages.

From the perspective of the district officials, there is a reluctance to see the end of LABE's involvement in the MTE project, and as was the case in other districts, the officials were quick to offer cogent reasons for LABE's work to continue. The reasons again include lack of budgetary provision from Kampala to provide adequate teacher development, support in materials development, support of language board activities, and support of parent educators who play a significant role in mediating between the village community and the school.

The officials made special mention of the facilitative role of LABE in terms of keeping all stakeholders informed about the various dimensions to MTE support: training, materials development, HLC and parent educators, monitoring and evaluation, assessment, and orthographic development. LABE is particularly adept at keeping all stakeholders involved and motivated in the process and acts in a transparent manner. The officials wished to have a series of recommendations forwarded to LABE and its funders, and also to NCDC and MoES. These include a strong wish that LABE would extend its project to include all the other schools in the district in order to empower them as well as the 40 project schools. The officials would like LABE to steer the Madi Language Board through the last stages of negotiations with NCDC in order to gain official recognition of the orthography. A further recommendation from these officials is that the home learning centres (HLCs) become officially recognised for their role in linking the community and schools, and their potential to enhance overall achievement of school learners while also strengthening communities.

The CAO particularly drew attention to the 'multiplier effect' of LABE interventions. Although the HLCs were not part of the original terms of reference for the MTE project, this has become one of the most significant achievements of the project. Apart from developing parents' literacy and numeracy skills, and following on from the numeracy classes, many of the HLCs have begun village saving schemes in order to build up seed funds to begin micro-economic enterprises. The village schemes avoid punitive interest from financial institutions. However, community members probably need some training on how best to manage these schemes. What the MTE project has begun is to change whole communities and the momentum of change is one which deserves careful recognition and analysis.

4.4.5. Gulu

The Gulu District Chairperson (LC5), the CAO and the DEO were consulted and interviewed. These senior officials set out the context of education in this district. During the colonial period children had been taught through the mother tongue for the first few years of schooling and older members of the community recalled this. However, most parents today were either not in school owing to twenty years of armed conflict, disruption of community life and displacement of large numbers of people; or, they were taught through English from P1. Most of these former pupils left school before completing primary education. Parents have therefore not been supportive of MTE, and most teachers are those who were never taught to read and write in Acholi, so many of them have been less than enthusiastic about embracing Acholi medium education. The officials do say, however, that as the thematic curriculum has been in place for some years, parents and teachers are getting used to the idea, and it is clear that learners in those schools which were the first to pilot the use of Acholi medium in P1-3 were the ones whose learners achieved most highly in the 2012 school exit examinations at the end of P7. Thus, the district education office has the evidence to demonstrate the effect of the change of medium and there appears to be evidence that community resistance to MTE is decreasing.

The importance of the work which has supported the development of the Acholi orthography and the nurturing of the original Acholi Language Board has resulted in significant progress in terms of materials development, generation of stories and preparation of further stories awaiting publication. There is a complication in relation to the Acholi Language Board (discussed more fully in Section 5.3) which may delay publication of the materials which are currently ready and also the finalisation of

the Acholi orthography. The latter is particularly important because this language is common to seven districts in Northern Uganda and thus the implications stretch beyond Gulu.

Although there are children in Gulu who come from other language communities, the informants claim they appear to pick up Acholi very quickly from the local community and in the school playground. In other words, the use of Acholi medium in P1-3 does not appear to pose difficulties for these children.

LABE's role in training teachers and parent educators; supporting the CCTs and district education officers in relation to MTE training, monitoring and assessment; co-development of story books with the language board; development of children's magazines; and supply of teaching materials, is fully recognised and applauded by the officials. The officials were keen to emphasise that LABE's presence is a full partnership with the district government and that there are mutually beneficial mechanisms for working together. Monitoring and assessment are often conducted jointly with a sharing of resources and expertise. The district government does provide office space for LABE and it is intended that the new language board will also be accommodated in the government offices.

What makes LABE different from other NGOs is that while very many NGOs have come and passed through Gulu, especially since the Lord's Resistance Army has left the area and attempts to normalise the situation have been underway, is that LABE has stayed and represents reliability and continuity. Most of the other NGOs have been transient and thus projects begin and end and the expertise which is build up often dissipates before the communities and stakeholders have developed sufficient confidence to continue independently of the NGO support. While the district officials have been preparing for an end of the LABE MTE project and would be able to find alternative partners to take over some of LABE's functions, the concern is that the other partners may not have the same level of commitment nor the same level of understanding of how to work with all stakeholders in a collegial and capacity-enhancing manner. For this reason, the district officials caution against LABE's withdrawal from Gulu at this time. There is no doubt that Gulu, as the de facto headquarters of 'the insurgency', will take generations to recover and at the individual and collective levels, post-traumatic stress syndrome is extreme.

4.4.6. Amuru and Nwoya

Amuru, a large district, has recently been divided into two: Amuru and Nwoya, each with its own local government offices. For this reason, the researchers visited and interviewed officials in each of these. Distances in this district are more substantial than in other districts, even though it has been divided. Travelling time therefore eats into the time available for educational initiatives, and makes the work of the LABE project officers, whose transportation is usually limited to a motorbike, especially onerous.

Amuru: Three officials, the CAO, DEO, DIS were interviewed.

As in Gulu, the officials reported that there has been some resistance or ambivalence towards MTE because owing to the insurgency, most parents have not been to school and do not particularly encourage school enrolment and retention, and they do not understand the relationship between the mother tongue and reading and writing development. Most teachers were taught through English and do not have the Acholi reading and writing skills required for teaching learners in P1-3. The curriculum materials, especially the Teacher's Guide for Primary 1 is available in English, not

Acholi, yet the teachers are expected to develop their lesson plans and schemes in Acholi, so this compounds difficulties. Teachers are expected to teach very large classes (120-150 children) in P1-3, and this naturally adds to the challenges.

LABE's role has been important to the district. Without LABE's knowledge of how to approach MTE in the thematic curriculum, most teachers and schools would have had little idea of how to proceed. The role of the Acholi Language Board and the development of the orthography, followed by story books published by LABE have contributed significantly to district school education. However, what LABE is able to provide is not sufficient and there is a disturbing shortage of materials' provision from Kampala. The officials appreciate the way that LABE has included all stakeholders and the MTE support is always team-based (i.e. includes district education officials and CCTs in all activities) and this includes preparation for visits to particular schools and sharing of transportation (costs) etc. Although there are other NGOs offering services, none of these has LABE's extensive expertise nor kind of depth of experience of capacity development at all levels of the system and within the community.

A particular request from the DEO is that the district office should receive a copy of the evaluation report.

Nwoya: Two officials, the DEO and DIS were interviewed in Nwoya.

The District Education Officer (DEO) for Nwoya expressed his gratitude to the support given by LABE to the newly founded District. He hailed LABE for spearheading the implementation of MTE in the district through supplying supplementary readers to schools, training lower primary teachers in MTE, and involving parents in school activities. He particularly singled out LABE's role in involving stakeholders at different levels. MTE is regarded as a big achievement for the district. He requested the continuation of LABE's MTE intervention in order to strengthen MTE activities that have so far been initiated. The District Inspector of Schools (DIS) also reiterated the role of LABE in the district. He praised LABE for its supervisory role in MTE in schools.

> Sometimes, we go with LABE officials to monitor what goes on in schools. It's a very satisfying thing to see NGOs coming on board to support education (DIS).

He urged the continuation of LABE until the new district could 'stand on its own'.

4.5. Language Boards

Members of four language boards were interviewed through focus group discussions. The major issues that formed the gist of the discussion centred on the role of each board in relation to the support and implementation of MTE; the nature of collaboration with LABE and other stakeholders, and the progress and challenges faced in regard to orthographic development, and the boards' future plans for sustainability and continued support of MTE once the MTE project under review comes to an end. The findings are discussed based per language board.

4.5.1. Kakwa Language Board – Koboko

The Kakwa Language Board was formed amidst several societal challenges emanating from long spells of civil wars and mass exile of people to Sudan and Congo beginning with the war of liberation in 1979, continuing with the 1986 civil war and years of subsequent unrest. Many civilians were

exiled or displaced for up to 15 years beyond the borders of Uganda. The establishment of the Kakwa Board came about in order to revitalize Kakwa culture and Kakwa language, believed to be endangered subsequent to the long-term consequences of protracted civil conflict. The major roles of the board include orthographic development, community sensitisation to MTE, and production of reading materials in MTE. LABE's partnership is regarded as enabling in terms of setting strategic goals and objectives and establishing collaborative associations with the District and Local Government (DLG) officials. In terms of capacity building, LABE has trained board members in orthographic and material development and provided constant facilitation of various board activities. The collaboration has contributed towards an increased interest in reading and writing among children in schools, high parental involvement in learners' education, community awareness of the importance of MTE, and production of the final draft of Kakwa orthography. There are a number of challenges in regard to the sustainability of the board. Chief among these are the absence of financial support for board activities (especially in order to print materials produced) and the paucity of linguists in Kakwa language. Other challenges include lack of office space to house the board, delays in the approval of the orthography, lack of electricity/ power in the district, negative attitudes towards MTE, and the presence of three major Kakwa varieties (Ugandan, Sudanic and Congo) were cited as the major challenges faced by the board. There is an emergent plan to establish a writing association which may contribute towards income generation to support board activities and further training in materials development.

4.5.2. Aringa Language Board - Yumbe

The establishment of the Aringa Language Board facilitated the completion of the Aringa Orthography which was written with the support of a local community and faith-based organisation 'Here is Life'. According to members, the board is an umbrella association of all parties working with the Aringa language. LABE facilitated the transformation of the Aringa Language Association into the Aringa Language Board. LABE has provided a favourable environment for the board to operate, and many of the activities of the board are planned and executed in conjunction with LABE. In collaboration with LABE and NCDC, the board has: written educational materials; vetted books; trained primary teachers, community development officers CDOs and tutors in Aringa Orthography; and sensitised the community to the orthography. The board is currently translating the Bible and the Koran into Aringa and has applied to the District Council for official recognition. The board members anticipate that official recognition would enable the board to function as a legal entity and also to solicit financial assistance. The activities of the board are believed to have improved community awareness about MTE and increased parental involvement in children's education. It is also claimed that improvement in MTE has led to improved performance in primary school leaving examinations. Apart from LABE, the board has worked with other stakeholders such as 'Here is Life' and the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) to improve MTE in the district.

The board does not work without challenges, and notable among them is the attitude of the elderly members of the community who were trained in Lugbarati. In addition, resistance has been reported from among religious leaders and followers who believe that prayers should be in Arabic and not Aringa. Limited resources and direct borrowing of words have equally affected the board's activities. The board articulates a medium to long term set of objectives which include: establishing a writers' club to strengthen the writing arm of the board; training religious leaders (Imams & Sheikhs) in the orthography; establishing a secretariat to coordinate the board's activities; establishing a publishing house and a library; carrying out intensive research to document cultural practices; establishing an

examination body to assess the use of the Aringa Language; offering translation services at a small fee; registering the board at the district and the registrar of companies; and intensifying district involvement in MTE. A matter which may have potential risk in regard to the orthographic revision is the recent introduction of complex diacritics to distinguish between different tones. This matter will be discussed further in the analysis and recommendations section of the Report.

4.5.3. Madi Language Board - Adjumani

The Madi Language Board originated from the Madi Writers' Association Club and the latter continues to be instrumental in the activities of the board. All board members contend that the board is the custodian of the Madi Language, whereby they edit and approve materials written in the language. They emphasised the positive role of LABE in supporting both the board and the MTE programme. For example, they passionately emphasised LABE's role in the training of the writers in the materials development, facilitating the writing of readers for lower primary classes, inviting NCDC to train board members in orthography writing, supplying MTE materials to schools, training parent educators in teaching local language (LL), organising the annual International Mother Language Day celebrations which bring together MTE stakeholders, and setting up computer centres in schools where teachers get information related to MTE. As a result, one of the members explicitly claimed that LABE's contribution has been a blessing to the Madi sub-region. All the board members requested an extension of the MTE project for the next four years until capacity has been built among the major stakeholders. With support from LABE, the board has been able to produce readers for Primary 1-4. The board has sensitised the community on the importance of local language and the Madi culture in general. It also drafted the Madi orthography which was later approved by NCDC. Members enumerated several challenges such as financial constraints, lack of commitment from some members, lack of office space to coordinate activities of the board, and the members' shortage of writing skills, people's (community) mixed feelings about MTE which seems to hinder the smooth execution of the board's activities. Members also lamented the NCDC's two-year delay in effecting corrections in the orthography. Board members expressed concern over the slow pace in the training of lower primary teachers in Madi Orthography. Five per cent of the teachers have been trained, and as a result, most of the manuscripts sent to the board for proof reading contain numerous spelling errors. It was suggested that the district authorities do not seem to recognise the role the board plays in implementing MTE and the DLG has not provided financial support to the board for its work. The board intends to engage district political and technical leaders on financial and other support for: the publication of educational materials already approved by the district education office, and office space for the co-ordination of board's activities. The board requires a computer to facilitate its work, and there are plans to hold live talk shows on radio to boost the activities of the board and to sensitise communities more effectively.

4.5.4. Acholi Language Board - Gulu

The establishment of a Luo language board was initiated by UNICEF in 2009 and then nurtured by LABE until April 2013. Originally the board was established to serve seven (7) districts where Acholi is spoken. Acholi is the largest variety of Luo spoken in Northern Uganda. Significant progress had been made in regard to the finalisation of Acholi orthography by early 2013. The major aim had been to harmonise spelling variations arising from earlier missionary efforts to print texts. In the midst of reviewing the orthography and writing MTE materials, a new language board was instituted by NCDC in April 2013; and only one member of the old board was re-appointed to the new board. This has brought about some confusion over the status of existing work of the original board. Of potential

concern is that the new board has within a short period of time made significant changes to the orthography increasing the number of vowels from five to nine. The degree to which there has or has not been broad stakeholder consultation is a matter which has the potential to ignite long-term disputes and these would delay provision of learning materials to schools. The orthographic changes may also have long term consequences for closely related speech communities within the Luo group, but not included in the newly constituted Acholi Language Board. Members of the former board have expressed a commitment to proceed with their planned language development activities including research to document the culture, indigenous knowledge, and oral traditions among the Acholi people. They are, however, clearly restricted by financial constraints and ambiguity in regards to their status owing to latest administrative developments.

By the time the new board was officially established in 2013, the original board had achieved numerous objectives, such as: the writing of several stories and readers for MTE, sensitising the community on the importance of MTE. Members of the original board argue that more reading materials need to be published and training of writers is crucial in order to ensure effective implementation of MTE. LABE continues to work alongside those who have been associated with the language board since its inception because these members have long-standing expertise in and have contributed to the implementation of the MTE programme in primary schools and the community. Members also underscored LABE's positive contribution to the activities of the board, including: training the board on orthographic matters, organising workshops on MTE, inviting NCDC to address issues concerning MTE, sensitising the community about MTE, developing a work plan for MTE implementation in schools, organising joint parent-pupil class sessions in schools, negotiation with the DLG for language board office space, and financially supporting the writing of readers for P1-3. LABE has also enabled the board members to create a good working relationship with the CCTs, and the district officials. Members observed that without LABE such activities would not have taken place. The exit of LABE by the end of 2013 is likely to result in stagnation not only in the execution of planned board activities but also in the implementation of MTE in schools. Nevertheless, members of the original board plan to lobby for funds from district authorities and line ministries to facilitate their five year plan. Furthermore, they have plans to establish a public library in the district geared towards promotion of readership among the communities.

4.6. Centre Co-ordinating Tutor (CCT) Interviews
Centre co-ordinating tutors were interviewed in four of the six districts.

4.6.1. Centre Co-ordinating Tutor (CCT) Koboko
The CCT – Koboko was trained in MTE by officials from the Ministry of Education & Sports (MoES) and LABE. With this expertise, he is able to offer support supervision and mentoring to classroom teachers at their respective schools. The CCT affirmed that LABE's support has led to a change in the community's attitude towards MTE. This is manifested in parents and children's participation in the teaching-learning process in joint classroom sessions. The CCT also confirmed that LABE has supplied story books which are currently used in schools. LABE's intervention has led to the establishment of HLCs hence bringing education closer to the community. An improved relationship between the CCTs and the school community, parent educators, language board members, and the school management committees is another benefit of the MTE project.

In the midst of executing their duties, CCTs face various challenges. These include: supervising several schools (one CCT has 49 schools) to support and mentor; a shortage of instructional materials; in some cases parent educators (PEs) are uncooperative, arguing that their stipend is very low. There are also too few Madi-speaking teachers for lower primary classes, although Madi is one of the languages in Koboko alongside Lugbara and Kakwa. There is a high attrition rate of teachers; delays in releasing government grants; and therefore increasing a dependency on LABE facilitation. An imminent and sudden exit of LABE is thus viewed as a huge challenge for the continuation of the MTE project in schools and the entire community. The CCT requested an extension of the project for the next four years to enable stakeholders gain necessary capacity to carry on beyond the project.

4.6.2. Centre Co-ordinating Tutors (CCT) Yumbe

The centre coordinating tutors (CCTs) in Yumbe were trained by LABE officers in the nature and use of the new Aringa orthography. The CCTs, in turn, trained primary teachers in the pedagogies of MTE in lower primary school. In addition, the CCTs monitor and supervise teaching in schools, and source resource persons (Kampala trained people) to demonstrate the use of Aringa language as a medium of instruction in classroom situations. According to the respondents, the intervention of CCTs in schools has led to improved performance in literacy and numeracy in MTE. The work of the CCTs has nonetheless been hampered by some challenges notable among them are: the inadequate facilitation from their mother institutions, that is, the Primary Teachers' Colleges (PTCs); too many activities or responsibilities to perform adequately; and having to travel long distances. It was also claimed that the new tonal orthography is hard to grasp and employ in reading and writing.

The establishment of the LABE MTE project in Yumbe in 2009 rejuvenated the work of the CCTs. LABE has simplified and supported CCTs' work through carrying out joint monitoring and supervision of schools. The respondents noted that in joint fieldwork surveys LABE uses its own vehicles, and sometimes provides other support. In addition, LABE's intervention in MTE has brought schools nearer to the community through training PEs and establishing HLCs. LABE has continued to sensitise the communities on the importance of MTE in literacy and numeracy. Hence, some parents have attained reading and writing skills, and can ably assist their children to improve literacy levels. Children's story books and magazines introduced by LABE have increased their interest in reading, though such materials are not enough. According to the respondents, the exit of LABE would leave many things undone since HLCs have not yet taken root to the extent that they can operate independently. The CCTs therefore requested that LABE continues for some time so that capacity is strengthened. This would help CCTs organise more continuous professional development (CPD) programmes for teachers in lower primary. It would also help more parents to grasp the concept of MTE and provide support to their children.

4.6.3. Centre Co-ordinating Tutors (CCT) Adjumani

 The CCTs in Adjumani were trained in MTE by LABE staff. During the training, a training kit and other instructional materials were provided to the CCTs. CCTs were taught how to develop schemes and prepare instructional materials in MTE and were also taught how to handle the training curriculum for parent educators (PEs).   After the training, the CCTs were able to mobilise PEs, teachers and parents, who were in turn trained in thematic curriculum and MTE in particular. The CCTs mentored and supervised the teaching-learning process and also encouraged teachers to organise MTE activities such as school festivals. LABE further facilitated the work of the CCTs through supporting the revision of the orthography and providing readers to schools. LABE produced the first MTE

materials, and the MTE Policy Briefs were very helpful and interesting although there were not enough copies. The orthography was later approved by NCDC. These activities helped teachers' attitudes to become more positively disposed towards MTE.

The CCTs confirmed that the MTE project has resulted in high learner participation in school, and more children take readings in church. Parent involvement in their children's education has improved the latter's literacy levels, and generally learning has become meaningful and interesting because learners seem to understand concepts better. However, in spite of the successes achieved in MTE, some teachers and parents still think that MT should not be the medium of instruction at lower primary school. This coupled with inadequate instructional materials, a large number of untrained teachers in MTE, and fewer in HLCs, MTE still has a long way to go because capacity to handle MTE has not yet been built. An exit of the LABE MTE intervention towards the end of 2013 may bring many activities to a standstill. Development of materials will stall because these are largely being funded by LABE; support to PEs will come to an end and therefore community involvement may therefore decline; and generally capacity building in MTE may come to a halt. The CCTs lamented that as much as the education office at the district and NCDC fully support MTE in lower primary, their capacity to take over from LABE is not sufficiently robust to carry on with the activities and structures currently supported by LABE.

4.6.4. Centre Co-ordinating Tutors (CCT) Gulu

The Gulu Centre coordinating tutors have received knowledge and skills in MTE and the thematic curriculum through LABE and NCDC organised training. They have also received additional training from fellow colleagues at the PTC who had attained prior knowledge in the thematic curriculum. Initially, Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) provided MTE theory. As a result the CCTs have managed to train school teachers in literacy through workshops, and carry out classroom supervision. The workshops were sponsored by LABE, though UNICEF and the MoES facilitated some training. The CCTs say that they do organise demonstration lessons in class to strengthen teachers' pedagogical skills.

The informants report that the introduction of the MTE project in 2009 has led to steady progress in literacy and numeracy levels among children the project schools. Parental participation has equally improved parents' skills in reading and writing, and this has enhanced their support and involvement in their children's education. The establishment of the HLCs and provision of materials by LABE, has substantially improved MTE in schools. LABE in conjunction with the CCTs has organised reading competitions and sensitised the community on the importance of MTE. However, the majority of teachers still hold a negative view about MTE. This is because many teachers have not yet been trained in MTE, and the available materials are inadequate to foster the teaching-learning process. Furthermore, the prestige of English still casts a shadow on the relevance of MTE. Therefore, the end of the MTE project at this stage is likely to have a drastic effect on the successes so far achieved. It would be a significant challenge to all stakeholders as one of the CCTs lamented 'LABE's exit will make MTE an orphan'.

4.7. Questionnaires

Two sets of questionnaires were administered. The first set was administered to a small sample of respondents in the districts in order to verify (triangulate) some of the qualitative data collected from respondents. These data are summarised in Appendix 4.

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4.7.1. Data from the questionnaires administered to district stakeholders

A questionnaire was administered at most schools visited, in each DLG office and with each language board. Twenty-two questionnaires were completed, one was not recovered, and one was discounted in order to report on a round number of 20. The purpose of the questionnaire was simply to collect litmus type data to triangulate with those collected through observation and interview. The questionnaire data show an overwhelming agreement that MTE benefits children, parents and other members of the community across the six districts. There is general consensus that the following stakeholders all support the implementation of MTE in the lower primary curriculum: CCTs, LBs, School Administrators, DLG officials, MoES and NCDC. This suggests clarity in terms of the language policy in the thematic curriculum and buy-in from each of the significant stakeholder communities. The feedback on LABE's intervention is very positive. In terms of parents' preferences for which languages should be offered in schools, most respondents indicate a preference for the current policy: local language /mother tongue and English. The respondents did not appear to be comfortable with additional languages added to local language and English.

These data are significant in that the researchers were informed by several respondents in each of the districts that there had been resistance to the use of local languages in education amongst the stakeholders and particularly amongst parents and also amongst teachers who had not themselves learned to read and write in the local language/s. However, the questionnaire suggests that the current view is more positively disposed towards the use of local language, perhaps now that the benefits are beginning to become apparent to parents, and because the practices are becoming easier for teachers. Secondly, the significant support of both local language and English is consistent with findings in other sub-Saharan contexts where although there is a public perception of resistance against the local languages, quantitative studies usually reveal a much stronger level of acceptance than is commonly thought (e.g. Heugh 2007).

4.7.2. Data from questionnaires administered to MLEN stakeholders

The Multilingual Education Network (MLEN) is a loose organisation that brings together stakeholders from both public and private organisations interested in the promotion and preservation of Ugandan languages. Members of MLEN are considered to be valuable resources in terms of commenting on the MTE project since each of them has an investment in the implementation of the local languages in the primary school system of the country. Electronic questionnaires were sent to members of MLEN subsequent to an MLEN workshop meeting on 5 July 2013. Only three MLEN respondents returned questionnaires, however, the data are useful and are summarised below.

Questionnaires completed by MLEN members draw attention both to the positive role of LABE in supporting MTE but also to other participants and agents that are able to contribute towards MTE in Uganda. There is agreement of the view that the MTE project had improved literacy in the six districts through developing teaching-learning materials. The establishment of HLCs has led to improved community involvement in MTE. The training of teachers and parent educators is believed to have improved literacy instruction. Respondents draw attention to the socio-political conditions of the West Nile and Northern Uganda owing to the insurgencies which have left the local communities with few teaching and learning materials; delayed orthographic development and a shortage of teachers as a result of widespread (forced) exile during three decades of civil war. One of LABE's strengths is understood to be its ability to consult and network with multiple stakeholders to promote MTE.

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Language boards are believed to have been instrumental in realising the objectives of MTE project. Orthographic development, materials production for learners in Primary 1-3/4, and MTE advocacy are regarded as significant contributions. Nevertheless, language boards are faced with challenges of inadequate budgets which restrict: the publication of reading materials, capacity to train lower primary teachers in the local orthographies, and monitoring of the progress of MTE. Other stakeholders, e.g. NCDC, may support MTE as a matter of policy but seem to lack the capacity for successful implementation. MoES may be supportive of policy but it is believed that few ministry officials seem to understand and appreciate the importance of MTE. District Local Governments (DLGs) appear to be troubled by the financial implications of MTE in the initial stages of implementation, although these concerns fade once implementation has succeeded. There was some disappointment expressed about the level of the system's support of the early Research Triangle Institute (RTI) and School Health and Reading Program (SHRP) capacity building of the language boards, however, the major stakeholders such as MoES, NCDC, and DLGs are now supporting the work of language boards.

There are other NGOs or other stakeholders that are able to support MTE. RTI and SHRP have contributed to capacity development of the language boards enhancing orthographical skills' development and other literary skills necessary for writing and publishing teaching-learning materials and other literature. SIL is also mentioned as another important partner in MTE development. Mango Tree working in Leblango and Kumam language communities has specialized in producing reading materials for learners in Primary 1-3 and these have yielded positive results in terms of improved performance in MTE. Mango Tree also has a strategy of sharing its publications with lower primary teachers, and such materials could be translated in other languages.

There is a concern that most of the initiatives in West Nile and Northern Uganda, have short to medium term timeframes and that these are insufficient for sustainability. There is a need for MoES and NCDC to continue the MTE project.

In a bid to support and promote MTE in the country, respondents revealed MLEN's future plans which include a need to form a National Language Board to oversee the development and maintenance of local languages in the country. They also indicate that the MLEN network would continue to share knowledge and technical support with LABE to strengthen MTE should this project come to an end. Continued lobbying and advocacy for MTE is a long term strategy for MLEN.

5. National Stakeholders

5.3. Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC)

There is significant evidence of participatory collaboration among LABE, the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) in terms of correspondence sighted in the LABE office and in terms of information given to the researchers by senior officials in Kampala.

LABE's approach to working alongside relevant stakeholders at national level to support primary school education is evident in regular correspondence from MoES and NCDC to LABE. Senior education officials in Kampala at MoES and at the NCDC express strong appreciation of LABE's

participatory support of local language implementation in the thematic curriculum. LABE is commended for its innovative practices in the development and nurturing of productive partnerships with government at both district and national levels. In addition to the support of MTE in the districts, senior officials including the Deputy Director of NCDC and two senior Teacher Instruction, Education and Training (TIET) staff in the Ministry (MoES), draw attention to the significance of three LABE initiatives: MTE teacher education and the *Pedagogy Handbook for Teaching in Local Language*; capacity building of Language Boards; and the community-wide benefits of the Home Learning Centres (HLCs).

The *Pedagogy Handbook for Teaching in Local Language* has been written collaboratively by LABE and NCDC and is currently under review in terms of NCDC regulations. This Handbook has been designed to support teachers across Uganda in the implementation of local language (mother tongue) in P1-3 and is due for publication towards the end of 2013. As a related concern, both NCDC and TIET recommend that LABE extend its teacher education support activities beyond the timeframe of this project. In particular, TIET would like LABE to extend its support of the CCTs in the Six North Western Districts to the 539 CCTs across the country, and also to the tutors responsible for P1-3 in the pre-service Primary Teachers' Colleges (45 government and 7 private). This would amount to the training of approximately 591 teacher educators country-wide. To this end they propose that LABE participate in training of teacher trainers to build the capacity of all Ugandan primary school teachers to implement MTE. The issue of teacher education through the Handbook and teacher training programmes, and even training of trainers of teacher educators, takes the initial MTE project to another level of participation which indicates impact at the national level with positive implications for primary school teachers and thus primary school children across the country. The significance of this initiative is considerable.

The second contribution to be highlighted in discussions with high-ranking education officials is the capacity building of language boards. The building of expertise and independence of these structures is undoubtedly of enormous and far-reaching significance for the future of local languages (or mother tongues) in the education system of the country. LABE's ground-breaking work with five language boards (two orthographies officially approved and recognised, and three others revised and awaiting NCDC approval) is regarded as significant. However, the NCDC and MoES officials recognise that the boards are not yet sufficiently empowered to be able to function independently. Ideally this support should come from government agencies; however, government at both district and national levels has not yet been able to provide the kind of funding necessary to support the capacity building and maintenance of the boards. While NCDC has a set of guidelines for the establishment and recognition of language boards, there remain some ambiguities about key issues relating to orthographic development and whether or not the current trend towards further separation of languages (and thus language communities) is in the long term interests of the speech communities. (This issue is picked up in the Discussion and Recommendations sections of the Report.) Discussions with NCDC and MoES included the possibility of assisting language boards to develop business plans and to recover costs through charging for some services. The point being made by both NCDC and the Minister of Primary Education was that if LABE were unable to continue to support the Boards at this time, the positive work and progress made thus far is likely to atrophy.

The third contribution of LABE which receives particular attention is in relation to the benefits of the establishment of the Home Learning Centres as multifunctional learning spaces where:

- school pupils are able to study after school hours, particularly where solar lights have been sourced by LABE;
- adult/parent learners are able to participate in literacy and numeracy classes;
- some make provision for young pre-school children who are offered pre-reading and writing skills and other age-appropriate preparation for P1; and
- adults have begun to establish village or community saving schemes.

It is notable that the HLCs were not part of LABE's original plans for the MTE project and that these grew out of the community's suggestions to make the home reading corners more accessible to larger groups of learners. As such, the emergence of Home Learning Centres (HLCs) over the last two years of the MTE project is a clear indication that LABE's inclusive approach to the home-school linkages has had a knock-on effect to the point that communities have empowered themselves to take educational decisions which benefit the community at a holistic level.

Whereas both NCDC and MoES acknowledge that there was initial resistance to the use of MTE once the thematic curriculum was rolled out in 2007, officials from both structures indicate that LABE's approach to community sensitisation and involvement has resulted in a weakening of resistance and a change towards positive encouragement of MTE especially in those communities directly affected by one or more of LABE's activities.

The Minister for State for Primary Education particularly requests that his personal observations of LABE's community engagement during the Mother Language Regional Symposium held in Arua on 23 February 2013 (organised by LABE as part of the UNESCO International Mother Language Day celebrations) (LABE April 2013) be included in this Report.

> On behalf of the Government of Uganda, I would like to say: first, we strongly appreciate the financial support which donors have provided to LABE. Second, we strongly recommend that LABE should be supported for a further four year round of funding so that it can complete the work which has begun and in order to plan for sustainability during the next four years….Speaking from my personal witnessing of the way which LABE works hand-in-hand with the community and government, this project needs to continue (Minister of State for Primary Education, 18 July 2013).

5.4.   Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNATCOM)

The Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General for the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNATCOM) regard the partnership between UNATCOM and LABE, particularly in relation to advocacy strategies to support MTE, for example in the document, *Implementation Strategy for Advocacy of Local Languages in Uganda*(LABE 2011) as successful. They believe that UNATCOM's role is that of paving the way for successful interventions such as LABE's work in MTE. The concern expressed here was that if LABE were to withdraw from the MTE intervention by the end of 2013 would be premature. The innovative successes would wither simply because the communities in which this project are being conducted continue to be afflicted by post-traumatic stress disorders of one kind of another and therefore require longer term maintenance and support than may be the case in more stable communities. He also observed that ending the project at this point would not only affect the on-going successes so far realised in the communities, but it might also affect

children's performance in future. This may have an adverse effect on the attitude of future generations towards MTE.

The issue of ambiguities about the nature, purpose and practicalities of orthographic development and the possibility that there may be different sets of theoretical and methodological approaches being used by different stakeholders in this work is a matter of concern for UNATCOM. The Secretary General believes that LABE should seek funding which could be used to call a national conference on orthographic development and that this conference should be hosted by UNATCOM as an independent and impartial body to facilitate agreements on a national approach towards the theoretical and methodological approaches for orthographic development.[3]

6. LABE and AET Staff

A series of interviews and discussions were held with LABE staff prior to the beginning of the fieldwork, during and after the completion of data collection in the field. The AET Programme Co-ordinator responsible for the partnership with LABE was present at one of the meetings with LABE staff and the evaluators prior to the fieldwork and during which the TOR were discussed and minor amendments to these were agreed. Electronic communication among LABE, AET and the evaluators was maintained prior to, during the field work and write up of the report. The evaluators were supplied with a comprehensive set of documentation of relevance to the background, development, and progress of the MTE project. Staff provided prompt, continual and on-going information whenever requested by the evaluators of the project. The Director made available a set of correspondence between LABE and senior education officials in NCDC and MoES, in addition to a set of background policy documents necessary for the evaluation. Since LABE staff accompanied the researchers to the field and on each field trip, there were on-going discussions about the project, its challenges, issues of delivery, successes and prospects of sustainability. The AET staff member responsible for overseeing the management of the LABE MTE project contributed AET documentation and participated in helpful discussions with the evaluators.

LABE staff were found to be extremely well-informed on pedagogical issues, innovative in their conceptualisation of networking and collaboration, meticulous in their management of financial records and data pertaining to each school and home learning centre, parent educator, collaborative stakeholders, project activities and outputs. AET has played a significant role in supporting LABE with capacity building of LABE staff with a series of training programmes in financial management, monitoring and evaluation, improving literacy provision and pedagogical issues relating to literacy in mother tongue (e.g. AET 2011; 2012a,b,c).

Owing to the intricate involvement and participatory involvement with stakeholders nested within this very complex project, LABE staff are also an invaluable source of information regarding the prospects of sustainability and the future of MTE in the six districts. Below key issues as these emerge from different office bearers and their area of expertise within the project are presented.

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[3] Possible funding sources include: GIZ which has supported MTE and related research activities for ADEA and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, as well as MTE in several African countries. Similarly, the Swedish agency, SIDA, and the Norwegian Council of Churches have contributed towards development of African languages in education in the past.

The findings below include information provided by portfolio leaders in respect of their own portfolios and also in relation to their overview of the project, its challenges and opportunities.

6.3.   Monitoring and Evaluation

LABE keeps meticulous and detailed data management records of all project activities, including continuously updated information regarding each school, teacher, parent teacher, HLC, assessment records, attendance records. The MTE project is an exceptionally complex endeavour with intricate sets of activities which are nested within a participatory and collaborative engagement with multiple stakeholders at community, school, district and national education levels.

The MTE Project Objectives, detailed Activities and Outcomes were discussed in terms of the revised log-frame for the project during a lengthy meeting with the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager in Kampala. This was more to check details regarding numbers of items rather than the major objectives, since each of the seven major objectives of the project had been verified during the research and data collection in the field. An annotated log-frame with the evaluator's comments and information supplied by the M & E Manager is attached as Appendix 5. The evaluators were satisfied that LABE has met each of the objectives and in fact exceeded most of the objectives and outcomes, despite a very complex and ambitious project. These matters are discussed further in the analysis section. In terms of the activities and outputs, the most significant variation of activity relates to a change from supporting story bags in a selection of homes, to the establishment of 551 home learning centres (HLCs) to add quality support to learning in 240 schools. The establishment of the HLCs had not been anticipated. The communities decided themselves that HLCs would be more useful to them than the story book corners in a few homes in each village connected to project schools. The establishment of the HLCs was identified by all stakeholders as one of the most significant benefits of the MTE project.

6.4.   Financial Management and Financial Issues

An interview with the Head of Finance elicited important information regarding the project's finances and also additional perspectives of community involvement in the project as these relate to financial and budgetary matters. Firstly, just as the data management of the project is meticulously maintained, so too is the financial management meticulous. The annual financial statements for three years of the project's duration and the first three quarters of the fourth year were provided to the evaluators. In each case, minor variations between planned expenditure and actual expenditure were well within acceptable margins in respect of major budget lines. All variations in the Financial Reports for the first three years of the project were accepted by AET and Comic Relief (UK). At the time of this evaluation, more significant variations in regard to expenditure during the fourth year of the project were in the process of being negotiated. By early July, there was under-expenditure of approximately 50% of the year's budget in particular line items. This under-expenditure may be explained as follows.

A significant publication, the *Pedagogy Handbook for Teaching in Local Language*, which has been prepared by LABE in consultation with NCDC has not yet been printed because it is awaiting the closure of administrative procedures within NCDC. Documentation regarding this publication from NCDC indicates that closure is imminent and that printing should occur by November 2013. This is a particularly significant, high-stakes, document since it would extend LABE's contribution in teacher training across the Ugandan primary school system and this is a powerful indicator and form of

recognition of the value of LABE's interventions in MTE. The printing of this publication is one of the most significant items for expenditure planned for the year. Related to the publication of this item is a national forum on teacher education which LABE plans to convene once the teacher's guide, the *Pedagogy Handbook,* has been published. This national forum will be a second costly and high-stakes budgetary item.

Areas of variances (under-expenditure) require additional time in order to complete outstanding outputs and to resolve variances and it is understood that AET and Comic Relief have agreed to an extension of the duration of the project until later in 2013 in order for the variances and outstanding outputs to be completed. The final reporting date to Comic Relief is 31 January 2014.

There have been a number of challenges in relation to the budget for this project and the expectations of some of the stakeholders. The most significant is that the expectations of some stakeholders cannot be met by the project. For example, people in some communities want to go to literacy classes but classes take time out of the day and there are competing demands of survival economics and livelihoods (particularly in relation to planting and harvesting). The weather plays a part in that during the rainy season, access to literacy classes may be difficult because the roads and footpaths become impassable. Unexpectedly high inflation has had a major impact on the resource envelope. At one point it went up to 34% then stabilised at 20%. This has had an impact on the stipends paid to parent educators who are now very unhappy with a stipend which amounts to approximately $3 per month. This has resulted in a negative morale and other NGOs are recruiting well-trained LABE parent educators to conduct related work for higher payments. Although the stipend is very important to the parent educators, other resources, such as the provision of solar lamps which enable learners to study at night have proven to be particularly important (solar lighting was sourced through another funder) and have motivated parents to support the MTE project. Thus, financial rewards or a disappointment in regards to these are partially offset by other advantages which the MTE project has brought to the collaborating communities. The Head of Finance regards the degree of parents' involvement in adult education (literacy and numeracy classes) as indicative of the value which communities place in this initiative. The attendance registers in which parents can now sign their own names and in the home learning centres, and the emergence of village or community saving schemes, provide evidence of community engagement in this project.

In the view of the Head of Finance, the districts do not yet have the capacity to take on the various activities undertaken by LABE, although some districts need more support than others. Terminating the project now may risk of much of the work being taken over or 'poached' by other organisations. Just as other organisations have been actively trying to recruit LABE trained parent educators, LABE has found its materials being repackaged under the name of other organisations, which is clearly unacceptable practice. LABE's model of working with the district government offices and sharing office space within the district government office compounds is also being replicated by other agencies. LABE has some concerns about the nature of other competitive enterprises where these may involve loss of LABE's Intellectual Property (IP). Nevertheless, LABE's intervention in terms of collaboration with the MoES and NCDC, for example in respect of the *Pedagogy Handbook* for teachers, takes on added significance in the context of these matters.

6.5.   Regional and District Based Programme Officers

Information was collected directly through conversations and interviews with the Team Leader of the West Nile districts and five of the six LABE Programme Officers (POs) based in each of the six districts in which the project is conducted. In addition, the evaluators observed each of these LABE staff as they interacted with the various stakeholders in the districts. It is quite clear that these personnel are dedicated, use their initiative, and are energetically involved in every aspect of the project in each district.

The Team Leader and each of the programme Officers interviewed listed and explained their primary responsibilities, namely to promote the implementation of the local language as medium of instruction in the primary schools of the district, particularly, in the 40 project schools in each district, that is in 240 schools across the districts. In order to do this, they are clear that there are several objectives with accompanying strategies which they have had to manage simultaneously. These are:

- Initial and on-going teacher development to support of the 120 primary 1-3 teachers in the 40 project schools in each of six districts (720 teachers, 240 schools), in order to support the use of the local language as medium of instruction in P1-3.
- Contributing towards and working alongside the district level teacher educators, i.e. the CCTs, so that the CCTs have sufficient understanding of MTE in order to integrate this expertise in their work to support teachers to implement the Thematic Curriculum.
- Contributing towards the development and completion of orthographies in each of five languages designated 'local languages' in the six districts, through capacity building of five language boards, and through assisting the language boards to navigate the administrative channels to secure official authorization from NCDC.
- Training of parent educators (720 trained to run 557 parents' literacy classes in total) in order to increase parent participation in their own and their children's education.
- Developing learning resources in the five languages, including
    - Initiating the development and printing of story books for P1-3, in each of the five languages, in collaboration with the language boards;
    - Producing sets of posters, policy briefs and other learning materials;
    - Eliciting learner stories and creative contributions to be included in a series of children's magazines.
- Monitoring implementation and assessment of learner achievement by contributing towards the strengthening of monitoring, evaluation and assessment capacity of District and Local Government education officials, CCTs and teachers (regular monitoring and assessment), subsequent to a baseline study of student achievement in 2010.
- Advocacy (community sensitization), in the form of annual International Mother Language (Tongue) Day celebrations and showcasing of local language artefacts, performances, reading competitions, radio slots etc.
- Building strong co-operative networks amongst all the stakeholders, including at community (village), school, and district (government) levels. This involves securing shared office space within the precinct of the District and Local Government (DLG) offices, sharing resources, keeping officials informed of activities, challenges and successes, involving all stakeholders in each of the project outputs and activities.

Challenges

The POs work long hours under difficult circumstances. Regular visits to schools using the transportation provided to them (each has a project motorcycle), is time-consuming and often hazardous. Almost every road in the districts is unsealed, pot-holed, and susceptible to the ravages of tropical rainstorms when the roads become treacherously slippery and it is common to see trucks and large vehicles upturned or in deep ditches. These together with various animals on the road make the roads even less safe. Distances between each district centre and schools in the rural and remote areas are often long or take a long time to travel.

Negotiations with all of the stakeholders in the districts and keeping everything in balance are tricky. The issue of money, finances and budgets, or the insufficiency of funds required for the needs of each of the activities and responsibilities, is a constant headache. Unexpectedly high inflation over the years of the project, 2009-2013, has had an impact on the delivery of some of the planned activities or outputs. For example, the parent educators were to receive a small stipend for their contribution towards liaising between parents and the school, bringing parents into the schools for joint parent-child classroom sessions, parent classes, and organizing the use of reading and other MTE project materials in the village communities by both children and adults. The stipend was intended to cover the costs of transportation between the community and the school. However, the stipend now is completely inadequate, even as a token consideration for the work that these invaluable people do, and PEs are 'out of pocket'. The POs, as the people who front up the project at the district level are thus on the receiving end of disgruntled and disappointed PEs. Several POs say that PEs who have been trained by them have been recruited by other NGOs working in education because these are able to offer more competitive remuneration, and this weakens the LABE initiative. LABE staff has trained the PEs whereas other NGOs receive the benefit of the training.

The DLGs do not have the funds to support the provision of more reading materials to schools, and insufficient resources are supplied from NCDC in Kampala. Thus the implementation of MTE and provision of materials is largely left to the LABE story books and these, valuable as they are, were not intended to take the place of the education system's own provision of learning materials. Because the POs have delivered policy briefs and other learning materials (packs of numeracy and poster materials) to schools and home learning centres, the communities have come to believe that LABE is and should be responsible for delivering more and in sufficient quantities. The POs presence in the communities means that they are thus in the firing line of frustrated people who recognize the weaknesses of the education system in this regard and rely on resources in whatever form from LABE.

Regarding collaboration with the language boards, there is a complication with the Acholi Language Board. Originally LABE was working with a number of people who are experienced in Acholi language and linguistics. In April 2013, NCDC constituted a new board, retaining only one member of the original board. This has created difficulties in Gulu region in terms of work already in the pipeline with the original board and a new inexperienced board.

While the planned teacher development activities have proceeded, the system's practice of transferring teachers has meant that teachers who have been trained to implement MTE have been transferred to other schools leaving the project schools with on-going issues regarding training of new staff.

The range of responsibilities required of the POs is broad and complex. POs believe that they are stretched too thinly on the ground or that there are too many tasks expected of them and too many sub-projects to juggle. Several of the staff in the field suggest that should this project have a second phase or be extended, it would be advisable to narrow the range of activities and to allow more depth of focus.

Achievements

The Team Leader(s) and Programme Officers have to have expert networking expertise and they have to build up their own and LABE's reputation for reliability and trustworthy expertise. To this end it is clear from the interactions between all the stakeholders, whether government officials, parent learners, teachers, language board members and CCTs, that the LABE staff are well-received and highly respected for the work that they undertake. In each of the districts DLG officers expressed high regard for the work of the POs and the LABE staff responsible for various portfolios, e.g. monitoring and evaluation, and team leadership. This feedback was similarly given by language board members, CCTs, school principals, teachers and parent educators. The Team Leader and Monitoring and Evaluation Manager have together with the POs led intricate negotiations and engaged in delicate sensitization activities which include consulting with community elders and religious leaders in addition to the other stakeholders already mentioned. This has been in order to mediate some of the resistance towards the elevation of local languages in education owing to several decades of a policy based on the privileging of English and resultant loss of confidence in the value of local languages in education.

Whereas initially the Team Leader and POs were expecting to work with story bags provided to a limited number of homes where parents were happy to share reading materials and learning spaces for village and community children, there was a community-driven change which required encouraging responses from the LABE staff. The communities themselves decided that the setting up of home learning centres (HLCs) would be more useful and allow easier access to child and adult learners than was possible with the reading or story corners in selected homes. Approximately half-way through the project, from 2011 onwards, the POs and Team Leader therefore had to take on an additional challenge, that of supporting the establishment of the HLCs in addition to their other portfolios. As discussed elsewhere, the establishment of HLCs is undoubtedly one of the most successful outcomes of the MTE project. The HLCs have become multi-purpose educational centres where in some communities there are adult literacy and numeracy classes, and these have led to the establishment of village or community saving schemes. Whereas initially the plan was to have parents attending literacy and numeracy classes in the schools after hours, now they can attend these in the village which is more convenient for them. In other communities, in addition to offering out of school hours space and support for school learners, and adult learners, there are also early child care facilities. In other words HLCs offer early childcare and preschool opportunities for children too young for primary school and this frees up parents to conduct their agricultural or micro-economic enterprises.

The team leader provides continual mentoring for the POs. Meetings are periodically organised for all the POs to get together to share challenges and successes and the POs support one another by offering advice in respect of challenges and successes.

Recommendations emerging from the team leader and project officers are that:

- o The MTE project needs a second phase in order to strengthen capacity. None of the current stakeholders are confident that the project will succeed and strengthen in the absence of LABE at this time.
- o Should it be possible for an extension or second phase, then the recommendation is to focus on fewer objectives and to work on these at a deeper level.
- o There is consensus about the need to extend and strengthen teacher development, particularly in regard to the training component (mostly for teachers, but also for CCTs and PEs).
- o There are two views regarding the publication of story books or reading materials. There is agreement that there need to be more readers available in schools for learners to read because currently too many learners have to share books. Although there is supposed to be a ratio of 1 book to 3 learners, the researchers found that the ratio could shrink to 1 book between 10 learners, which is problematic. One suggestion is to limit the number of titles published but to have larger print runs. The other view is to have more titles and more print runs.
- o The stipends for PEs need to be upgraded as quickly as possible to prevent further attrition and also to compensate for out of pocket travel expenditure, etc.
- o Additional focus on supporting adult education is also urged. The HLCs appear to be having a particularly beneficial impact on women's empowerment, and the encouragement of girls to remain in school beyond adolescence. There is a suggestion that LABE focuses on the HLCs and assists in the introduction of micro-economic enterprises, so that the HLCs become more sustainable in the community.
- o The use of motorcycles as a mode of transport may need to be reconsidered in terms of time and cost-related efficiencies.

7. Partnership and Collaboration between AET and LABE

A strong collaborative partnership between AET and LABE is evident in the data received from interviews with LABE staff and various communications with AET. A set of reports on capacity-building and skills' enhancement training of all LABE staff in relation to financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and pedagogical training in literacy development in the local language/mother tongue, was provided to the evaluators by AET (cf. AET 2011; 2012a, b, c).LABE staff confirm that they have participated successfully in capacity development programmes facilitated by AET. The Head of Programmes (and Acting Director at the time of the writing of this Report), Head of Finance and the Monitoring and Evaluation officer contributed the information upon which the following discussion is based.

The training programmes have offered staff stationed in the districts access to skills which are necessary for monitoring and evaluation, i.e. in data collection, analysis and reporting. This has assisted project staff to produce monthly and quarterly reports on time and to submit these to the LABE Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. Staff also report that they are now 'able to distinguish between outputs and outcomes' which is important in understanding key changes and contributions for beneficiaries. Staff have also been trained in the writing of research reports which include quantitative data.

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Training in MTE and literacy pedagogy has given LABE staff encouragement and confidence:

> …to develop local curriculum for family learning sessions using both the government thematic curriculum and LABE's adult learning materials. They have also increased their skills in continuous assessment of literacy and numeracy learning in local languages which complement the assessment tools used by teachers in primary schools. It is also from these trainings that POs, whose professional training is mainly [in] adult education and social sciences, have been able to work confidently with the school systems (teachers and school heads) where professional training in education is a key requirement (Head of Programmes, LABE, August 2013).

Training in finance has empowered project staff to develop skills in financial planning and budgeting, which are important for the implementation of project activities in the districts. The training has improved reporting procedures to the Head of Finance upon the completion of activities, and this has improved accountability between the district offices and the Kampala office.

8. Analysis of the Findings

There is little doubt that the LABE MTE project has had significant success, has achieved most of its objectives, has exceeded some of the objectives, and its work has led to unexpected outcomes which are regarded as of particular importance to the participating communities in the six districts. The seven objectives of the MTE project and their attendant activities and outputs, as itemised and annotated in Appendix 5, have been discussed in the findings of the field research in Section 4, and in relation to interviews with national stakeholders, LABE staff and AET staff in Sections 5, 6 and 7 above. Highlighted below are key achievements and challenges or risks related to the project between 2009 and 2013. These are discussed in relation to the major objectives of the MTE Project.

8.1 Improved learner achievement in literacy and numeracy

Increased enrolment, particularly for girls

A key indicator of successful implementation of the curriculum, in this the thematic curriculum which uses the local language as medium for lower primary learners in the six districts in which the MTE project is being conducted, is to do with enrolment. In Table 2 and 3 below, pupil enrolment of girls and boys is shown for 2010 and 2013. Overall there has been an improvement in enrolment. It is clear that over the three years 2010 to 2013, enrolment of P1-3 learners has increased from 104,502 in the six districts to 141,733. This is an increased enrolment of 35.63% overall. This is an extraordinary achievement.

Table 2: Enrolment of learners in 2010

District	Boys	Girls	Total
Adjumani	10155	10177	20332
Amuru	5762	5414	11176
Arua	11640	12708	24348
Gulu	5117	5187	10304
Koboko	10353	10352	20705
Yumbe	9377	8260	17637
Total	**52404**	**52098**	**104502**

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(Data compiled for this report by Simon Mukula, 2013)

Table 3: Enrolment of learners in 2013

District	Boys	Girls	Total
Adjumani	11398	10950	22348
Amuru	7902	7889	15791
Arua	14718	15382	30100
Gulu	10215	10422	20637
Koboko	13407	16587	29994
Yumbe	11833	11030	22863
Total	**69473**	**72260**	**141733**

(Data compiled for this report by Simon Mukula 2013)

The enrolment of girls has increased by 38.7%. Whereas in 2010 more boys were enrolled than girls, now there are more girls than boys enrolled in the first three years of primary, thus the improvement of girls' enrolment has exceeded that of boys. Notable is the improved gender ratio in Yumbe and Amuru over this period. In Adjumani, while there has been an overall increase in enrolment, this has been greater in respect of boys than of girls, resulting in a decline the ratio of girls to boys.

Achievement in literacy and numeracy

The Baseline Survey on Literacy and Numeracy (LABE 2010) and follow-up Literacy and Numeracy Testing Reports (LABE 2011b and 2012) show significantly improved achievement in literacy and numeracy in the project schools for learners in P2 and P3. However, there is a noticeable decline in achievement of students in the 2013 assessment. Whereas the assessments were conducted in November-December in previous years, in anticipation of the closure of the project in August 2013, the 2013 assessment was conducted in May-June, several months earlier, in order to ensure that the data might be analysed by the scheduled end of the project. See Tables 4 and 5 below:

Table 4: Test data summary Primary 2
n = 1200

Skills	% of pupils proficient			
Numeracy	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013***
Matching symbols to numbers	89%	96%	97%	93%
Simple arithmetic	45%	59%	61%	51%
Literacy - reading	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Word recognition	51%	86%	75%	70%
Sentence recognition	14%	25%	23%	21%
Literacy - writing	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Labelling	35%	76%	72%	51%
Copying	10%	20%	32%	13%

(Data compiled for this report by Simon Mukula 2013)

There is no doubt that the 2013 data are disappointing. However, the administration of the 2013 tests, five-six months earlier than in previous years compromises the validity of the data to a serious extent. All the same, from a theoretical perspective, the increased student achievement in 2011 and 2012 is somewhat surprisingly high. From what is known of the potential for children's reading and

numeracy to improve significantly, there are a number of key indicators which need to be present. These include: adequate supply of reading materials for each child, adequate supply of paper and pencils/pens, acceptable teacher : student ratios, adequate teacher development (particularly in relation to the use of the mother tongue where this has not been well-established) and so on.

Table 5: Test data summary Primary 3
n = 1200

Skills	% of pupils proficient			
Numeracy	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Matching symbols to numbers	46%	74%	73%	66%
Simple arithmetic	38%	69%	72%	64%
Number patterns	44%	56%	53%	43%
Re-ordering numbers by size	42%	62%	63%	71%
Literacy - reading	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Sentence recognition	68%	87%	88%	75%
Missing letters/words	35%	60%	60%	39%
Shapes	8%	15%	20%	11%
Literacy - writing	**2010**	**2011**	**2012**	**2013**
Copying	20%	17%	29%	12%
Labelling	25%	34%	50%	29%

(Data compiled for this report by Simon Mukula 2013)

Despite the change to mother-tongue education and the support which LABE has undoubtedly provided, the larger systemic conditions are not yet in place. In the view of the lead evaluator, it would be unrealistic to have expected dramatic improvements in reading and writing and those that appear in 2011 and 2012 are a bonus, but unexpected. Although the data for 2013 are low and disappointing, they are however realistic given the timing of the assessment and in relation to the conditions in and resources with which the children are being taught.

8.2. Increased community and parental awareness of the value of local languages in education

Co-ordinated public awareness strategies, 'sensitisation', have been conducted in an on-going manner in each of the six districts since the inception of the project. It is clear from the interview responses in each of the districts that this continues and coheres particularly around the preparations for and celebrations of UNESCO's International Mother Language Day. The LABE system is to take these celebrations to a different sub-district each year, thereby extending and localising the focus on local languages.

The degree to which parents and communities participate in their children's schooling and educational life is regarded as a key indicator of successful achievement in the international research and literature. The ways in which the MTE project has involved parents (grandparents) and communities in school learning, through joint parent-child classes each week and through adult literacy classes are significant indicators of the success of this project.

Attendance and implications of adult literacy and numeracy classes

It was anticipated that about 16 800 adults would participate in classes. However, this figure has been exceeded during the lifespan of the project. A total of 20 722adults are registered as

participating in these classes. Of these, 12 698 are women and 8 024 are men. There are also participants who are not recorded in the class registers, so the actual figure is likely to be higher than this according to the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager. The evaluators found good records in registers, but also instances where the registers were full and the PEs did not yet have replacement registers, so there it is likely that more parents attend classes than are reflected here. The AET programme manager has pointed out that it has been more difficult to bring male participants into regular attendance of these classes. Some of the reasons given to the evaluators for this phenomenon during the fieldwork included the need for men to be involved in tilling soil, planting and harvesting (i.e. the rhythms of agricultural lifestyles and economy). In the view of the evaluators, the participation of 20 000 adult learners is a significant achievement. Informal discussions with parent learners in these classes were informative. Parents were keen to indicate the qualitative benefits which literacy and numeracy have brought to them. The significance of being able to sign one's own name in terms of self-esteem cannot be sufficiently emphasised. More than this, these classes have allowed adults to develop confidence and independence in relation to their own economic management, use of mobile phones for monetary transactions, and writing letters, amongst other things.

Growing out of the adult literacy and numeracy classes has been the establishment of Community or Village Saving Schemes. The communities have worked out their own rules and regulations for managing these schemes and they are used to assist members to begin micro-enterprises. This has the potential over the medium term to develop strong local economies.

Probably one of the most unexpected, yet most significant developments to emerge from the MTE project has been the establishment of the 551 home learning centres (HLCs) attached to the 240 schools. These centres provide conveniently located spaces for adult learners as well as after school hours learning spaces of primary children. In several instances, they also provide an opportunity for the establishment of pre-school/kindergarten early childcare.

Initially reported ambivalence or resistance towards MTE in the six districts appears to have dissipated or was initially over-reported. Ward et al. (2006) suggest that most parents were actually in favour of MTE from the start, and this study's questionnaire data of a small sample of respondents in the six districts show no sign of ambivalence towards or antipathy towards MTE at present. Rather it shows that there is widespread acceptance of MTE or local language education.

8.3. Increased capacity of language boards

NCDC initially invited each district of Uganda to establish a language board in 1999. By the time that the LABE project came into being, there had already been some initial development of language boards in these districts. However, it is obvious from the interviews with the district-based and Kampala-based respondents, that LABE has played a significant role in capacity development, orthographic development, and materials development training. The five language boards, for Aringa, Kakwa, Madi, Lugbara and Acholi languages are in different stages of official recognition. It needs to be emphasised that the language boards perform a particular function in that they are key to both the initiation and encouragement of literary endeavour in each of the local languages. Their ability to co-ordinate and foster a culture of reading and writing is essential to adequate resourcing of the use of local language in education.

The potential contribution of these boards may not yet have been fully explored in relation to the kind of language support services which they could develop under their auspices, such as interpreting and translation services. Once the orthographies have been finalised, there is good reason to consider how these boards could be further capacitated with training in the use of information technology in order to develop electronic data banks for orthographic, dictionary, terminological lists, and literacy resources, once the orthographies have been finalised.

Ideally, the language boards should be able to take over some of LABE's work in relation to public awareness campaigns or 'sensitisation', co-ordination of the UNESCO International Mother Language Day, writing competitions, book weeks, and so on. This would free LABE up to focus on community empowerment in the form of adult literacy and numeracy, support of parent educators, and teacher education.

The evaluation of the LABE intervention by the evaluators has led to particular findings which have a possibly high risk factor for a long-term theoretical approach to orthographic development in Uganda. This relates to a recent phenomenon which has been identified as the 'fragmentation' of languages in Uganda (Ward et al.2006; Penny et al. 2008). This matter was the subject of some attention at an MLEN workshop on 5 July 2013, held in Kampala. If Ugandan languages were indeed fragmenting, then this has serious implications for education.

Discussions with language board members in the districts has given rise to a concern that there may be important decisions being made by each language board or set of language stakeholders which set languages on a divergent path. The history of orthographic development in Africa has been a complicated and contested one since the Rejaf Conference in 1928 in Sudan when linguists working with languages across sub-Saharan Africa came together to discuss ways to develop more convergent orthographies –i.e. ones which brought language varieties closer together rather than those which drove them further apart.

If development takes a convergent path, then it is likely that more people will be able to read the written texts which are relevant to closely related languages. If development takes a divergent path, the result is that fewer people would be able to read texts written in divergent orthographies. Fewer people would be able to use electronic equipment (computers and laptops) to produce text easily. Over time, this may very well lead to small print-runs which become less cost-effective, and gradually the result is likely to be a return to English-only publications and learning materials for languages with smaller numbers of speakers. On the other hand, convergent approaches offer opportunities for wider readership and stronger likelihood that the publication of materials will be cost-effective. Drawing the written form of languages closer together may result in more widespread or democratic use of the local languages in education. It needs to be emphasised here that the written and spoken form of languages are two entirely different phenomena. It is not necessary to insist on written differentiation between closely related languages based on pronunciation and variations of vocabulary. For example, speakers of Mandarin (Putonghua), Cantonese, Hokkien etc. use the same writing system when reading and writing classical Chinese languages, yet they often claim that they do not understand each other when communicating in spoken language. Speakers of many different regional varieties of English around the world tend to use either the UK-based or US-based international variety of the written language, yet their speakers use widely different forms.

This means that developments which are geared towards a further separation or fragmentation of written languages in Uganda may be counter-productive. Increasing the degree of difficulty in learning how to read and write languages (e.g. by increasing the number of diacritics and vowels) is an exceptionally serious matter with long-term consequences. The long term consequences of orthographic developments need to be discussed and thoroughly debated in order to ensure that the best outcomes for the future use of local languages is guaranteed. To this end, as a matter of some urgency, there needs to be a national forum discussion on this matter, and it would be important for this to be convened by an agency considered to have limited vested interests in the process.

8.4. Production and use of sample reading materials

There is ample evidence of the development and printing of sets of story books in each of the five languages. The main challenge is that while these were only intended to be sample materials, in the absence of other reading and learning materials for learners in P1-3, these are often the only reading texts for children and adults in the MTE project schools. The ratio of 1 book to each of 3 learners is probably correct in terms of overall print-runs; however, because the books are distributed in the HLCs and schools, the numbers available to learners in classrooms are painfully inadequate. Owing to the paucity of materials and the limited number of titles available to learners, they inevitably will learn the stories off by heart and this does not foster long-term reading proficiency. The challenge is how best to assist NCDC to print and distribute far more learning materials for primary children. A further challenge is to secure the system's support for the work of language boards in order to develop appropriate reading materials and translation services for NCDC. An NGO like LABE cannot possibly provide all the reading materials for children in lower primary. Yet, because of LABE's presence in the schools and communities it is LABE that is constantly under pressure to produce more materials and the POs and Regional Managers/Team Leaders are in the front line of receiving this pressure.

8.5. Production of children's magazines

The children's magazines have been successful and it is reported that the learners' whose stories, drawings and other artefacts have been included in the magazines are encouraged and feel validated. Even if most children's work cannot be included in the magazines, the fact that some children's work is included offers encouragement to others. Not all of the volumes that were intended to be published were completed. Partly this is because of rising printing costs and a reallocation of expenditure on this item towards the anticipated costs of the teacher's guide, the *Pedagogy Handbook*. Partly this is also because there have been too many expectations placed on the POs and the Team Leaders who are hard pressed to acquit themselves adequately in each of their expected roles. One possibility would be to equip each school with a computer, and to provide each school to with training in information technology, so that these materials could be produced in each school, and thus involve more learners. However, this may be a longer term objective and a more practical alternative could be to transfer the responsibility to the language boards once these are sufficiently capacitated.

8.6. Teacher education

Each of the stakeholders indicated the contribution of LABE towards the work of CCTs, involving capacity development in relation to MTE, evaluation and assessment. The presence of a dedicated

PO in each district as well as regular contact with the Team Leader or Regional Manager and the Monitoring and Evaluation Manager, as well as other LABE staff, has ensured on-going support for teacher education alongside the CCTs in each of the project schools and in relation to the training and support of parent educators (PEs). The value of this work is acknowledged in the DLGs and by NCDC and MoES.

What has been learned from this work has informed LABE's contrition to the *Pedagogy Handbook for Teaching in Local Language*, in collaboration with NCDC, and which is due for publication in the last quarter of 2013. This publication, in conjunction with a national forum on teacher education to be convened by LABE at the end of 2013 extends LABE's work to a high level national platform. That LABE's work is so highly thought of at a national level is indicative of the quality of expertise which resides within the organisation.

8.7. Dissemination of experiences to policy makers

LABE staff have maintained a participatory and collaborative approach with district and national levels of government. LABE participates in the Multi-lingual Education Network (MLEN) as does NCDC. Through this network, the lessons learned by all stakeholders are circulated and shared by a wide set of interested parties, including language associations, writers' guilds and language boards in other Ugandan districts. A mature working relationship with NCDC and MoES, which has resulted in the production of the *Pedagogy Handbook* is a strong indicator of the extent to which LABE's work is being disseminated amongst policy makers. The Minister of State for Primary Education made a particular point of emphasising the value which government places upon LABE's work during a meeting with the project evaluators in July 2013. (See also 5.1 and 8.6 above).

8.8. Significant challenges and risks

The main challenges and risks to the successful implementation of the MTE Project are more to do with the national and district level conditions than they are to do with LABE's work and delivery. The MTE Project sits within the national MoES and NCDC commitment to implement the Primary School Curriculum, and specifically the thematic component for Primary 1-3. LABE's interventions pave the way for the wider implementation across the Ugandan primary school system and demonstrate the advantages to community and broad stakeholder involvement in education. However, it is at the end of the day incumbent upon the state to provide adequate learning materials (reading /story-books and textbooks) for each child in the system. It is also necessary to develop a plan to ensure that each child has simple but adequate supplied of exercise books and pencils in order that writing and arithmetic can be practised on paper each day. Without these simple resources, it is virtually impossible for children to learn to read and write. While LABE's initiation and supply of sets of story-books and children's magazines have made a contribution to ease the situation, they are a drop in the ocean, even in the six northern districts. Whereas LABE has made contributions to teacher education, the system of transferring teachers has meant that the human resources have not remained constant within the project schools and it has been difficult for LABE to maintain stability within these schools. These are conditions over which LABE has little control. Teaching children in the language that they know best, is undoubtedly the best policy and approach, but it has to be well-resourced, and this is an issue for the state.

9. Recommendations

9.1. Extend timeframe, or initiate a second phase for the MTE Project

It is recommended that the MTE Project is extended at least for another four years or that a second four year phase of the project continues without a break in activities in each of the districts.

Each of the relevant stakeholders at national, district and school community level have argued that a four year MTE project in this part of Uganda needs to be extended for at least another four years. The chief reason is that these districts are in the early stages of recovery after decades of particularly brutal civil conflict, and it is not possible both to heal the communities and establish sustainable programmes within such a relatively short period of time. As one DLG official argued, LABE's work is consistent, reliable, and it has remained while other NGOs have come and gone. The expertise developed and nurtured by AET is significant and there are strong arguments that this should be retained and used to expedite further developments in the six affected districts.

9.2. Consolidate objectives, possibly focussing on fewer objectives and fewer activities

It is recommended that a second phase of the MTE Project should include fewer objectives in order to permit a deepening and consolidation of areas in which LABE has the capacity to make the greatest impact. It would be advisable for LABE to focus on teacher education at the school, district and national levels as well as the capacity development of parent educators at community and school level.

Unless it were possible to increase the district-based staff from one to two Programme Officers, the complexity and range of expected objectives, activities and outputs are too numerous. The danger is spreading human resources too thinly. The POs need to get to schools and the HLCs more frequently because their face-to-face support is needed by teachers and PEs who are struggling to make use of the local language in their teaching. The reason for this is that teachers themselves are very unlikely to have learned to read and write the local language, and they have to become sufficiently confident in the written language to be able to teach their learners effectively. While the MTE project had to invest in a wide range of activities in order to build community awareness and support in the first four years of the project, it would be important in the second phase to consolidate in areas of particular strength. Is it possible that LABE might be able to negotiate other partnerships where other agencies take more responsibility for certain activities, such as the awareness/sensitisation programmes and a lesser role in the organisation of International Mother Language Day activities.

The experiences of increasing contact with schools, teachers and parent educators would be invaluable in terms of informing teacher education more widely across the country. It is therefore recommended that LABE focus on developing dedicated teacher education modules which might continue to be trialled at district level and then included in regional and national level training. A serious weakness in the implementation of new curriculum in most countries of the world has been an underestimation of how much and for how long teachers in schools need support in order to implement changes in their teaching practices. Since LABE already has made significant strides in this area, it is strongly recommended that this area become a site of future concentration and that LABE's expertise at working with stakeholders at all levels of the system is used to maximum effect.

LABE's expertise in monitoring, evaluation and assessment, is an important aspect of the potential contribution particularly at school and district levels.

9.3.   Language boards

It is strongly recommended that a national conference on orthographic development be convened. The purpose of such a conference or forum would be to guide agreements on the theoretical and practical trajectories of orthographic development.

This is a task which is beyond the capacity of LABE and should be taken on at a higher level. The Secretary General for the Uganda National Commission for UNESCO (UNATCOM) has offered to facilitate such a national workshop/convention, but this may require some collaboration in fund-raising. This is a matter of urgent relevance and needs to be flagged with all relevant stakeholders in order to ensure that the long-term consequences of orthographic development are clearly understood. This in no way suggests that the autonomy of each language board or the creative contributions of language associations, writers' guilds and other language bodies should be compromised. There is every reason why the enthusiasm and commitment of linguists and writers should be encouraged and fostered.

Language boards need further capacity development in order that they can become sufficiently empowered to assume responsibility for the writing and preparation for publication of reading materials for school learners, perform translation and interpreting services for district and even national stakeholders, and to train teachers and other stakeholders to use the orthographies. Ideally the language boards should take over the co-ordination of the UNESCO International Mother Language Day celebrations and other public awareness activities.

Each language board needs to be provided with adequate office space by the local DLG.

Each language board requires the use of electronic equipment and training to use this in order to produce their own materials and also in order to be able to offer translation services at the district and regional levels. A further recommendation would be that each language board be capacitated with small-scale business expertise in order that they might offer not-for-profit business services, the funds for which could be used to support the running costs and activities of each board (see also 9.6 below).

9.4.   Parent educators and HLCs

It is recommended that LABE focus on continued support and further capacity development of parent educators to strengthen the home-school connections; and to build the internal capacity of the home learning centres to offer early childcare opportunities and micro-economic skills development for adult learners.

Parent educators require further support in terms of on-going capacity development and remuneration in order to build on their expertise and role in fostering home-school linkages in the six districts. The emergence of the home learning centres during the lifespan of this project provides an opportunity to extend the potential of these in a second phase. It is therefore recommended that further support of both the PEs and HLCs are included in a second phase of the MTE project in order to strengthen home-school connections to the educational advantage of the communities, adult learners, pre-school children's child care, and primary school learners' achievement and retention. In

particular, it is recommended that a second phase of the project would focus on the early childcare possibilities within the HLCs, and training of PEs and other community members in early childcare education. A further recommendation in relation to the HLCs is to consider taking on board a request from the communities to introduce other forms of adult education which would support the establishment of micro-enterprises and hence the economic independence of villagers.

9.5.   Reading and learning materials production

It is recommended that LABE focus on transferring materials development activities to the language boards and NCDC as soon as possible. Alternatively, it would be recommended that LABE enter into partnerships with other agencies engaged in materials development, e.g. via MLEN.

Where possible, LABE should consider moving towards handing over the development of reading and other learning materials in local languages to other agencies, such as the language boards and the NCDC, and thus relieving itself of this task. Clearly this may require a staged transfer of responsibility, to be negotiated with both language boards and NCDC.

9.6.   Electronic resources in local languages for schools, language boards and the national system

It is recommended that each language board, in the short term; and each school in the medium term, develop capacity in information technology. The sustainability of development in each of these sets of stakeholders is reliant on this capability. At the national level, it is recommended that an open-access National Databank for Local Languages is established to increase opportunities to access learning and teaching materials at district and school level.

Even if this were to begin with one computer in each school and language board office, this would be an important step forward and it would immediately reduce the reliance on external agents for the production of reading and learning materials.

At a regional and national level, the development of a website and electronic data bank would provide opportunities for resources to be uploaded and shared. These resources could include lesson exemplars, examples of lessons that work well, and reading materials etc. This recommendation is for NCDC or for LABE to lobby with NCDC and other stakeholders. It is not for LABE to undertake.

9.7.   Relationship between community stakeholders and LABE

It is recommended that LABE ensure that communities have a clear understanding of the boundaries between LABE's responsibilities and contributions and those responsibilities and contributions expected of the community, as well as those expected of the DLGs and the national education system.

Community expectations of what LABE can and ought to deliver need to become more realistic. It is therefore recommended that LABE develop a strategy which is clear and concise and which informs communities of the limitations of its engagement with the community. This is to protect both communities and LABE staff from any misunderstandings about responsibilities and issues of accountability. It is also an important aspect of community empowerment in that communities need

to take ownership of initiatives, contribute towards and participate in the work and activities of developing stronger non-formal and formal educational environments. Communities now need to develop a mature understanding of their own agency and co- dependency rather than slipping into relationships of one directional dependency. At the same time, communities need to distinguish between government (at local and national levels) responsibilities and those of LABE.

9.8.   Language education policy monitoring and review

It is recommended that MoES and NCDC have an on-going language policy review process which is responsive to changes as these occur on the ground.

This recommendation is to ensure on-going support of the use of local languages in education as the primary mediums of instruction, and to ensure that children receive the appropriate configuration of languages in order to guarantee their successful academic achievement through primary and secondary school. This recommendation is also intended to ensure the best match of the linguistic expertise of teachers with that of their learners.

The mobility of people has increased dramatically over the last two decades and this is having an effect on language use, even in rural and remote contexts. The reality is that most communities are now multilingual and that the use of terms such as 'mother tongue' or 'local language' may come be seen as too narrow for contemporary and emerging contexts over the next decade or more. 'Local language' does have more flexibility than 'mother tongue' and does allow for the possibility and reality that more than one local language is used in most districts nowadays. Nevertheless, there are also cogent reasons why the term 'mother tongue' prevents ambiguity about which language should be used in a particular community. At the same time, migration whether based on economic or socio-political circumstances, means that each community is increasingly becoming linguistically diverse. This diversity will ultimately need to be addressed at local and national levels of the system. There is an tendency in the international community towards considering the term 'multilingual education' which allows for different combinations of languages in different districts or regions, and the current debates suggest that 'multilingualism' is becoming the 'new linguistic dispensation' (Singleton, Fishman, Aronin & O'Laoire 2013).

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Appendices

Seven appendices accompany this Report, in a separate file.