

## **Mother Tongue Education: Necessary? Possible? Sustainable?**

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Issues affecting pre-school education in a rural area of Kenya are highlighted in a study of a mother tongue education (MTE) programme in one indigenous language group, the Pokomo. Factors supporting the introduction of MTE include official support for MTE, the welcoming of non-government stakeholder involvement in education, the presence of individuals and organisations committed to MTE and the willingness of local education authorities to partner with organisations in the establishment of the programme. Issues which emerged as constraining the development of the programme included the dominant teaching styles, the dearth of educational resources in Kipfokomo, widespread poverty and societal attitudes and structures which exclude local languages from education settings. The tensions between enabling and constraining factors are explored, as, too, is the sustainability of the programme.

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