Preface

Good Answers to Tough Questions in L1-based Multilingual Education
Volume 2: Introduction
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In 2016, SIL published the first Good Answers to Tough Questions in MTB-MLE, a volume dedicated to providing “what works”-type responses to some of the most difficult challenges being faced by practitioners in the field. At that time, global awareness of the power of L1-medium learning was growing, and there were many questions about the “hows” of L1-based MLE. In this first volume, experienced literacy and MLE consultants from across the globe provided a set of practical responses to some of the most pressing questions of the time.

Seven years later, governments, NGOs, and local communities around the world are developing local languages as languages of instruction and initial literacy for a range of learners, while also ensuring that local culture is well represented in curricular and material resources. United Nations agencies, the World Bank, bilateral donors, and others are focusing attention on “inclusive and equitable quality education” (SDG #4) for all learners, through the provision of classroom instruction in local languages—as well as official languages—to increase learning and comprehension. This increased focus on local languages has resulted in positive changes in policy and implementation of L1-based multilingual education in many countries around the world.

However, the “tough questions” have also changed somewhat over time. So, this second volume of Good Answers to Tough Questions addresses new issues and questions related to the implementation of local language-medium multilingual education programming. In this volume we explore some of the more recent questions related to policy, school language mapping, orthographic challenges, digital tools for learning, early childhood education, education in emergencies, and more.

These practical suggestions are intended to facilitate and strengthen the implementation of L1-based MLE programs as they are being developed around the world today. We hope our “good answers” are helpful!