

**Preliminary steps for a successful implementation of language -in-education policies
in Africa**

Nthatsi Bulane

INALCO, Paris - France

Since attaining independence, African countries have acknowledged the need for the use of African languages as media of instruction. Subsequently, many adopted language-in-education policies that obligate the use of African languages as media of instruction at the primary level.

The pilot studies carried out in several countries have shown that the use of vernacular languages as media of instruction yields better results compared to the existing model based on foreign languages only. These studies therefore come in as clear indications of the legitimate necessity for the expansion of vernacular languages as media of instruction.

In the context of the majority of African countries, despite the positive results from these test studies, there is still no progress in that direction. Two phenomena are observed: stagnation and retraction. The implementation either stagnates at the primary level or with time, it is completely abandoned. This clearly portrays a deficiency in the implementation planning.

In view of the above, this paper proposes the restructuring of the current paradigm. Seemingly, countries fail to follow the preliminary steps: training of teachers and making provision for the pedagogic materials. Starting off with teacher training will imply that teachers do not only acquire the teaching skills to teach these languages as first, second or foreign languages, they also acquire skills to teach in them. This prior to the languages' actual use in schools preparation, will undoubtedly impact on the preparation of teaching materials as well.