

MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION RESOLUTION IN THARAKA

We, the 23 education officials attending the Mother tongue education advocacy workshop, held at BTL Tharaka language centre, between 28th and 30th of January 2009, hereby reaffirm the critical role the first language plays for school beginning children.

We recognise that the use of Kitharaka as the medium of instruction in lower primary schools in Tharaka schools is the way to go for the following reasons:

- Mother tongue provides a smooth transition from home to school
- Mother tongue helps learners to begin from the known to the unknown
- Mother tongue forms the foundation for learning other languages easily
- Mother tongue helps build self-esteem and self confidence in the learner
- Mother tongue helps to preserve culture cultural values, knowledge and information as it serves as a library
- Mother tongue enhances fluency in other languages
- Mother tongue helps the learner to identify with his/her community
- Mother tongue promotes active classroom participation of learners in the learning process
- Mother tongue helps the learner to enjoy the learning and excel in life... positive thinking and attitude
- Mother tongue enable parents to participate in the learning of their children
- Mother tongue enhances interaction and socialisation

Taking cognisance of the above, we propose that the following measures be taken to ensure proper implementation of the education language policy in our community and thus improve the quality of education:

1. Kitharaka should be taught as a subject in all lower primary classes
2. Kitharaka shall be used as the medium of instruction in lower primary classes except when teaching English and Kiswahili
3. Education officials should monitor the implementation of the MTE programme in schools
4. More teaching / learning materials shall be developed in Kitharaka to create a mother tongue print rich environment
5. All schools should buy materials to facilitate the implementation of the MTE programme

We reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that education policies are implemented fully. We rededicate ourselves to ensuring that testing in the lower primary is done in the mother tongue (Kitharaka) except for English and Kiswahili tests.

To achieve this, we resolve to:

1. Sensitise the head teachers to support the testing of lower classes in the language of instruction as per the policy
2. Set all exams in Kitharaka except for English and Kiswahili and exams by teachers teaching in Tharaka schools
3. Identify a credible person to print the exams that meet the set quality standards for such exams and deliver them in good time
4. Recognise good performance in subject areas taught in Kitharaka through giving awards and trophies
5. Transparency in appointing the examination panel who should be people of integrity and performance
6. Distribution of exams should be done by a credible person who is acceptable to all players and appointed by a committee
7. Exam fee should be reasonable compared to other exams
8. A meeting with zonal examination committees
9. Kitharaka exams shall be made available whenever needed once the work station has been set up
10. Kitharaka exams shall be procured from the identified printer by the examination committees

We acknowledge the blow dealt on minority speakers by majority languages in terms of language attitudes. We acknowledge the many misconceptions about mother tongue which have seen it banned from schools and children punished for speaking their mother tongues in schools

We commit ourselves to working together with other stakeholders in education to correct these misgivings and raise community awareness on the value of mother tongue education.

We, in this regard resolve to:

1. Sensitise primary school heads at the divisional level
2. Train more teachers in the teaching of and teaching in MT as well as in the use of the mother tongue materials
3. Conduct advocacy seminars with school management committees at the zonal level
4. Train all stakeholders at the zonal level
5. Create awareness on the use of Kitharaka in schools at chiefs barazas
6. Strategic display of posters encouraging the use of Kitharaka
7. Media coverage for all major mother tongue promotional activities where possible
8. Official launching of mother tongue materials once published
9. Decentralise of material distribution centres
10. Organise an annual Tharaka cultural day to coincide with the International Mother's Language day on 21st of February, as way of promoting the teaching of MT

11. Motivate teachers by certification and facilitation of field officers during programme monitoring

Endorsed by education officials on 30th January 2009

CC: DEO and DEB chairman, Tharaka district