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Website

## **MTB-MLE and the teaching and learning of indigenous languages: perspectives from teachers on their motivations, struggles and their aspirations**

Panel III: Initiatives and Challenges of MTB-MLE among Indigenous Peoples in Malaysia

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## Overview

- BorIIS and its role as 'the bridge or the voice' from the academic platform
- Sabah and status of intergenerational disruption of Indigenous languages in Sabah (Ethnologue, 2021)
- Previous studies of intergenerational disruption of IL in Sabah's indigenous community
- Language Champions MTB-MLE teachers: Motivations - Challenges
- Aspirations for IDIL 2022-2032



Kadazandusun 'WayForward' research fieldwork, Kg. Botition, 2020,



*Is my language already old  
and walking away from  
me? Or is it me walking  
away and leaving my  
language?*

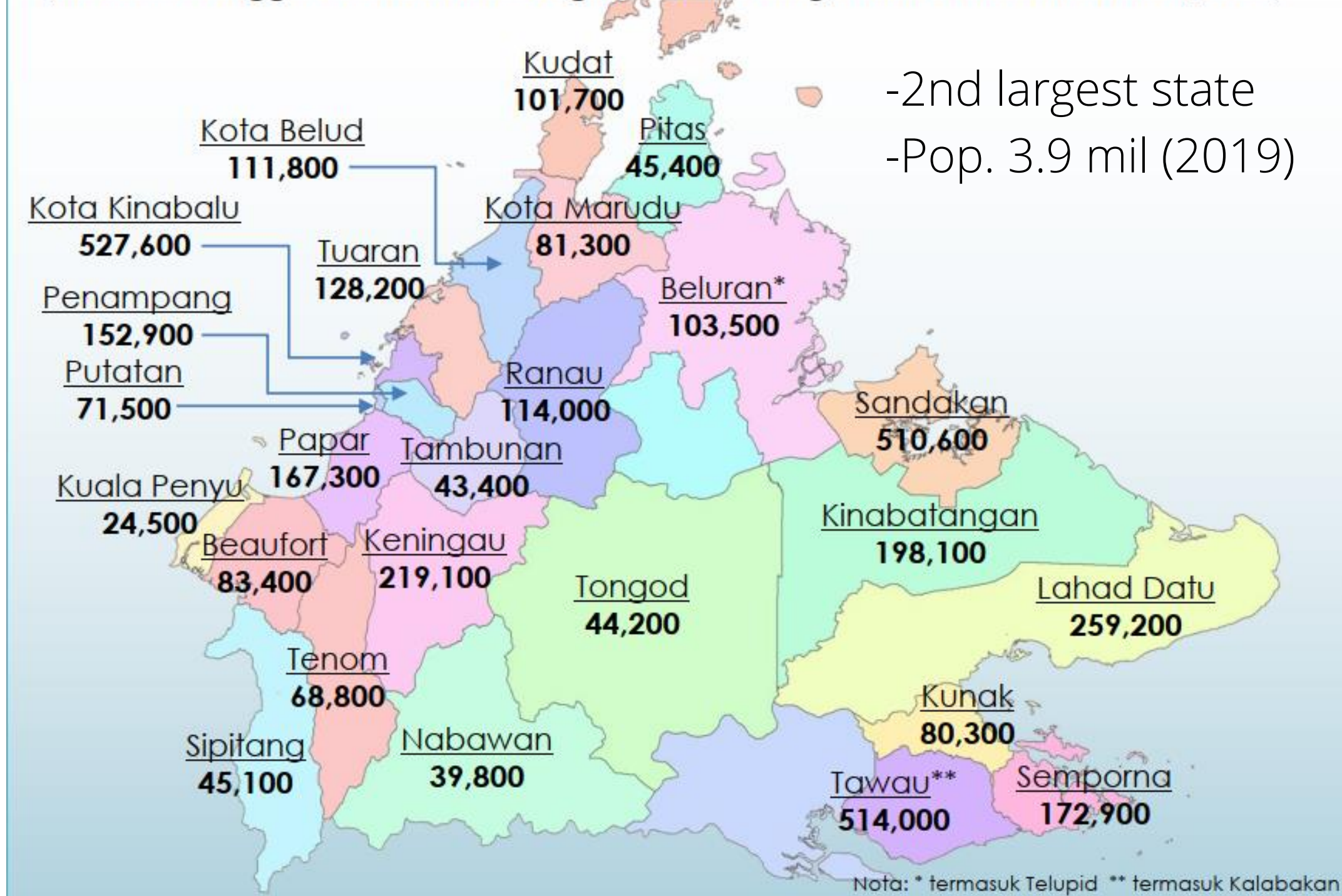
What has been done to help indigenous children continue to be able to learn, and use, their mother tongues – language at home of the indigenous family – in Sabah?



Kg. Pinatau, Kota Marudu, 2019 #fieldwork



**Ilustrasi 1: Anggaran Penduduk Negeri Sabah mengikut Daerah Pentadbiran, 2019**



-2nd largest state  
-Pop. 3.9 mil (2019)

# Sabah, Malaysia

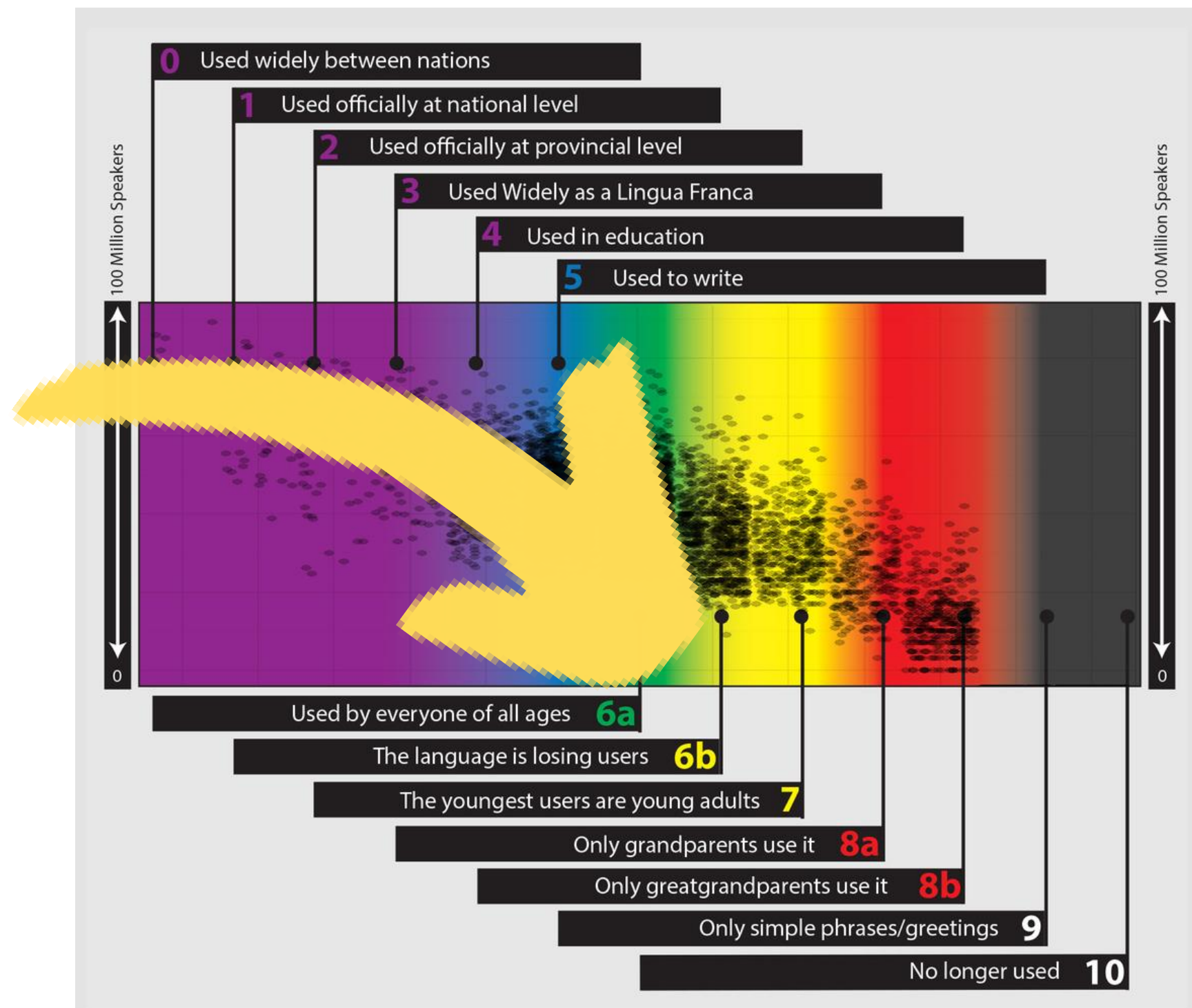
- 33 indigenous communities communicating in 50 languages and 80 dialects.

(<http://eborneo.dbp.gov.my/sabah.html>)

- In Sabah, 43 ethnic groups apparently make up 61.22% of the state's local population.

<https://suhakam.org.my/portfolio/indigenous-peoples/>

# Vitality of Sabah's Indigenous languages (Ethnologue, 2021)

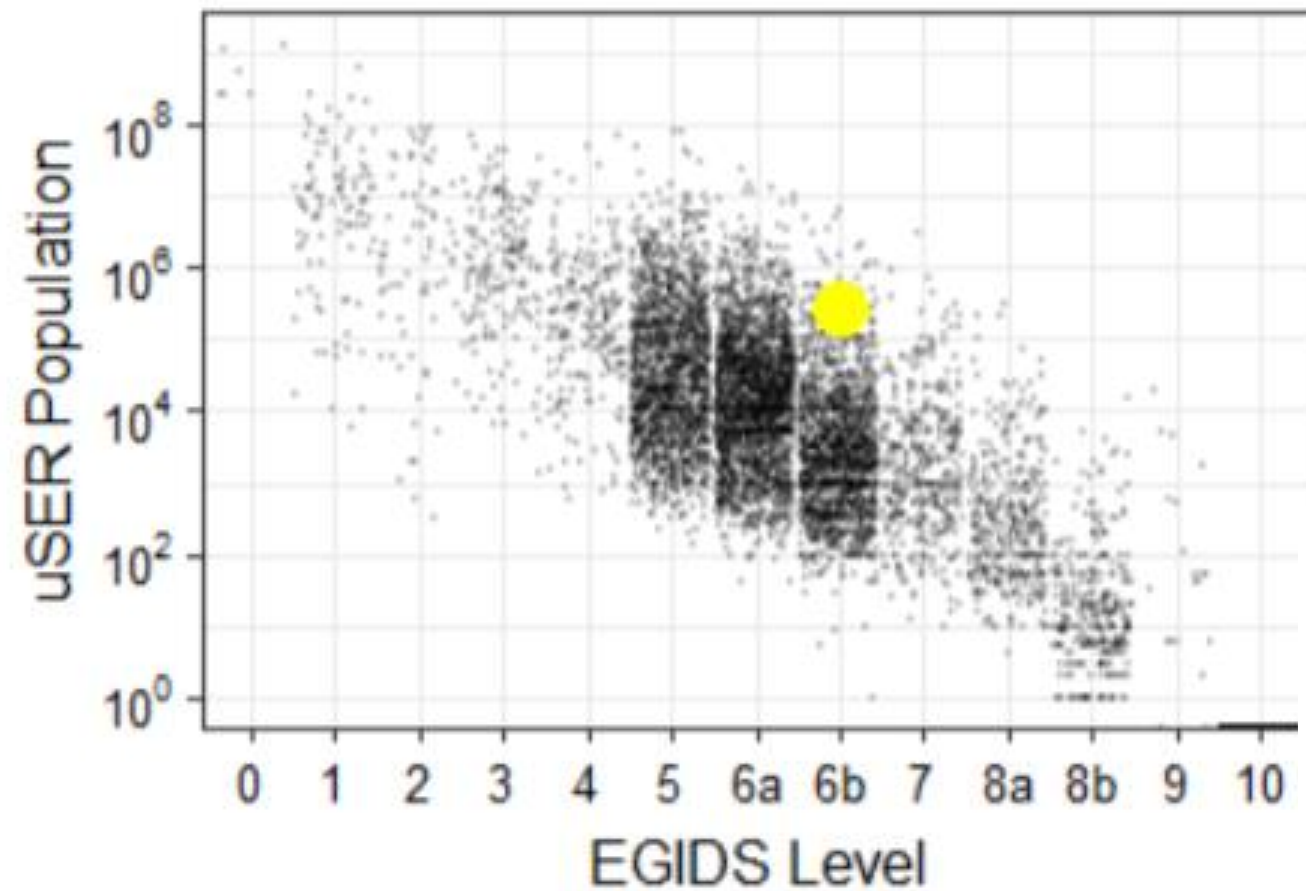


6b on the Expanded Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale or EGIDS (Lewis & Simons, 2010)

'Threatened': The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but is losing users.



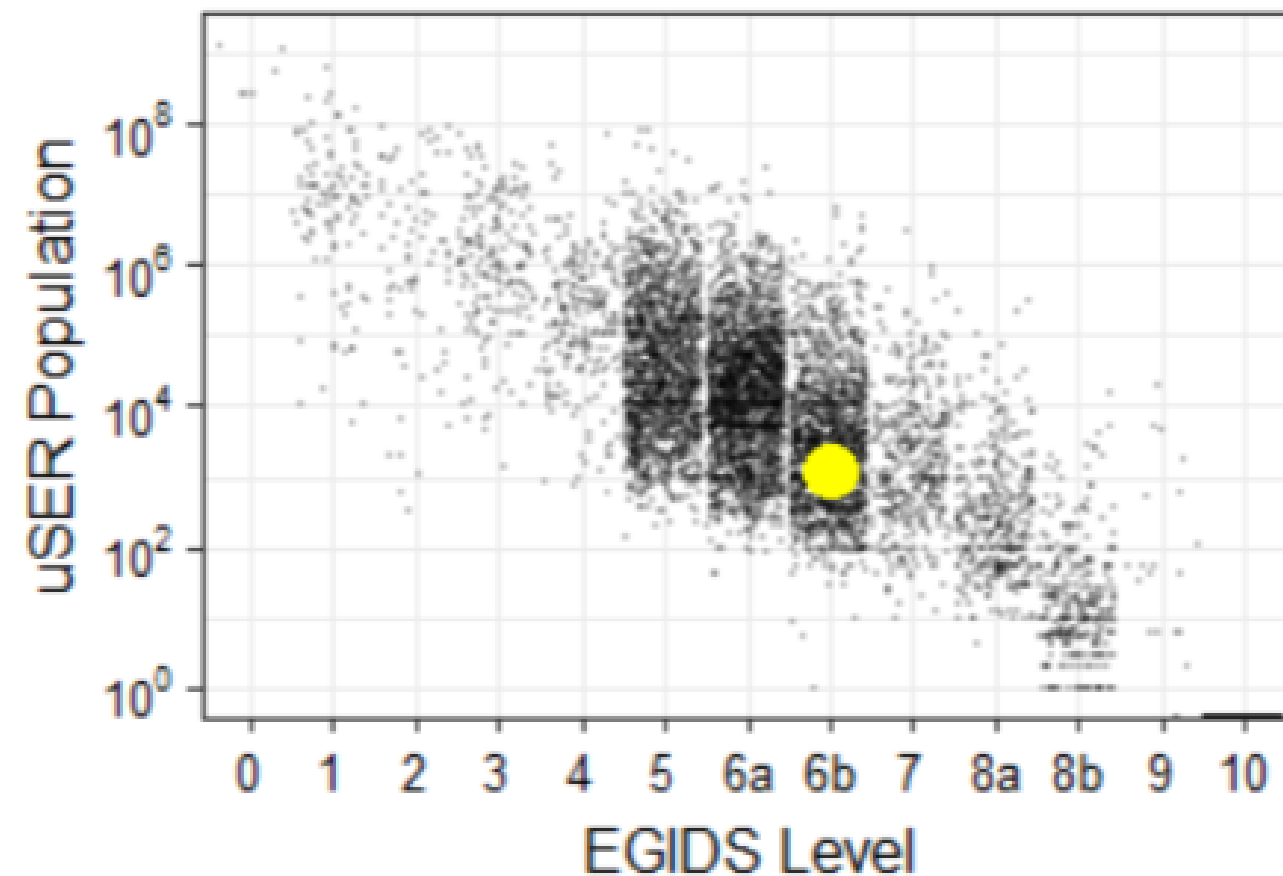
# Kadazan Dusun in the Language Cloud



The EGIDS level for this language in its primary country is 6b (Threatened) — The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users.

Ethnologue (2021)

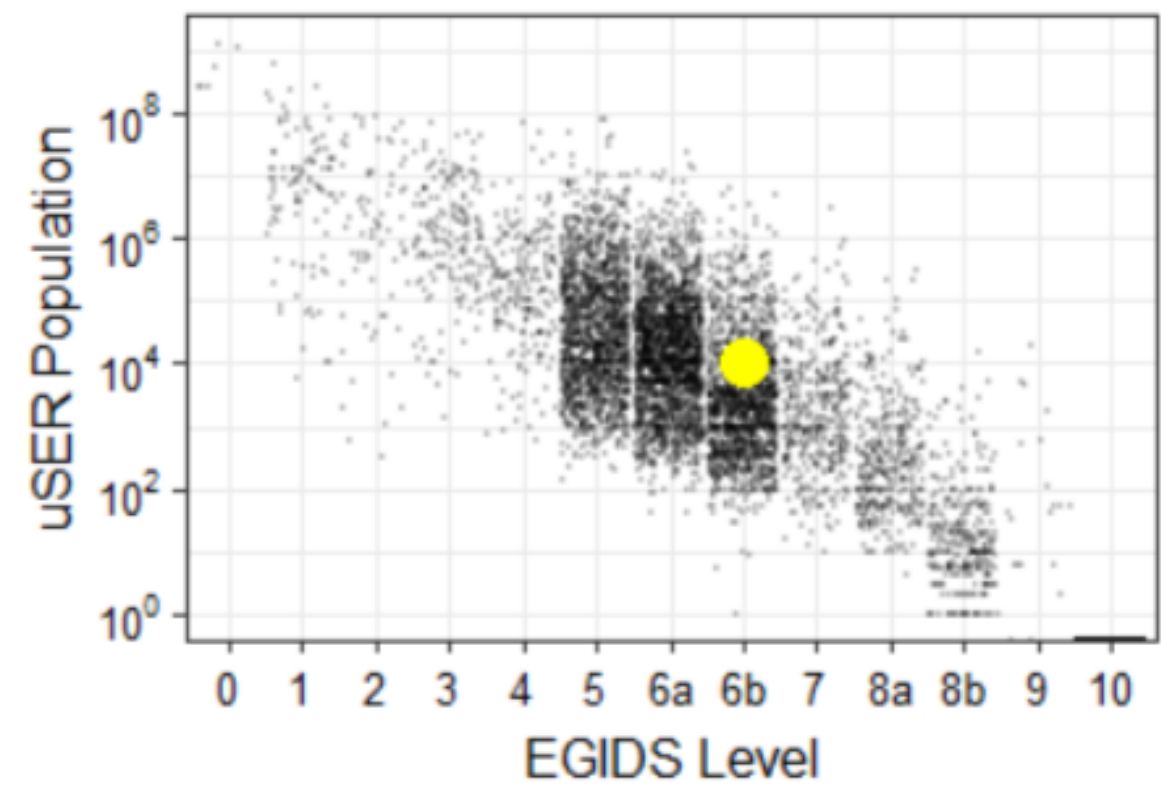
# Minokok in the Language Cloud



The EGIDS level for this language in its primary country is 6b (Threatened) — The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users.



# Kimaragang in the Language Cloud



The EGIDS level for this language in its primary country is 6b (Threatened) – The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations but it is losing users.

Ethnologue (2021)

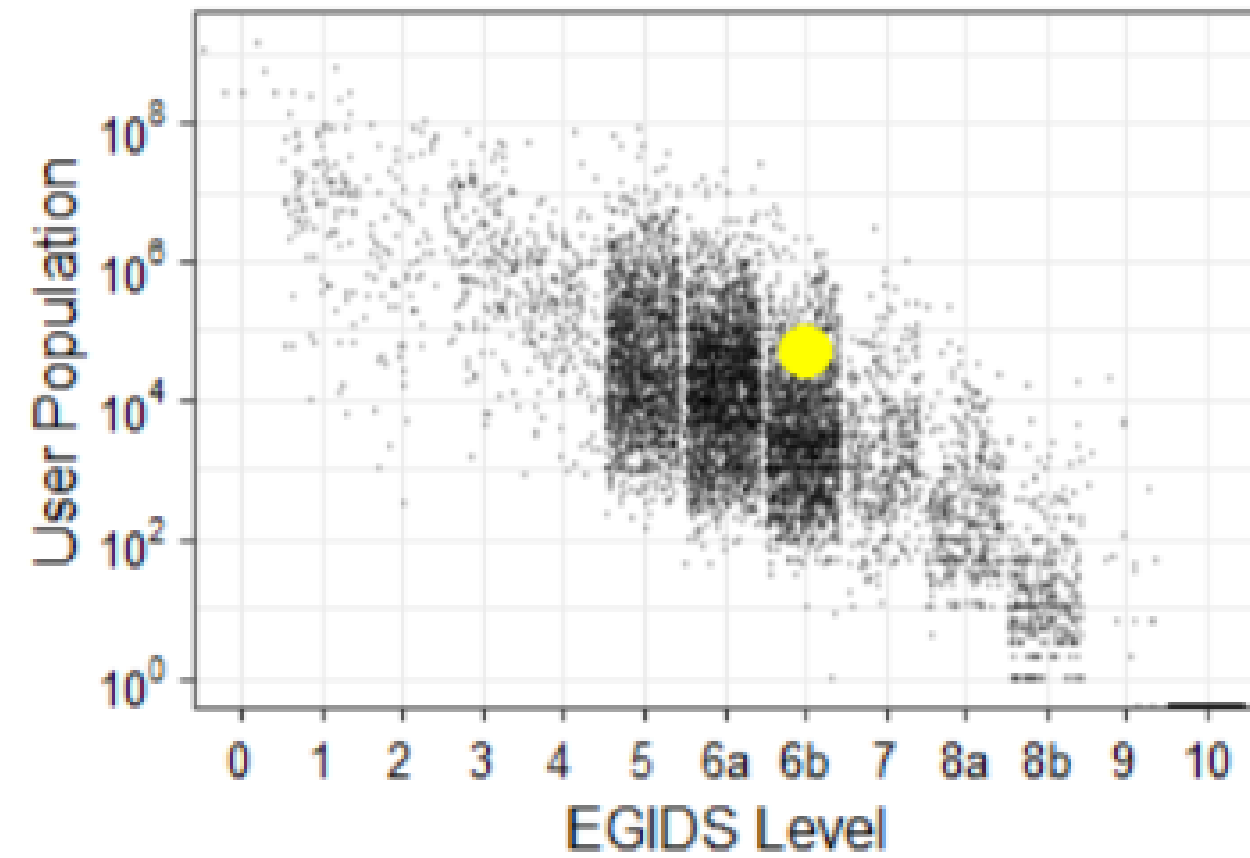


Kimaragang Preschool, Kg. Gailun, Kudat





# Rungus in the Language Cloud



The EGIDS level for this language in its primary country is 6b (Threatened) — The language is used for face-to-face communication within all generations, but it is losing users.



FB MTB-MLE Sabah



# Intergenerational disruption of Indigenous languages in Sabah's Indigenous families

## DBP Jejak Etnik (2010)

"Our preliminary study shows that there is a possibility that ethnic dialects in Sabah will become extinct. This is because the younger generation under the age of 30 is more comfortable speaking Malay than their respective tribal languages, ... only 2,000 people from this group can speak Begahak. The Tobilung community in Kampung Mengaris, Kota Marudu is also experiencing the same problem, ... "

## Ting & Tham (2014)

"ALTHOUGH THERE IS INTERGENERATIONAL transmission of KD language, the results showed a decrease in KD use from the grandparents' generation to the KD teenagers' generation. The language that is taking root in the KD community is Sabah Malay dialect, not only in the friendship, education and religious domains but also in the family domain. In spite of that, the KD teenagers have positive attitudes towards their ethnic language." (A survey of 205 KD teenagers aged 13 to 19 living in Kota Belud)

## Dani et al. (2019)

THE MAIN REASON BEHIND THE DECLINING USE OF THE MOTHER TONGUE AS the main language spoken at home is due to speakers' tendency to selecting and incorporating Malay lexical relevant to the Dusun language. According to Dani, Jaffar, Seruji, and Amir (2011), such Malay words thrive in the Dusun language and are used for everyday speech. There is fear that the mother tongue may eventually be lost if nothing is done to reverse this worrying trend. The data indicate that for the group as a whole, intergenerational language transmission is at Grade 2 (Dwyer, 2011) of the language endangerment scale, which refers to as 'severely endangered'. (120 teenagers aged 15 in Ranau).



## Focus group discussion with:

- 1 - Mdm. Rita Lasimbang, CEO KLF (Observer)
2. Mr. Joemin Maratin – MTB-MLE Director, SIL Malaysia
- 2 - Ms. Amanda Dickson – Coordinator, Bidayuh Development and Preservation Program since 2020; Executive Secretary, Dayak Bidayuh National Association (DBNA), Sarawak.
- 3 - Mdm. Alles Jadaï, Kg. Sinjuk, 11 years experience (Bidayuh Biatah)
- 4 - Mdm. Salina Bangunan, 10 years experience (Tobilung)
- 5 - Mdm. Josphen, CLC Kibunut, Penampang under PACOS Trust (Dusun Ig), 20 year exp
- 6 – Ms. Roslina, Heritage Language Preschool Kimaragang, Kg. Gailun, 2 years exp





- to continue to provide an avenue to the young generation a place to learn the language, even if the pre-school is the only place they get to hear the language.
- feel proud to contribute to continuing the ability to make my language as one of the most important identity marker of a person, hence even if there are many challenges, I will strive on
- feel proud to help and support students who couldn't attend other school due to special learning needs. "I feel proud to see the grandmother of the child so happy because the grandchild could hold his/her pencil when he couldn't previously."





Parents' awareness/support/interest  
in using the mother tongue (more so in  
mixed-marriage contexts)  
is low or none;



Home language with parents is not in the mother  
tongue; child does not understand the language  
at the heritage language school; resulting in child  
being confused; they don't want to speak or  
participate in storytelling

Parents speak to e/other in Indigenous  
language but to the children in Malay/etc.;;  
and children speak to siblings as well as  
neighbours' children using Malay/etc.



Translation **FROM Indigenous language TO the  
child's main language** (Malay, English, mixed,  
etc.) because child does not understand.





- Need training before becoming a heritage language school teacher in Teaching & Learning, and in the preparation of teaching materials.
- Demands from non-Indigenous parents to enrol their child at the school; teachers have to do more translation for this category of students (have no background at all because parents can't speak Bidayuh)



- Schools have to be closed because the teacher fell ill and was confirmed to have COVID-19
- During COVID-19 movement control, apart from technical issues, parents' lack of knowledge in the language means teachers have to respond to text messages from parents who asked what does the homework wants.





- Competition with other options for pre-schools so numbers of children at the heritage language playschool reduces.
- Initial lack of trust by community and parents.



- Lack of use of the IL at home made child couldn't recognize basic phrases or basic vocabulary in the IL such as 'mari makan' (let's eat) or 'pegi mandi' (go take your shower').
- To increase parents' awareness, teacher has to spend time each time a parent comes in, to talk to them and encourage them to use the IL at home.



# WHAT WE HOPE FOR IN IDIL 2022-2032

“

- More teachers join this field to replace or help us teach
- for the heritage lg schools to be registered

“

For a more updated curriculum and teaching aids, so that relevant bodies/agencies are confident with what we offer

“

To teach the IL not only at Pre-school level but also to their primary & secondary school levels

“

For others to appreciate the effort of heritage lg teachers who are teaching to continue our identity and heritage

“

*Nung kivaa sinikulan miagal diti id  
omuhok poh zou, aanangan zou do  
mongoi sinikulan miaga diti; tu suvai  
tadau, obuli poh motuu moboos zou  
do boos ku sondii.*

Jeannet Stephen

#isthiscorrectuse?





TERIMA KASIH  
KOTOHUADAN  
THANK YOU

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