SIL International® Presents

Facilitator Reference Materials

To be used with

A Guide for Planning the Future of Our Language

First Edition-updated 15 November 2016

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This is a companion document to the *A Guide for Planning the Future of Our Language (First Edition)*. Many people and local communities have contributed to its development, and we are very thankful. Please continue to give us feedback (gpfol_intl@sil.org) so that we may improve this tool for the sake of the language communities around the world.

Disclaimer: The material in the Guide has been tested in a limited number of language communities in South America, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific. Though the Guide is based on commonly accepted sociolinguistic principles, SIL and the authors do not guarantee any specific results for communities that use this Guide. We have seen many encouraging results from our preliminary pilot tests, and believe these show the general usefulness of this tool. However, each community will have its own specific outcomes depending on its own unique situation. To those communities that engage with this material in an effort to better understand and perhaps even shape the way they use language, we wish you the very best.

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Helps for Section A

What does it mean to speak a language "well"? (Section A4)

$\Longrightarrow$ Frequency – YES! This is one thing we have in mind. Children should be speaking the language often each day to talk about many things, in many places and with many people.

$\Longrightarrow$ Fluency – YES! This is another thing we have in mind. By fluency we are talking about a person's ability to use and understand the language without having to constantly search for words or correct pronunciation or grammar. They should use the language naturally, without thinking about it. They can say anything they want to say in the language.

$\Longrightarrow$ Quality or precision of speech –NO! This is NOT in view. The elders or others may feel that children no longer speak a language well because it is now mixed with words from a dominant language. They may feel children do not understand the old ways and therefore lack ability to talk about the old things. But all languages are in constant flux. Languages change based on the changing world around them. This is normal. These changes to a language do not, in and of themselves, affect the future of a language. In fact, just the opposite is often true. If a language remains relevant for important bodies of knowledge in the current context, it will remain strong, even if the vocabulary shifts and new words are added and old ones fall into disuse. So a judgement call on the quality or perfection of speech is NOT in focus when we discuss speaking a language "well."

An alternative way to present the mountain comparison (Section A4)

Another way to present the poster is to start at the middle of the mountain instead of the bottom. The mountain story below gives first an overview on the different areas of the mountain and then, the explanation for each level starts at the middle area, where "all the community speaks the language." Choose the best presentation for your community's cultural environment.

A mountain can be used to help us think about how a community uses a language. In the picture, we see a mountain rising high into the air. On that mountain we could picture the status all of the languages of the world, and all of the communities who speak them. If a language is very strong with many speakers, it is near the top of the mountain. If it is a weak language, with less and less speakers, it is near the bottom of the mountain.

Notice there are labels on this mountain. We could imagine that each of these explains how a language is used at that place on the mountain. If we are lower down on the mountain, it is similar to being able to use a language for fewer and fewer things. If we go higher up on the mountain, that is similar to being able to use a language for more and more things.

We could imagine that the steep parts of the mountain represent ways of using a language that are hard to keep going over a long period of time. In order to keep using a language in one of these more difficult ways, we would have to put out a lot of effort, just like someone walking on the trail would have to use a lot of energy to stay on the steep parts of the trail without sliding down. We would also have to put out a lot of effort to move upward on these steep parts of the trail.

It would be the same if we wanted to change how many things we use a language for--it would take a lot of work. There are many things that make it difficult to continue using a language the same way over time. Those things are like wind blowing down on the mountain or falling rock which make it hard for people to keep climbing upward. On the other hand, the flat places with villages represent ways of using a language that are easier to keep going over a long period of time.

Every language starts out healthy. Everyone in the community fluently spoke the language: parents, children, grandparents and great grandparents. This is like a community that lives in the village at the middle of our mountain. It is on this nice flat place, and so it is a safe and easy place to live.

This level is called "Spoken Well by All Children." This means that people of all ages in the community—from children to the elderly— speak the language and use it for daily communication. In some places, people do not learn to speak their traditional language until they are teenagers or young adults, but at some point everyone learns to speak it and use it for daily communication. At this level, people speak the language well but do not normally write it. This is the place where the language story begins.

When communities are at this level, one of three things can happen:

 *A) They can stay where they are and continue speaking their language every day with each other, but do not use it for reading and writing. This way of using their language, along with using **another language** for other purposes (such as reading and writing), may meet all of their communication needs.*

B) Or, they may speak their traditional language and choose to also use it in new ways, like reading and writing. If they choose to begin reading and writing their own language, this means they have begun to climb further up to a new place on the mountain, making their language stronger.

C) Or, some members of the community may decide that another language will be better for them and their children in the future, even for speaking to each other. This decision may cause them to neglect speaking their own language, especially to their children. Once a community stops using their traditional language, and uses another language instead, they are sliding down the mountain. The traditional language is getting weaker.

We will now describe all of the other levels on the mountain. We will start by understanding what it means to climb up the mountain and make a language stronger.

*If a community begins to read and write their language, they have climbed up to this next spot on the mountain, where we see the title for "**Spoken well by all, written by some.**" This means that there is a way to write the language (like an alphabet or other writing system), and that someone is teaching at least some people in the community how to read and write-- although there is no government school or social institution that teaches the language. This also means that everyone in the community speaks the language for every day use.*

*Climbing up a bit further we see another flat spot with a village that has the title "**Used for education**." This is another good place to stay for a while. In this place, all children and adults speak the language daily. In addition, most children or youth are learning to read and write in their language. This could be because teachers in government schools teach children to read and write that language in class. Or, it could be because there is a community institution that provides a regular way and place for many young people to learn to read and write that language. Either way, reading and writing has become a common way to use that language.*

*Finally, reaching the top of the mountain, we see a city labeled "**Spoken in whole countries and regions**." This means that a community is able to use that language not only in their community, but also other ethnic groups throughout an entire region or country are also using it.*

Now we will describe what it means to start at the same place on the mountain, "Spoken Well by All Children", but then slide down the mountain and allow one's traditional language to weaken.

*Sliding down to the first place below "Spoken Well by All Children", we see the lower level "**Spoken well by some children**." This means **some** parents in the community are speaking the language with their children in the home, but a number of parents are NOT speaking it with their children. When this happens, some children or younger adults are no longer speaking the language on a daily basis. This is the first sign of weakness in a language.*

*Below that is the level for "**Spoken well only by adults**." In this situation, **no** parents are speaking the language with their children anymore. Parents and the elderly speak the language daily, but no children speak it daily.*

*A bit further down is the level for "**Spoken well only by the elderly**." This means that only those who are now grandparents or older are able to speak that language on a daily basis. Everyone else is using a different language, even in their homes.*

*The next level on the way down the mountain is "**Seldom spoken only by the elderly**." Only a few of the very oldest people in the community can still speak the language. This means that when they die, no one will be left who can speak that language.*

*Moving down the mountain one more level we find a flat place with a village labeled "**Used for uniting us.**" This means there is no one still alive who speaks that language, but there are still many people who know some words and greetings from the language. Or, people may remember some phrases of the language by using it in a few customs, art forms (like songs and dances), or traditions passed down from their ancestors. Since there is a flat space here, it means that a language can stay here for some time.*

*Finally, we arrive at a cave. This is the place we will call "**Remembered**." People know that their ancestors used to speak that language because there are written or recorded materials which have been passed down and which tell them something about how the language was spoken. As long as there is a way to keep these documents of the language safe, people will remember these things for a long time.*

Mountain poster (Section A5)

See alternative pictures in the **Facilitator Reference Manual.**
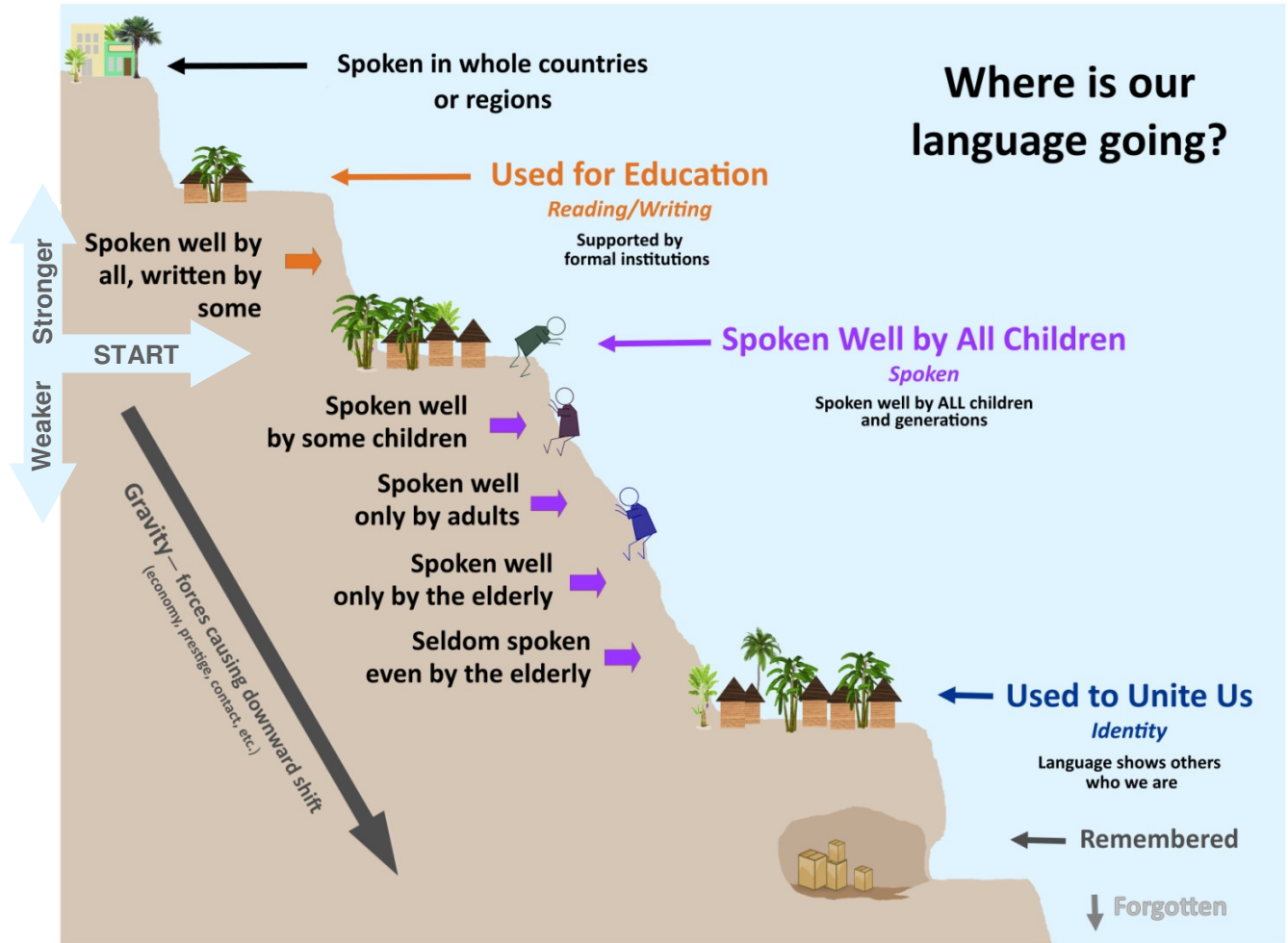
Alternative ideas for comparisons and posters (Section A4)

> If the mountain diagram in section A of the Guide is not easily understood in your context, this section provides some alternate comparisons which have been used around the world. Each reflects the EGIDS (language vitality scale) and the sustainable use levels of the Sustainable Use Model to varying degrees. Choose the best model for your community's cultural environment.

Languages are like the building of a house…
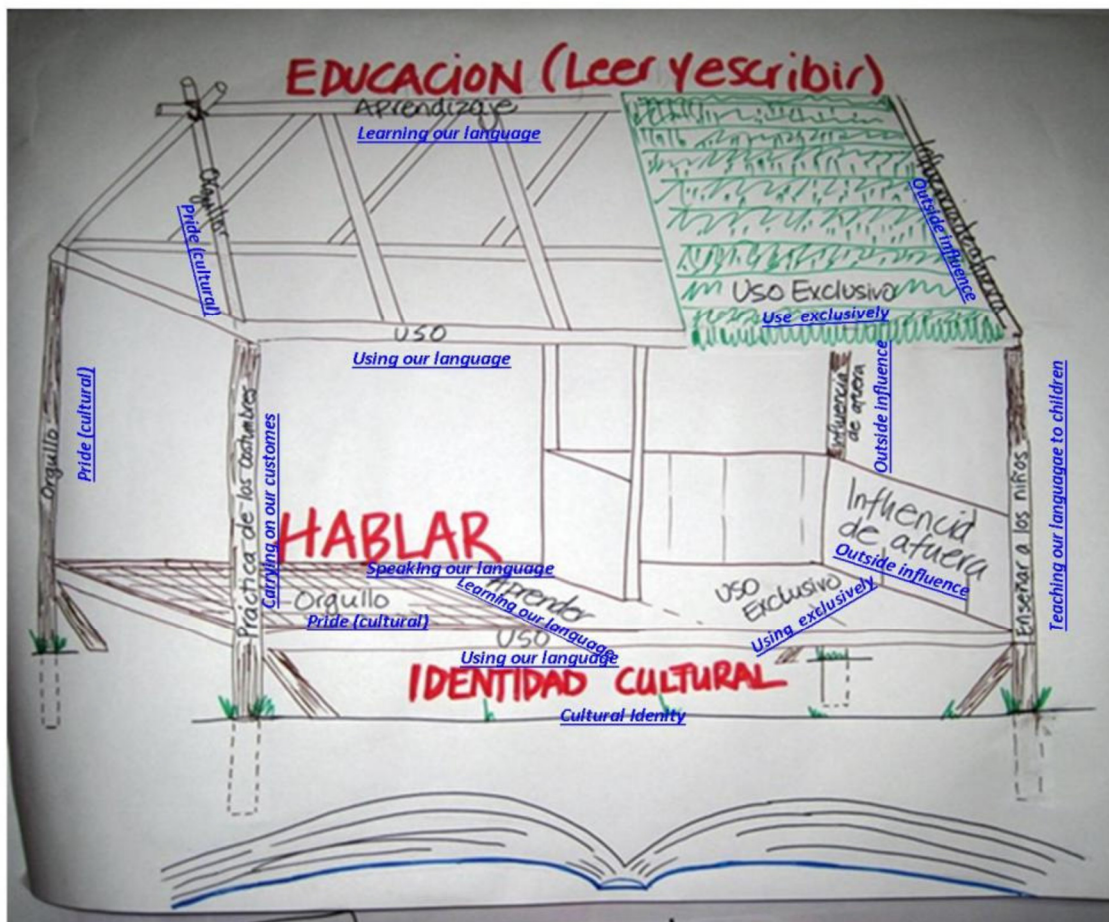
The following was used successfully in Peru.

The 4 poles which sustain the house were used to talk about cultural identity (Used for uniting us).

The floor and room were used to talk about the daily spoken use of the language (Spoken well by all children).

The roof was used to discuss reading and writing in the language (Used for education).

The FAMED conditions (reflected in the statements in section B of the Guide) were associated with different parts of each of these three parts of the house.

Rather than using the helps and hindrances charts to talk about strengths and weaknesses at the end of sections in B1, B2 and B3, we talked about the "termites" which destroy our houses. They eat away at our identity and the way we use our language. We need to look for signs of these bugs and manage the problem before they destroy our house.

It was also important for us to realize that it is the responsibility of the owner of the house to build and maintain it.

Note: This model does not intend to imply that a language must have literacy (the "roof") to be complete.

Languages are like the life of a river…

The following was used in Peru.
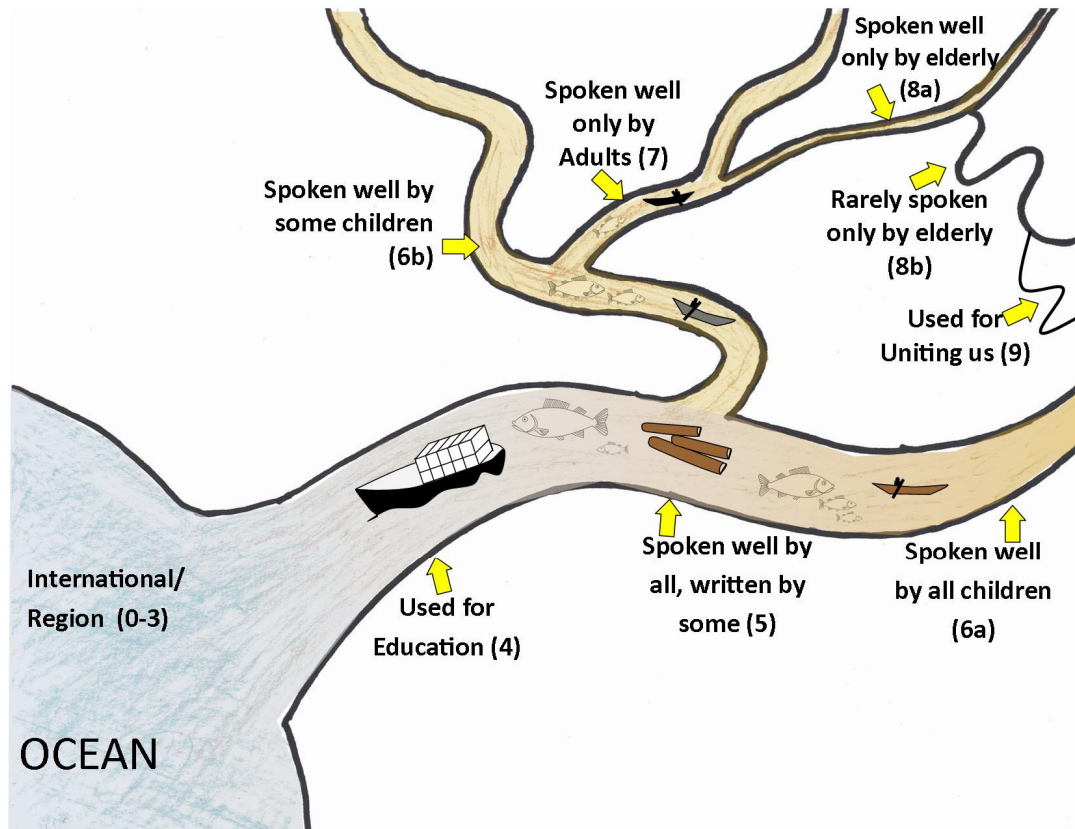
One of the ways we tried to explain the levels on the mountain was to think about the life of a river.

All rivers start with **springs**. These can dry up and change over time. When a spring dries up, it is like when our language dies. Our language no longer serves us like it once did.

When springs are still flowing, this is like a language that is remembered but not spoken well by anyone.

These springs feed into **brooks**, which are still are very small and vulnerable to drying up. But there are still a few people who can speak the language well. They are usually only the very oldest who still are alive.

The brooks feed into **creeks**, which are less vulnerable to drying up, but are not very navigable and do not provide much sustenance for daily life. This is like a language where only the grandparents speak the language.

These creeks feed into **streams**, which are more thriving and provide more fish and opportunities for sustenance. This is like a language which all the adults speak.

These streams feed into **rivers**, which is where people tend to go to do their fishing and logging because the river is big enough to provide what they need to live all year long. This is like a language where most of the children are speaking the language.

These rivers feed into **big river** [e.g., the Amazon], where opportunities abound—the current is strong and the river is wide. This is like a language that everyone speaks-- including all the children. There is no fear that this river will ever dry up or be in danger of being lost. Even during times of drought it will sustain life.

As the Amazon makes its way across the continent it gets wider and wider. This is like when we use our language for education. The more we use it to learn new things and for reading and writing, the stronger it will become and the more useful it will be to us.

The Amazon eventually spills into the ocean. This ocean is like the national or international languages spoken in a country. It allows us to communicate with many other people from many other places and gives us access to information that is important to us, even though it is accessible only by contact with people outside our language and culture.

Note: The great drawback of this metaphor is that the current of the river could lead participants to believe that the gravity of language use takes us down river, rather than up. It could also lead participants to think the goal is to use an international language, rather than a local language…so care needs to be taken to not take the illustration too far.

Languages are like bodies of water…

Always safe
Like a lake
Spoken in other countries or regions (0-3)
No action is needed for preservation.

Always Spoken
Like a large water tank
It is written (5)
All ages speak (6a)
Water is replenished by what we do

Always read and written
Like a pond
Used in education (4)
The situation replenishes water but that could change

Always identifies us
Like a water pump
- Children are not learning it (6b)
- Another language is used more (7)
- Only grandparents speak it (8a)
- Only great-grandparents speak it (8b)
- Only phrases and greetings used (9)

Water is replenished by what we do

Always remembered
Like a covered barrel
No longer used (10)
Water is saved by what we do

Forgotten
Like a puddle in the sun

We can think of how a language needs to be protected like water needs to be protected from the sun. Without that protection, water will evaporate.

Think of six containers of water: a lake, a pond, a tank, a pump, a barrel and a puddle.

A **lake** has lots of evaporation from the sun. But it doesn't matter. There are springs and streams

always adding water to it. Languages that are spoken by a large region or country are like that. The language will always be used—nothing needs to be done to protect it.

In the case of a **pond**, it also can be very stable but a bad drought might affect it because it is only replenished by one stream. That is the way it is for a language that is used for education. As long as the government or another institution continues to make educational materials in the language, it will continue to be used that way.

As a **tank** has to be refilled and checked for leaks, it takes a lot of work and planning to protect a language to make sure it is always spoken. Children must be learning the language. The community must designate areas where the language is used in public to make sure it is always used. Even if it has a writing system, it is not as protected as a language that is used in education, but if most people are teaching their children how to speak the language, that makes a language safer.

Someone needs to use a lot of energy to get water out of a **pump**. The same is true of some languages. The language is not being taught by most parents to their children, but there are things that can be done so that it can still be the way the group identifies itself.

A **barrel** needs to be filled regularly and there needs to be a well-fitting lid. This is like a language that people no longer use to speak to each other or to identify themselves. If they make efforts to preserve what they know of the language, they and their descendants will always be able to remember something about it.

Water in a **puddle** will dry up. In the same way a language will disappear completely without a plan to remember it.

The language community can decide the amount of language they want to keep. Each amount can be increased or preserved by different methods. This tool will help us see where our language is and make a plan to preserve it to the degree we think is best for our community.

Languages are like streams and ponds

This metaphor was used successfully in South America. The sustainable levels can be thought of as ponds where water is kept. Other levels are streams where the water is always on the move to the lower pond.

International, National, Regional, or Trade Languages
0, 1, 2 ,3

Used for education
4

All speak and some read and write
5

Parents teach all children to speak
6a

Some children are taught
6b

Spoken daily by all the adults
7

Spoken daily by the elderly
8a

Only spoken by the elderly
8b

Used for cultural events
9

Remembered
10

Levels of a Language's Vitality

Forgotton

By Stephen M. Echerd © 2016 SIL International

Helps for Section B

Illustrations for explaining FAMED conditions in Statements

FAMED conditions and sustainable levels are like protecting walls

Reading & Writing →
Speaking →
Identity →

Function (11)   Differentiation(12)
Function (1)   Differentiation
Function (6)   Differentiation
Aquisition   Environment (15a-b)
Aquisition (14)   Environment (5a, 5b)
Aquisition (4)   Motivation (13)   Environment (10a-b)
Aquisition (9)   Motivation (3)
Motivation(8)
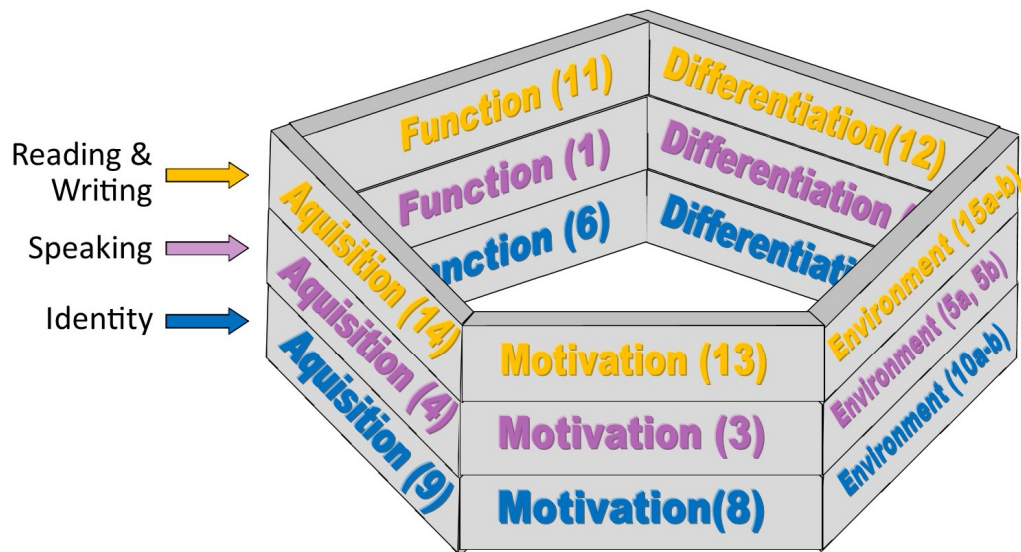
Parenthesis show the number of corresponding statement on the Assessment Charts

This illustration can be used to help a community understand how we can best plan to strengthen or protect our language. Imagine that your language and culture are inside these walls. Each of the 5 protecting walls represents a different FAMED condition. Each of these 5 conditions must be met to make sure our language is secure. If one wall does not exist or is weak, it will leave the language vulnerable and exposed to attack. There are 3 levels to the wall; each level provides more protection for our language and culture. We must make sure the bottom level (sustainable identity) is strong without any cracks or holes in any section of the wall before we can build or strengthen the layer above (sustainable orality) and finally the top layer (sustainable literacy). Sometimes we are anxious to build the top level, before we have secured the bottom level, but this can give us a false sense of security.

The following illustrations can be useful when talking about the FAMED conditions: Function and Differentiation.

Languages are like our clothing…

We wear different pieces of clothing for different events. We might choose to wear a nice dress for a special festival or party. We might choose to use a regular T-shirt and jeans to do an everyday task, like work around the house. We might wear those same T-shirt and jeans to go out to the store or the market. We choose languages in much the same way we choose what clothing to wear. We might use our home language to talk with people at home or in our neighborhood. We might choose the national language, however, when we're at school or at events where many people do not know our home language. We choose what language to use based on our needs at the moment--much like we choose what clothing to wear depending on where we need to go or what we need to do.

Languages are like fruit…

We choose what fruit to eat based on how hungry we are, or based on what we want to use the fruit for. If we want to have a snack, we might pick up an apple or a banana because they are easy to eat. If we want to add some flavor to a drink or a dessert, we might choose some berries or a lime. We choose each fruit for a specific purpose. We choose languages in a similar way. We might choose to use the language we learned at home when we want to talk with our relatives and close friends. We might choose to use the national language, however, when we need to answer questions asked in a job interview, or when we need to explain something to a visitor to our village.

Languages are like trees in a thick forest...

In a thick forest, many trees compete with each other to get enough sunlight, water and nutrients. Once one tree's limbs block out part of the sunlight needed by a neighboring tree, that neighboring tree stops growing as fast as it did before. After enough time, if the neighboring tree has not found a way to get more sunlight, it will begin to wither/grow more and more slowly. The first tree might eventually grow so big that it completely blocks all the sunlight of the neighboring tree, causing it to die. Languages often are like this, too. People may start to use one language more for things they did not previously use it for, which means that whatever other language they were using will start to get used less. Over time, that language may be used less and less, until it eventually is no longer used at all.
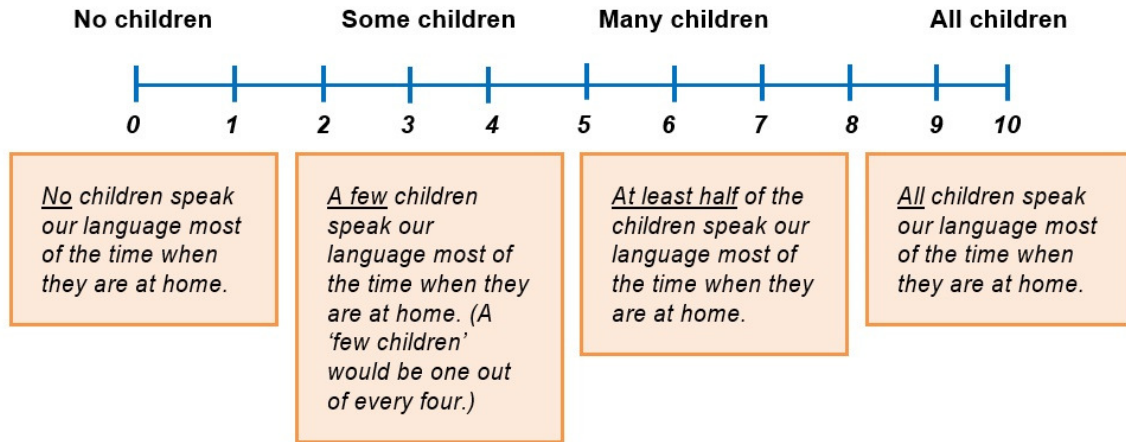
Alternative ways to discuss statements

10 Seeds Method for Scoring Statements

If using the scales in B section of the Guide is not going well, another more visual way to have the conversations is to use the '10 Seed method'. Any ten small items would work, for example, pebbles, beads, or leaves. Participants are asked to imagine that the 10 seeds (or items) represent the whole community (or group mentioned in the statement). Participants use the seeds to represent for how many in the community the statement is true. The number for which it is true would then be registered on the scale.

Below is statement of #4 of section B of the Guide with a scale of 10 added:

> **4** Children under 12 years old usually speak our language when they talk at home.

No children	Some children	Many children	All children

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

No children speak our language most of the time when they are at home.	A few children speak our language most of the time when they are at home. (A 'few children' would be one out of every four.)	At least half of the children speak our language most of the time when they are at home.	All children speak our language most of the time when they are at home.

We could use the 10 seed method as follows:

1) Give participants 10 seeds (or whatever would work best in your situation and culture).
2) Read the statement "Children under 12 years old usually speak our language when they talk at home."
3) Explain that the 10 seeds are equivalent to all the children (100%) in the community under 12 years old.
4) Instruct the participants to put the number of seeds on the table (or ground) that is their estimate of the answer to the question: *Out of all the children under the age of 12 in the community, how many children speak our language when they talk at home?*
5) Verify that there is consensus. If the participants lay down 8 seeds, then explain that means that 80% of the children below the age of 12 in the community speak our language when they talk at home.
6) Ask a participant to mark the corresponding number on the scale (8). (See example scale below.)
7) Return the seeds to the participants to be ready for the next statement.

No children   Some children   Many children   All children

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
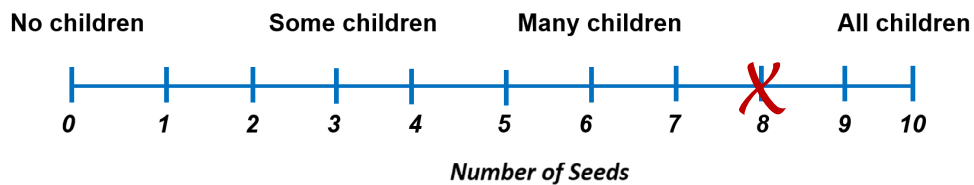
Number of Seeds

$\Longrightarrow$ When trying to discuss in how many places or situations a language is used (statements 1, 2, 6, 7, 11 and 12) it will be more complicated to use the 10 seeds method because there is an infinite number of possibilites. Also, for a language to be strong does not require it to be used everywhere or in every situation.

$\Longrightarrow$ When discussing statements 5b, 10b and 15b, participants could divide the seeds into three groups (Hinders, helps, neutral) to represent how many policies or attitudes fall into each category. Then based on the number of seeds in each category, they can then estimate whether the policies are generally helping or hindering them in using their language.

Helps for Section D

List of activities that may help

Aiming for 'Remembered'

	Possible activities
Section D	1) Make recordings (audio or video) of elders speaking our language and make written or recorded translations of what they have said in the recordings. 2) Store recordings, old documents and any historical items from our language in a safe place where it will not be destroyed by rain, fire or floods. 3) Make electronic records (scans, digital recordings) of any recordings or materials we have for our language. Make sure copies of these electronic files are stored in more than one place.

Helps for Section E

List of activities that may help (Sections E6 and E8)

Aiming for 'Used for uniting us'

	Possible activities
Function **(Use)** *Discussion #6*	4) Use some of our language at local community events. 5) Talk with community leaders about using more music or drama in our language at local community events. 6) Use greetings and simple phrases in our language with each other more often. Encourage others to do this. 7) Establish groups of older mentors who can teach local music, dance and other arts from your area to young people in the community who want to learn.
Differentiation **(Exclusive Use)** *Discussion #7*	8) Use greetings in our language with each other, and encourage others to do the same. 9) Use customs related to our language for certain occasions, and encourage others to do the same.
Motivation *Discussion #8*	10) Encourage community members to use simple greetings and common phrases in our language. Do this through ads, at community events, and at informal gatherings. 11) Encourage community members to use more local customs, songs and dramas related to our language at community events. These could also include local foods and clothing. 12) Promote the learning of the traditional script of our language by using it on simple signs or posters (even if it is only writing out words from another language using the script from our language). 13) Promote teaching the basics of the traditional script of our language in schools. 14) Encourage people to feel good about our language, as well as art forms and customs related to our language. 15) Find ways to help younger people move back to our area if they move away for work. Ask government and other organizations for help with this. 16) Set up groups to unite the people who have moved away from our

	Possible activities
	community in the new places where they live. Include the use of our language, customs and art forms from our community in these group meetings, and encourage them to pass these customs, art forms and simple phrases in our language on to their children.
Aquisition **(Learning)** *Discussion #9*	17) Show children or teenagers and young adults how to use some simple greetings or other common phrases in our language. 18) Teach local songs, dance or other arts in our language in schools or in community groups. 19) If we have a traditional script, show children or teenagers and young adults how to read the sounds.
Environment **(Policies and Attitudes)** *Discussion #10*	20) Take part in any regional or national events that promote local customs, art forms and languages. 21) Talk to members of government about ways to promote and keep our language, as well as customs and art forms related to our language.

Aiming for 'Spoken well by all children'

	Possible activities
Function **(Use)** *Discussion #1*	22) Make ads for radio, newspapers or magazines encouraging people to speak our language in the home and community. 23) Encourage religious leaders to read from texts in our language or to preach in our language (if appropriate). 24) Set up a group that will promote speaking our language in the home and community.
Differentiation **(Exclusive Use)** *Discussion #2*	25) Start using only our language for discussion in certain places or with other people who speak our language, about as many topics as possible. 26) Run workshops or educational ads to teach people words/phrases for discussing certain topics using our language. 27) Use ads to promote using our language in certain places or with certain people, like in the home. 28) Promote using only our language with the leaders/organizers of certain places, if appropriate (like religious meeting places, groups/associations).
Motivation *Discussion #3*	29) Encourage parents to teach their children how to speak our language. 30) Use meetings or ads to show parents how they can help their children succeed in education even by teaching them to speak our language. 31) If children do not learn our language, use ads or meetings to encourage teenagers or young adults to learn to speak our language. 32) Hold events to promote using our language to speak about many different topics in everyday life and beyond. We could also use ads and media to do this. 33) Find ways or places where you feel we can speak our language safely (if appropriate). 34) Set up groups of people who speak our language who can support/encourage each other.

	Possible activities
Aquisition **(Learning)** *Discussion #4*	35) Give parents practical ideas on how to teach their children how to speak our language in the home; similarly, encourage community members to speak to children using our language. 36) Speak using our language to teach preschools. 37) Speak using our language as a basis to teach children how to speak a second language/language of education. 38) Set up groups/places where teenagers and young adults can learn to speak our language from older community members.
Environment **(Policies and** **Attitudes)** *Discussion #5*	39) Talk with members of government about ways to promote speaking our language by our community members. 40) Ask language development organizations to consider adjusting their policies and practices to give more opportunity for us to reach our goals for writing our language.

Aiming for 'Used for education'

	Possible activities
Function **(Use)** *Discussion #11*	41) Develop a way to write our language, like an alphabet. 42) Use our language to teach classes in primary and/or secondary schools. 43) Hold workshops to show people how to write books/other materials in our language. 44) Start a magazine/newspaper in our language. 45) Set up a group to translate important documents into our language (government information, health information, etc.). 46) Use our language for signs/posters (in places where there are mostly people who speak our language). 47) Use our language to write to each other over the Internet. 48) Make fonts for typing our language.
Differentiation **(Exclusive Use)** *Discussion #12*	49) At community events, promote using our language to write certain kinds of things. 50) Run short workshops for using our language for specific purposes. 51) Offices, both government and private, and schools can use our language to write certain materials, rather than using another language.
Motivation *Discussion #13*	52) Show community members how reading and writing our language will help them reach their dreams. 53) Hold events to encourage community members to use our language for reading and writing. 54) Run contests for readers and writers in our language. 55) Let people know what new materials are available in our language as they are produced. Show them how these materials are useful. 56) Do surveys to ask what kinds of materials people think should be developed in our language.

	Possible activities
Acquisition (Learning) *Discussion #14*	• Teach as many years of primary and secondary school subjects as possible using our language. • Use our language as a basis to teach children how to speak a second language or the national language. • Provide adult literacy classes in our language. • Make new reference materials for our language on a regular basis (schoolbooks, dictionaries, etc.).
Environment **(Policies and Attitudes)** *Discussion #15*	• Ask members of government to change laws so they allow/support education through our language. • Talk with members of government to gain support for education through our language. • Talk with members of government (especially education) to find support for making teaching materials for our language and training teachers how to teach using our language. • Ask language development organizations to consider adjusting their policies and practices to give more opportunity for us to reach our goals for writing our language. • Work with linguistics and education organizations to design programs to teach children and adults how to read and write our language. These might be local, national or international organizations.