

WELCOME TO THE WEBINAR

SCHOOL



Webinar #2

Why Language Friendly Schools Don't Prohibit or Punish the Use of Mother Tongues

27 February 2020

Introduction

by Ellen-Rose Kambel, director Rutu Foundation

- in the **chat box**: please write your name, occupation, and the country you are currently located.
- all participants are **muted**, but your questions will be collected and answered at the end of the webinar.
- we will record the webinar for our own use only.



PROGRAMME:



Welcome and introduction of the Language Friendly School

– by Ellen-Rose Kambel, director Rutu Foundation

Why Language Friendly Schools Don't Prohibit or Punish the Use of Mother Tongues

Human Rights Implications

– by Deena Hurwitz, human rights lawyer & educator, Charlottesville, Virginia USA

The Effects of Prohibiting Students' Languages

– by Emmanuelle Le Pichon-Vorstman and Nidhi Sachdeva, University of Toronto

Discussion, Q&A



INTRODUCTION: LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL

Goal: To Envision A World In Which

LANGUAGE FRIENDLY
SCHOOL

- Every child has access to a language friendly learning environment
 - No child is punished for using his or her mother tongue at school
- (**deadline 2030**: Sustainable Development Goals)



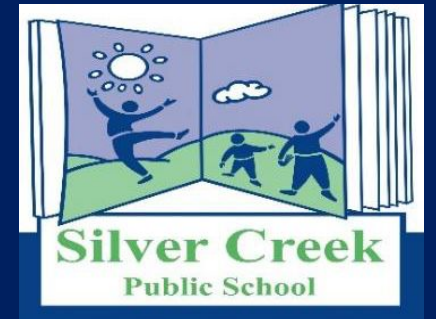
Three Language Friendly Schools in the First Three Months!



The Netherlands



Canada



And more to follow...

- Netherlands
- Canada
- United Kingdom
- Belgium
- Turkey
- Hungary
- Austria
- Kenya
- Myanmar
- Australia
- Suriname
- Dutch Caribbean



WHAT IS A LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL?

The Language Friendly School

LANGUAGE FRIENDLY
SCHOOL

WHAT WE DON'T DO

AS LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOLS WHAT WE DO

As a school

In the classroom

- We do not prohibit or discourage the use of other languages at school.
- We do not punish our students for using their home languages at school.
- We do not prohibit or discourage parents to use their own languages at school.
- We do not advise parents to use a different language at home with their children.
- We do not allow exclusion or bullying around languages, dialects or accents.

- We develop a language friendly plan together.
- We regularly evaluate our language friendly plan and adapt when necessary.
- We have a Language Coordinator who monitors the implementation of our language friendly plan.
- We encourage making a systematic inventory of students' home languages.
- We give visual representation to students' home languages at school.
- We use language buddies for children who speak the same languages.
- We pay attention to exclusion or bullying around languages, dialects or accents.
- We inform the whole school community about the importance of home languages.
- As teachers, we work together with parents to support the learning of children.
- We facilitate meetings where parents can use their home languages.
- We facilitate multilingual communication with parents.
- We facilitate after school language clubs.
- We ensure that there are books available in various languages.
- Our teachers and staff are aware of language and learning difficulties in relation to multilingualism.

- Our teachers are informed about the role of home languages in learning additional languages.
- We offer regular training and professional development to support our teachers in their multilingual pedagogical approaches.
- We share and regularly reflect on our approaches and the materials we use.
- We reflect on our own values and ideas and are aware of our attitudes towards language, cultural and ethnic diversity.
- We offer our teachers self-evaluation tools.
- We make room for students' home languages as part of the learning process.
- We encourage all students to develop their whole language repertoire, including dialects and accents.
- We offer where possible instruction in various languages present in school.
- In our classrooms, the home languages of all students are visible.
- We promote written, oral, gestural and graphic students' communication to promote inclusion.

Required

Optional

What Language Friendly Schools don't do

- We don't prohibit or discourage the use of other languages at school.
- We don't punish our students for using their home languages at school.
- We don't prohibit or discourage parents to use their own languages at school.
- We don't advise parents to use a different language at home with their children.
- We don't allow exclusion or bullying around languages, dialects or accents.

What Language Friendly Schools do to welcome and value all their students' languages

... is up to them!

- Each school develops their own Language Friendly School plan
- With the participation of teachers, parents and students
- [Language Friendly School Roadmap](#) for inspiration



Why Language Friendly Schools Don't Prohibit or Punish the Use of Mother Tongues

The Human Rights Implications

Deena Hurwitz

Right To Education

Guided by principles of

- non-discrimination
- commitment to the best interests of the child
- respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values
- respect for the views of the child

Banning (Home) Languages In Schools Violates Fundamental Human Rights

Non-discrimination

International Convention on the Rights of the Child

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx>

Education

International Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>

Identity and culture

International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

UN Declaration on Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Minorities.aspx>

Right To Non-discrimination

International Convention on Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination

Art I - definition of racial discrimination

Art 5(e)(v) - States must *prohibit and eliminate* racial discrimination and *guarantee without distinction the right to education and training*.

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>

International Covenant on Economic, Social & Cultural Rights

Art 2 - States guarantee rights without discrimination of any kind as to....
language, national or social origin

<https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx>

Right To One's Identity & Culture

UN Declaration on Rights of Persons Belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities

Art. 2 para 1. - linguistic minorities have the right to enjoy their own culture, and to use their own language, in private *and in public*, freely and without interference or any form of discrimination.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/Minorities.aspx>

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

OF BANNING HOME LANGUAGES FROM SCHOOL

- ❖ Rights holders
- ❖ Duty bearers
- ❖ Accountability
- ❖ Remedy

How can we hold States accountable?

1. **Awareness**: know your rights (as students, parents and teachers)
2. **Empowerment**: building (community) support to assert your rights
3. **Act**: confront representatives of the State (municipalities, school boards) about their obligation to
 - a. making teachers aware that they may not punish, prohibit or even discourage students for using their home language
 - b. actively stop teachers and principals from doing this

What are the effects when students' languages are prohibited or punished at school?

Emmanuelle Le Pichon-Vorstman
Nidhi Sachdeva
University of Toronto

Prohibition of Mother Tongue

"In Colombian classrooms the standard practice remains one of banning the use of languages other than English [...], many teachers and policymakers still believe that in order to learn English effectively, students must use English exclusively."

Ortega, 2019:156

A Vicious Circle of Coercion



Le Pichon & Sachdeva, 2020

What does the literature say?

“Coercive relations of power refer to the exercise of power by a dominant individual, group, or country to the detriment of a subordinated individual, group, or country.”

Cummins, 2015, pp. 464

Prohibition And Punishment Leads To

1. A lowered sense of self identity among students and families;
2. Feelings of exclusion;
3. Disengagement and drop out.



- “Punitive practices [...] **communicate to students the inferior status of their home languages and devalue the identities of speakers** of these languages”.
Cummins, 2015, pp. 458
- Students perceive their mother tongues as a **barrier to educational and occupational success**. Agirdag, 2010

Perceptions of their First Language As A Barrier

"R: *And which language do you speak amongst your friends?*

Ersan: *Turkish, unfortunately.*

R: *Unfortunately?*

Ersan: *Yes, they want us to speak Dutch.*

R: *And who wants that?*

Ersan: *School, generally the administration, everybody. They are quite right to do it. They say when you go to college or work, or apply for a job and so on, they pay attention to your language skills and they say 'you guys have to start speaking Dutch'.*

Agirdag, 2010, pp. 316

Internalized Feelings Of Shame

"I am not always comfortable speaking Cantonese when I have to go to the office for some reason. [...] a lot of teachers are at the office and I don't like speaking it in front of them. [...] Once, in grade one, I didn't feel very well. So my teacher sent me to the office to call my grandma. My grandma doesn't speak English and she also can't hear very well, so I had to speak in Cantonese very loudly for her to hear. So when I spoke to my grandma, I felt very nervous." Cummins, 2015, pp. 458

Food for Thought: What can be done to change this student's perception of her own first language?

Silenced Students With Poor Academic Participation

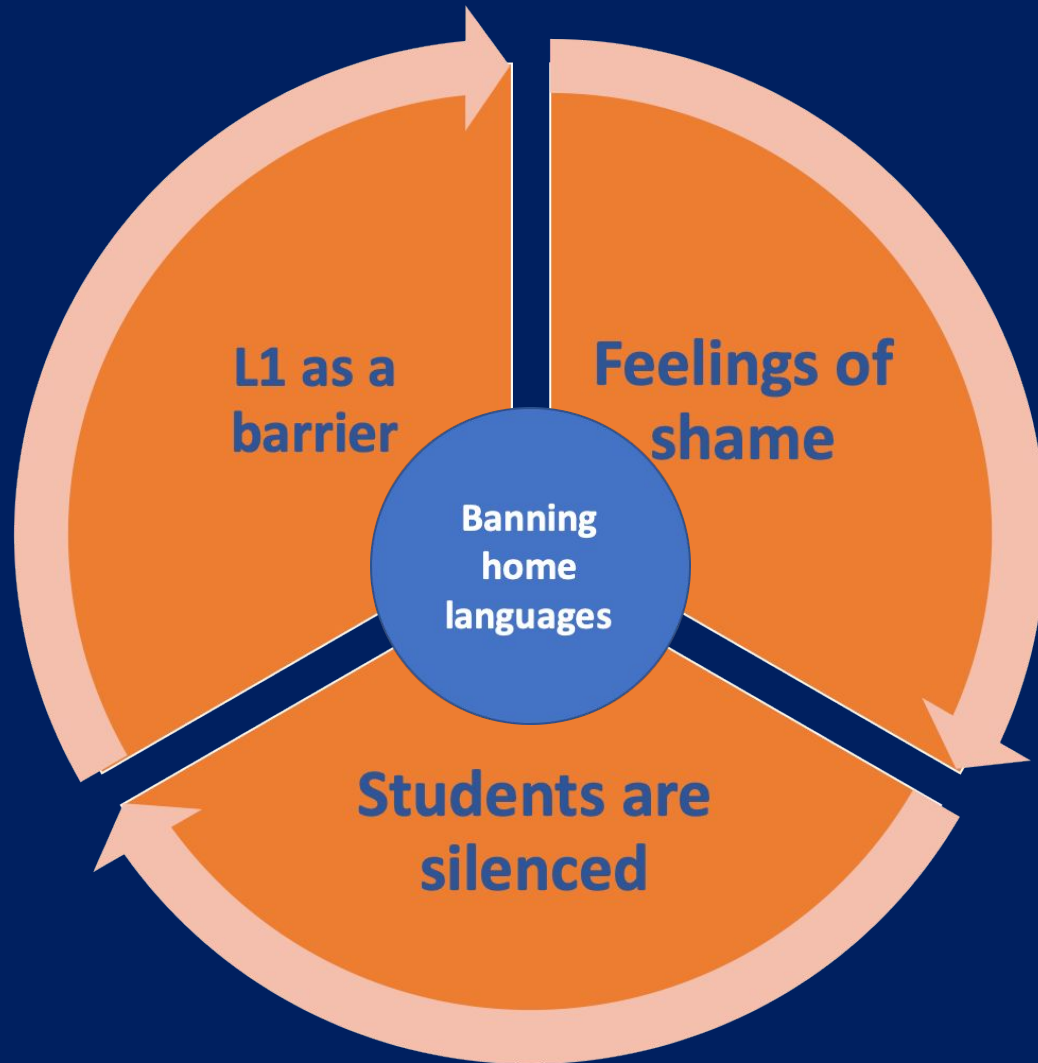
- “Outlawing the use of (home) languages, [...] **effectively silences these children**, and is detrimental to optimal/efficient learning,”
- **"may lead to confusion, frustration, low self-esteem** and in some cases to withdrawal from active participation in learning activities”

Mary & Young, 2017

- **Teachers’ negative/stigmatized attitudes** towards non-dominant languages etc. negatively affect the academic achievement of linguistically diverse students

Godley et al, 2006; Wheeler,
2008

Leading To Disengagement And Drop Out



Banning Languages Reinforces Exclusion

"I remember when I was in class the teacher [...] forced me to speak French when I didn't have the lexicon, the vocabulary, so I didn't really know what to ... do and ... it was hard [...]. even though it was my mother tongue so Turkish was kicked out, was not accepted, was forbidden and back home it was the ... dominant language [...] I didn't understand at that time why it was like that, [...] I felt ... virtually useless in class [...] I was always in a corner all alone, isolated and ... I, well I didn't feel like someone who was part of the class, I felt excluded."

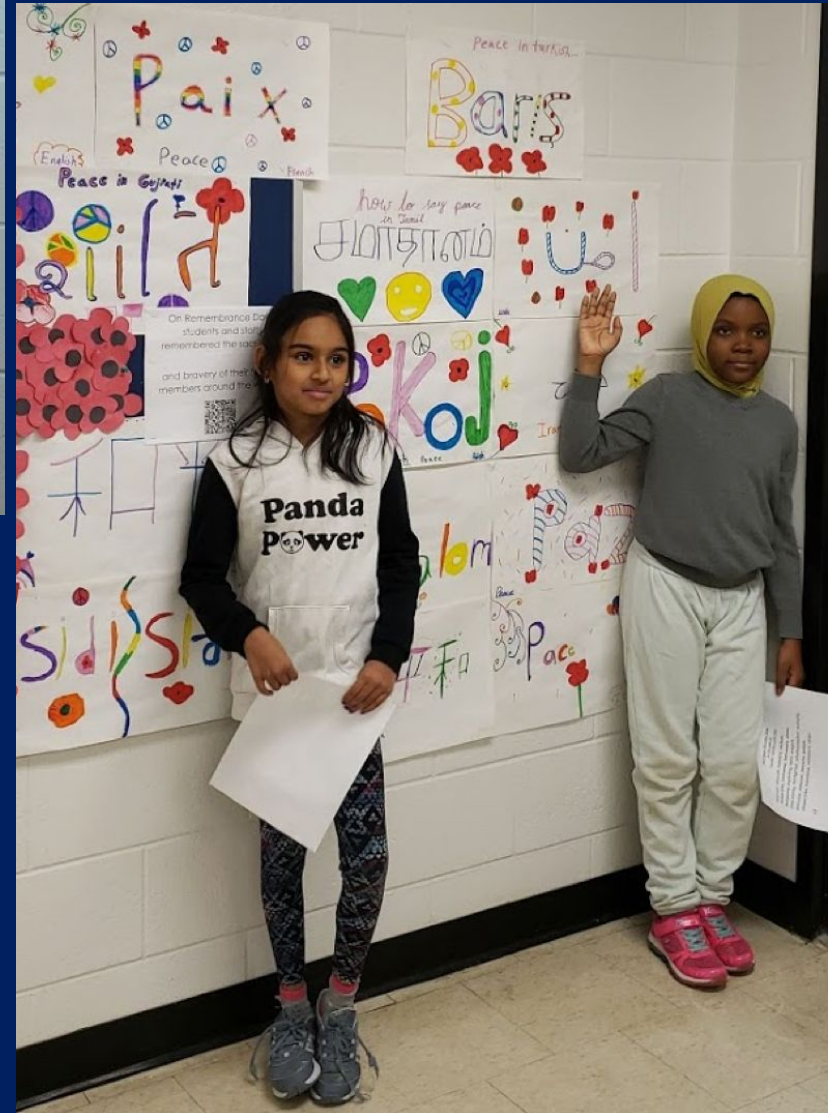
Mary & Young, 2017, pp. 456

Banning Home Languages Excludes Students



Allowing Home Languages Gives Room For Learning

LANGUAGE FRIENDLY
SCHOOL



Benefits of joining the network:



- Access to a global network of schools
- Access to an online platform for inspiration, ideas, strategies to make full use of the multilingual talents of your students
- Use of the Language Friendly School logo

HOW TO BECOME A LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL?

Contact us:
info@languagefriendlyschool.org



Find a local partner organization



Decide on priorities that work for your school

Commit in writing not to prohibit, punish or
exclude mother tongues at school



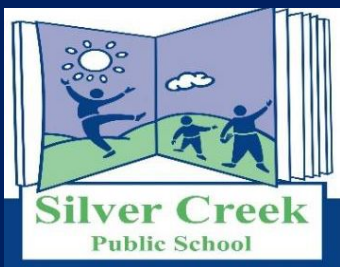
Develop LFS school plan with staff, parents and
students



Implement, evaluate and adjust the plan where
needed (two years)



Q&A



THANK YOU!

Contact:

www.languagefriendlyschool.org

Email: info@languagefriendlyschool.org



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