

# **Indigenous Children's Education as Linguistic Genocide and a Crime Against Humanity? A Global View**

*Tove Skutnabb-Kangas and Robert Dunbar*

Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino  
Gáldu, Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples  
(<http://www.galdu.org>) (in press)

***Back cover text and List of contents***

***Back cover:***

***Indigenous Children's Education as Linguistic Genocide and a Crime Against Humanity? A Global View*** (in press, Guovdageaidnu/ Kautokeino: Gáldu, Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, [www.galdu.org](http://www.galdu.org)) is written by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas (sociolinguist and educationist) and Robert Dunbar (human rights lawyer).

The book builds on two Expert papers for the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. As the title shows, the book investigates to what extent educational methods for Indigenous/Tribal and minority children which use a dominant language as the means of instruction can give rise to international criminal liability on the part of States which use such forms of education, within the meaning of the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and under the concept of crimes against humanity. These methods of subtractive education very frequently result in the degradation and even loss of competence in the mother tongue and also inadequate acquisition of the dominant language, with severe consequences for these children. This contributes to language shift, and thus to the disappearance of the world's linguistic diversity (and, through this, also disappearance of biodiversity). Using insights drawn from education, sociolinguistics, psychology, anthropology, sociology, political science and economics, as well as the law, and drawing on a wealth of evidence from around the world, the book shows that this kind of education intentionally aims at alienating these children from their own languages and cultures and assimilating them into the dominant culture. Such education also can and often does cause both physical and mental serious harm to them, with consequences that can last for generations. We show that such forms of education are completely inconsistent with educational and other rights of Indigenous/Tribal peoples and minorities, as well as frustrating the satisfaction of other important international obligations, and that the very severe consequences for the lives of those affected raise serious issues of international criminality. The education is also organised in contradiction with solid research evidence. The book also answers the question what forms of education would be consistent with law and research, and ends with concrete recommendations.

## **List of contents**

List of abbreviations

Foreword

1. Introduction and Summary
2. Right to Education: the Legal Basis
  - 2.1. *Introduction*
  - 2.2. *The Right to Education*
  - 2.3. *Interaction of the Right to Education and the Principle of Non-Discrimination*
  - 2.4. *Instruments and Provisions Specifically Directed at Minorities and Indigenous and Tribal Peoples*
  - 2.5. *Instruments to Which Appropriate ITM Education Would Make a Significant Contribution*
3. Why are languages and mother tongues so important?
  - 3.1. *Mother tongues – some definitions*
  - 3.2. *The importance of languages/mother tongues: Indigenous voices*
  - 3.3. *Reifying? Essentialising? Romanticising? Arguments belittling mother tongues/languages, and some counterarguments*
  - 3.4. *Linguicism and hierarchisation*
4. Right to Education: The Educational Basis
  - 4.1. *Goals in ITM education*
  - 4.2. *Non-models and weak models of bilingual education do not reach the goals; they harm ITM children and promote language shift*
    - 4.2.1. *Summary of prototypes for bi-/multilingual education*
    - 4.2.2. *Deficiency-based theorising and assimilation*
    - 4.2.3. *Presentation of non-models and weak models of bi-/multilingual education*
    - 4.2.4. *Assessing the non-models and weak models*
  - 4.3. *Force as means of control in ITM education: “sticks”, “carrots” and ideas*
  - 4.4. *Educational, social, physical and psychological consequences of submersion education*
5. Right to Education and Some Economic Factors
  - 5.1. *ITM education and poverty*
  - 5.2. *Do states act rationally in ITM education?*
    - 5.2.1. *Are states following research recommendations?*
    - 5.2.2. *Moral considerations arguments and welfare considerations arguments – what does supporting ITM languages cost?*
    - 5.2.3. *MLE, high-level multilingualism and creativity – the causal chain*
    - 5.2.4. *The ecolinguistic relationship between linguistic and cultural diversity and biodiversity*
6. Indigenous Education and International Criminality: Genocide

7. Indigenous Education and International Criminality: Crimes against Humanity
8. What forms of education would be consistent with law and research?
  - 8.1. *How should ITM education be organised on the basis of research results?*
    - 8.1.1. Change of ideology from forced homogenisation through assimilation to enrichment-based theorising and real integration
    - 8.1.2. Presentation of strong models for the education of both ITM and dominant group children
    - 8.1.3. Presentation of some concrete positive projects
  - 8.2. *Assessing the leading principles for strong models: Towards recommendations*
  - 8.3. *Recommendations for ITM education*

References

Notes

Downloaded from [www.tove-skutnabb-kangas.org](http://www.tove-skutnabb-kangas.org)

