

POLICY BRIEF: MTB-MLE in Regions V and VI

Introduction

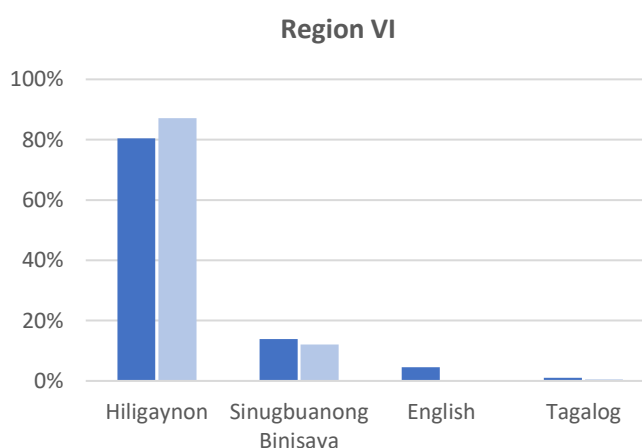
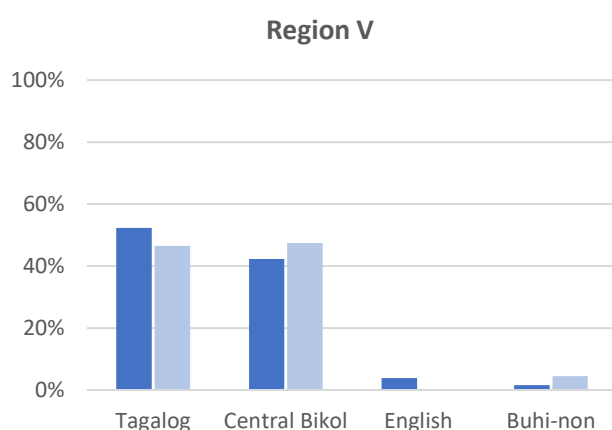
Implementing mother-tongue based education in a multilingual context like the Philippines requires a full appreciation of the diversity of languages spoken across communities and schools and among students and their teachers. DepEd's Learner Information System which assigns a language to students when they are registered fails to capture a true picture of the languages students speak, primarily because it relies on the teacher to select the language assigned to each student. For example, in Region V, most teachers simply assign "Bikol" to their students. The USAID-funded ABC+ project deployed a computerized language identification tool to more accurately assess students and teachers individually and thus identify the primary and secondary languages that they speak. Below is a summary of the findings from the use of that tool in select Schools Divisions in Regions V and VI.

Results Using the Language Identification Tool

The Language Identification Tool was used to evaluate the primary and secondary languages of over 55,000 learners and over 1,900 teachers as shown in the table below.

	Schools	Teachers	Learners
Region V	112	735	19,878
Region VI	122	1169	35,652
Total	234	1,904	55,530

Assessment of the languages students and teachers use in these two regions reveal that most students and teachers in Region V speak either Central Bikol or Tagalog, while the vast majority of both students and teachers in Region VI speak Hiligaynon, as shown in the charts below.



The data from this survey are from selected Schools Divisions as listed below.

Region V	Region VI	In these Schools Divisions, the languages that teachers and students speak matches in 94% of the classrooms. In Region VI, the language of instruction in the schools in these SDs matches the language of a school's community in all cases. In Region V the language of instruction matches the language of the community in 75% of the schools in the selected SDs.
Albay	Escalante City	
Camarines Norte	Himamaylan City	
Camarines Sur	Iloilo City	
Legaspi City	Negros Occidental	
Sorsogon	Roxas City	
	Sagay City	
	Sipalay City	
	Victorias City	

Implementation of MTB-MLE in Regions V and VI

At the request of the Department of Education, the ABC+ project also conducted an additional survey of MTB-MLE implementation in the two regions where the project is active. The survey was designed to mirror research completed in 2019 by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) and explores similar issues related to the implementation of MTB-MLE. These include:

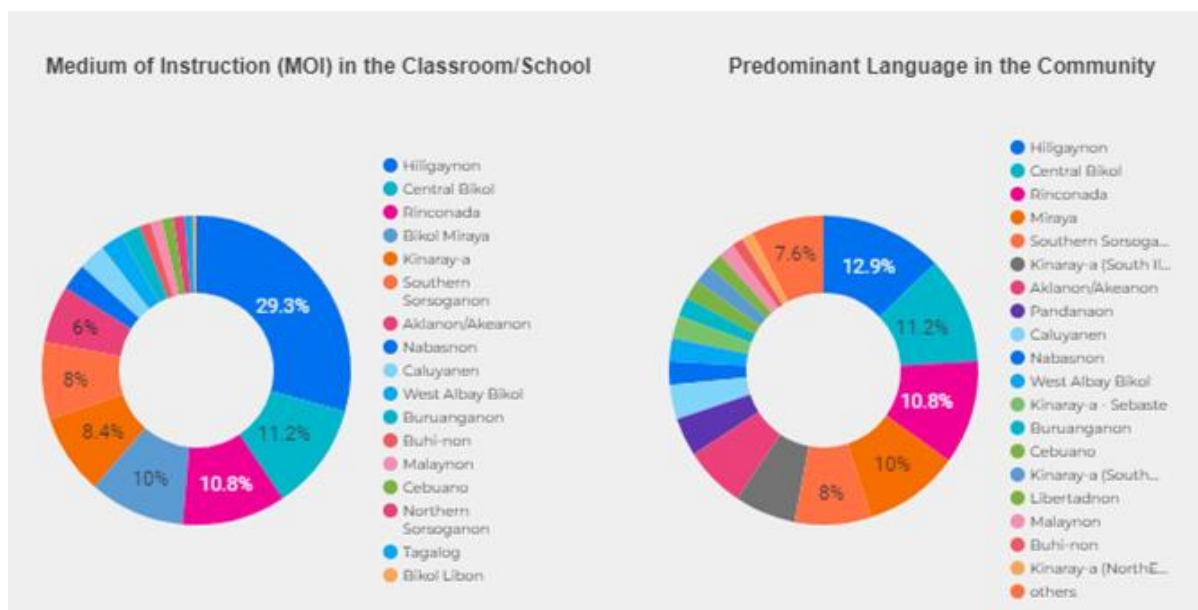
- The choice of and school staff proficiency in the medium of instruction (MOI);
- The extent to which teachers have been appropriately trained to teach beginning reading;
- The availability of teaching and learning materials in the MOI; and
- The level of support for MTB-MLE in schools and their communities.

Schools Divisions for this survey were chosen to represent those that serve communities that are linguistically diverse, as well as those that are more linguistically homogeneous, as shown below. Within each division, a random sample of schools reflecting a cross-section of school sizes and locations (urban/rural) was selected to participate in the survey. The numbers of schools in each SD are shown in the parentheses in the table below.

	Region V	Region VI
Non-Linguistically diverse	Legazpi City (15), Naga City(14)	Cadiz City (30)
Linguistically diverse	Albay (28), Camarines Sur (30), Sorsogon (30)	Aklan (30), Antique (30), Sagay City (9), Iloilo Province (30), Capiz (30)

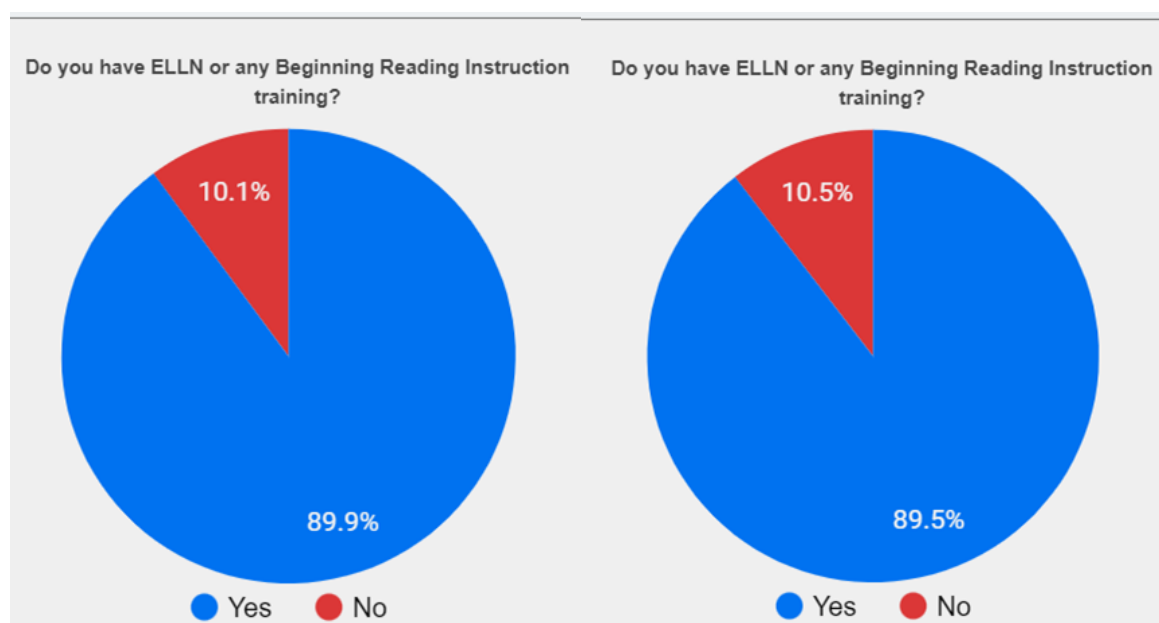
The school head and one Grade 1 teacher from each of the sampled schools responded to an online survey during the first three weeks of June 2023. A total of 272 Grade 1 teachers (113 in R5, 159 in R6) and 272 school heads (115 and 157) responded to the survey.

Diversity of Languages: As can be seen below, in these SDs in the two Regions there is a rich diversity of languages being used as mediums of instruction.



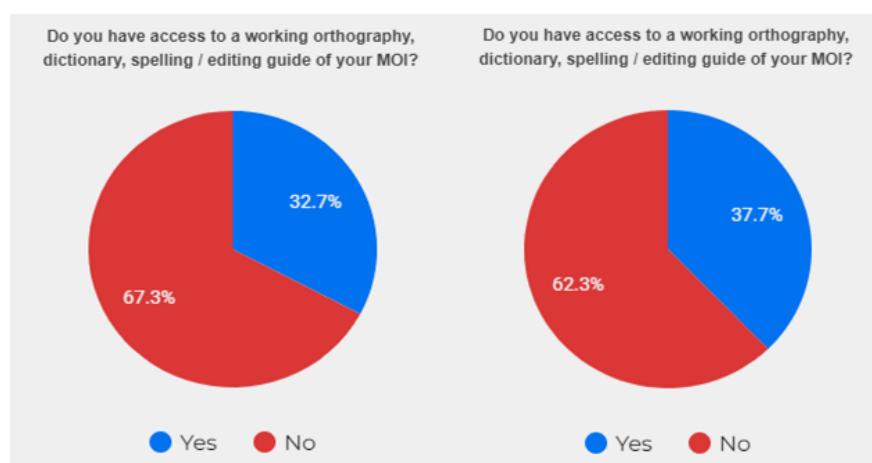
Teacher Preparation for MTB-MLE: Encouragingly, about 90% of teachers and school heads reported being proficiency in the diversity of languages being used as mediums of instruction in these Schools Divisions. For the small percentage of teachers who are not proficient, around 40% of schools reported that they address the issue through the school's Learning Action Cell. And 30 to 35% indicated that they use peer support for those colleagues who are not proficient in the MOI. And 15 to 20% indicate that they rely on community support to help teachers learn the language and/or use teachers' aides who speak the MOI to assist in the classroom.

Ninety percent of Grade 1 teachers in both regions indicated that they had received training on the Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy Program and on Beginning Reading.



Note that the ABC+ project continues to train teachers in Regions V and VI on teaching beginning reading as well as supporting learners' language development and language transitions.

Availability of Materials: While the vast majority of teachers in the selected schools divisions have received training related to implementing MTB-MLE, the provision of materials is less consistently assured as can be seen below.



More than half the teachers surveyed responded that they do not have access to documents relating to the orthography, dictionary, or editing guides for the languages in which they teach. ABC+ has developed editing guides for select languages in both Regions and before the start of the next school year the project will provide each school in those regions with copies in their languages.

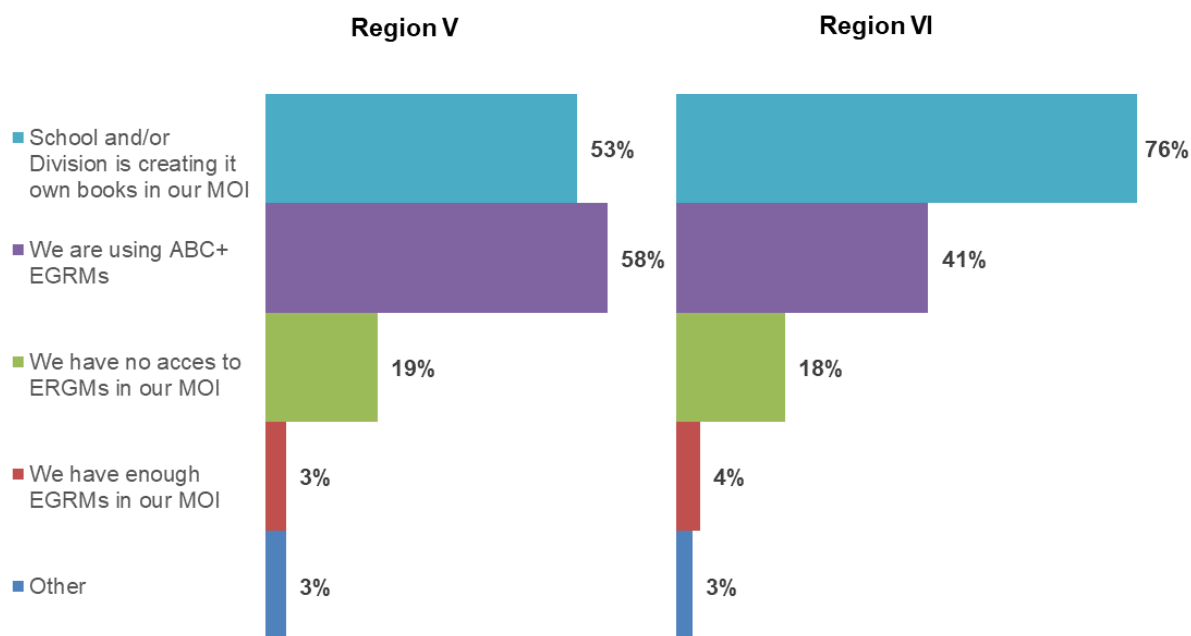
Teachers and school heads report that teaching materials in the relevant languages are more available, and are being developed either by the schools themselves in half the cases or are supplied by the Schools Divisions in over 40% of the cases. Only a small percentage of schools (less than 4% in each Region) report that their schools divisions are not working on developing relevant teaching materials.

These schools divisions are developing reading materials for learners in early grades in the chosen languages of instruction in almost 60% of schools in Region V and over 70% in Region VI. In addition, at least half the schools in Region V and around 40% in Region VI are also using early grade reading materials provided by ABC+. ABC+ has distributed materials in Central Bikol, Tagalog, Hiligaynon, and Sinugbuanong Binisaya and will print and distribute reading books in the rest of the languages being used as mediums of instruction before the 2023-24 school year. The project has also provided Filipino and English materials for Grades 2 and 3 to all schools in Regions V and VI.

When asked about how they address the lack of learner materials in the medium of instruction for early grade reading, School Heads in the selected SDs in Regions V and VI indicated that the school itself or the Schools Divisions are creating books for learners (53% and 76% respectively in RV and RVI) as shown below.

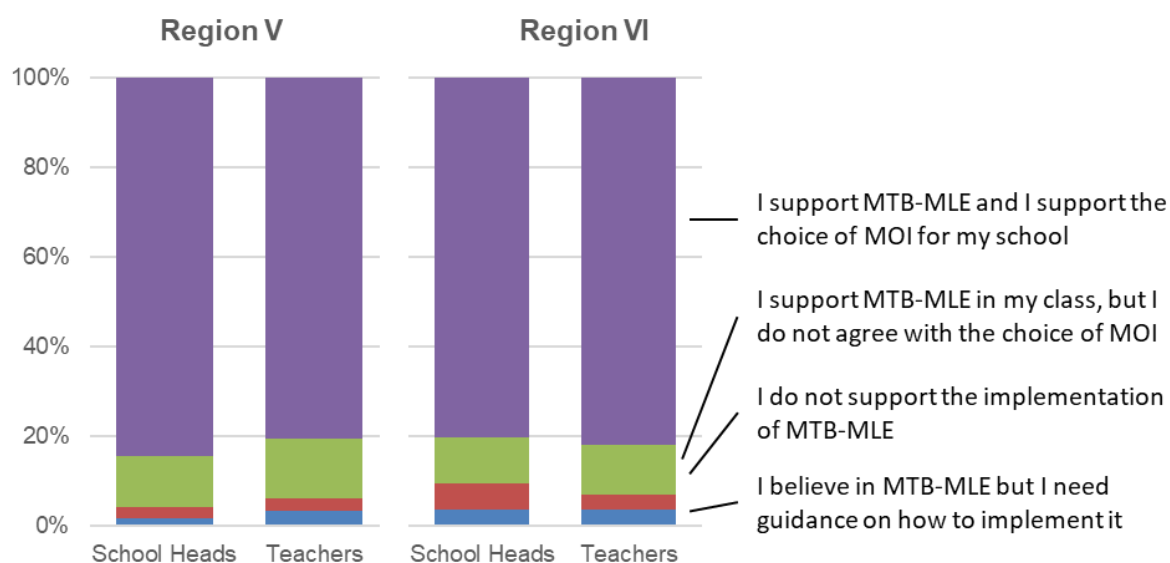
Less than 20% indicated that they have no access to early grade reading materials in the chosen MOI, but only 4% indicate that they have enough student materials.

How schools/divisions are addressing the need for learner materials in the MOI

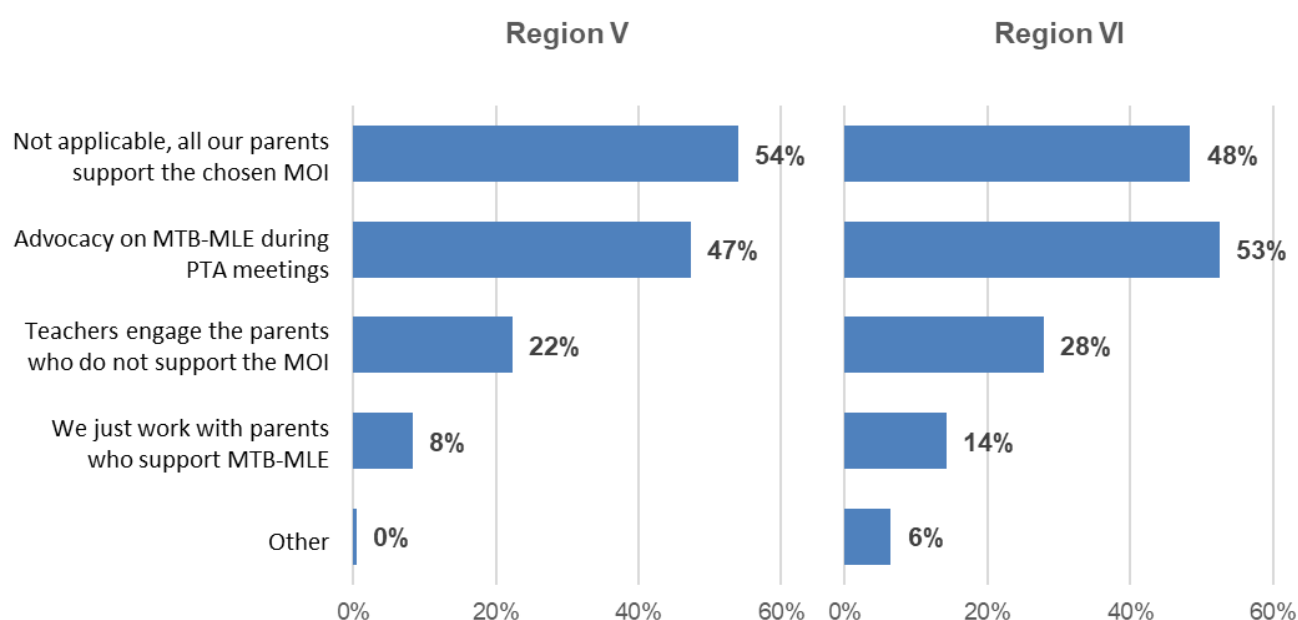


Respondents could give more than one answer

Support for MTB-MLE: School Heads and the Grade 1 teachers included in survey strongly support MTB-MLE and the mediums of instruction that is being used in their schools. Over 80% of teachers and school heads in both Regions indicated that they support implementation of MTB-MLE and that they agree with the chosen medium of instruction for their school. Small percentages of school heads in Region V (3%) and somewhat more in Region VI (6%) state that they do not support MTB-MLE. The chart below summarizes teacher and School Head responses related to support for MTB-MLE and the choice of medium of instruction.



When asked about parents support for MTB-MLE and the chosen medium of instruction in their school, 54% of School Heads and Teachers in Region V, and 48% in Region VI indicated that this is not an issue because parents in their communities support the MOI. In cases where they do not support the chosen MOI, schools for the most part engage in advocacy through the PTA, or have teachers work directly with those parents who do not support MTB-MLE. The chart below summarizes responses related to community support.



Recommendations and Conclusions

Through focus group discussions, regional division supervisors were asked for their recommendations regarding MTB-MLE implementation. There was agreement that DepEd needs to review hiring policies for Grades K to 3 teachers to ensure that teachers trained to address the specific needs of young learners in a multilingual context are retained in those grades (while still able to advance in their careers). They identified the specific training and preparation needed for teachers in those grades and called for more frequent orientation and retraining of new hires. They also recommended that there be dedicated personnel to support MTB-MLE and that mother tongue related activities be included in school improvement plans. They would also like to see budget allocations to meet ongoing staff capacity development needs and materials development, and would appreciate having guidelines for book development at the school level. They recognize the need for improved monitoring and evaluation of MTB-MLE implementation and more studies on its impact.

The data from this survey reveal that teachers and School Heads, with the support of their Schools Divisions and communities are putting forth a variety of efforts to accommodate the language and literacy needs of the learners they are serving. Drawing on the support of the ABC+ project as well as through their own initiative the schools surveyed in the selected divisions have staff who are proficient in the mediums of instruction in which they are asked to teach. The majority of teachers have received training on early literacy. But more needs to be done to ensure that the full complement of reference materials as well as teaching and learning materials are available in the appropriate languages across all schools.

This note was prepared by the USAID-funded ABC+ Project, implemented by RTI International.

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