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“Educate a girl, educate a community?” :
values for a gender-sensitive quality education
and building inclusive self-reliant communities :
a feminist ethics of Ubuntu perspective

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“Educate a girl, Educate a community?”

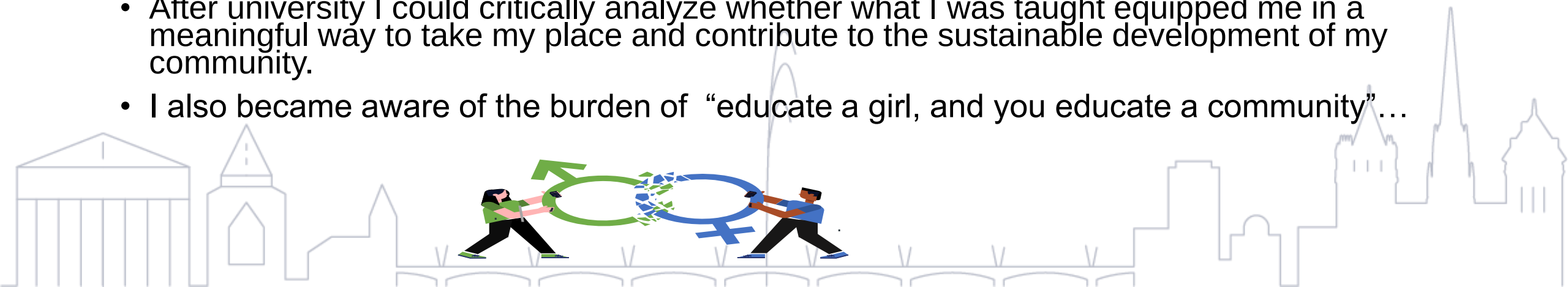
Values for Gender-sensitive Quality Education & Building Inclusive Self-reliant Communities – a feminist ethics of *Ubuntu* perspective

Fulata Lusungu Moyo, PhD - fulamoyo0@gmail.com



Whose Experience and for whose Benefit?

- At Primary School grade 8, I learnt that its not my people the Malawians who grew up around Lake Malawi but the Scottish Missionary David Livingstone who discovered Lake Malawi,
- Before I learnt about the means of transport used by my people around Lake Malawi, I was taught about the use of Gondolas by people of Venice, Italy – I had no clue where Venice was then
 - Estimated 72% of Malawian population is Youth: 15-24 years of age
 - Only 6% of girls graduate from High School and only 2.9% get into tertiary education
 - 51% of youth population is female
- After university I could critically analyze whether what I was taught equipped me in a meaningful way to take my place and contribute to the sustainable development of my community.
- I also became aware of the burden of “educate a girl, and you educate a community”...



Why feminist ethics of ubuntu (FEU- intersectionality) as critical

Sinentlanhla Sithulisiwe Chisale, argue that *ubuntu* in its very essence promotes equality and justice, as people are not defined according to social markers of gender, race, class, age, different abilities, or any other category Chisale

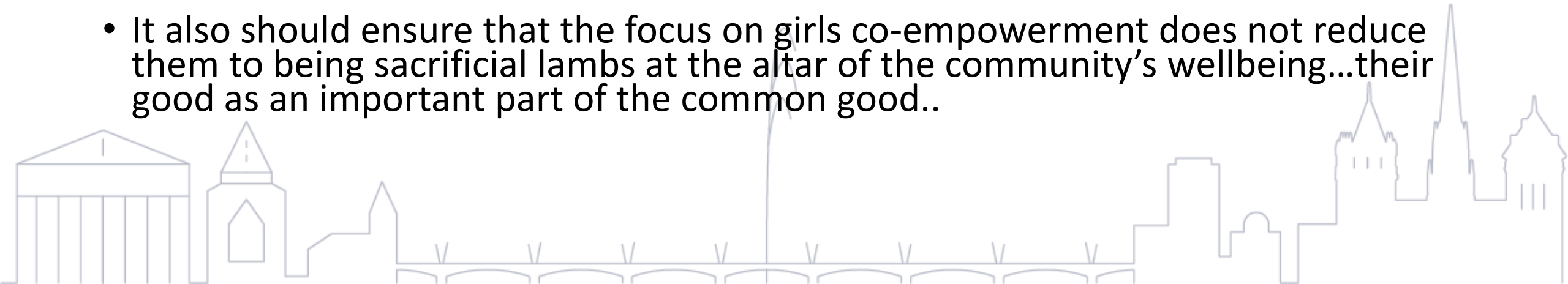
- Each has a personhood as moral agent as well as dignity as *imago Dei* (created in God's image)
- FEU offers a critique of kyriarchal biases – the privileging of male and western approaches that emphasize individualism and abstract theorizing.
 - For gender-sensitive education, the enemy to deconstruct is kyriarchy beyond just patriarchy:
 - Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza coined kyriarchy from ancient Greek *kyrios*
 - Kyriarchy extends patriarchy to encompass and connect to other structures of oppression and privilege, such as racism, ableism, homophobia, capitalism ... in recognition of the intersectionality of oppression into overlapping, transversing and complicated power dynamics that privileges and excludes...

Sinenhlanhla Sithulisiwe Chisale, "Politics of the Body, Fear and Ubuntu: Proposing an African Women's Theology of Disability," *HTS Theologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 76, no. 3 (August 2020): 2, (1-10).

ESF, *Changing Horizons: Explorations in Feminist Interpretation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2013), 7.

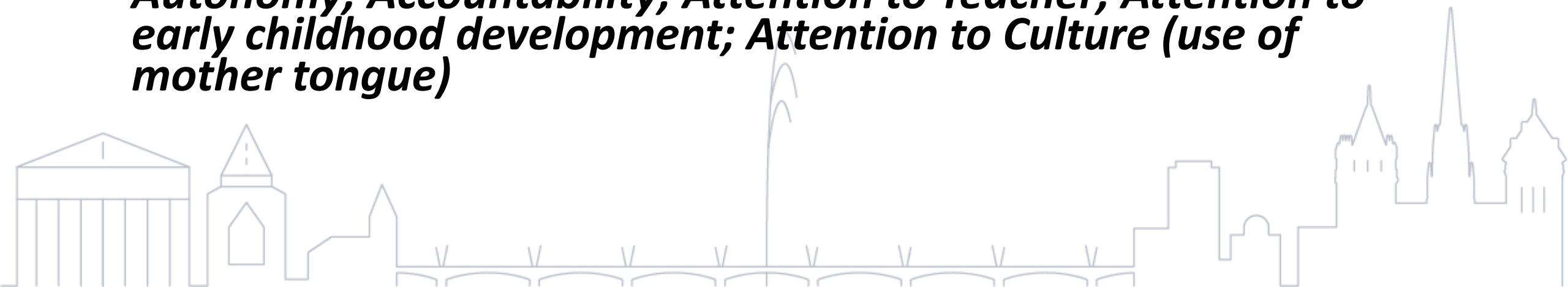
Why feminist ethics of ubuntu (FEU-intersectionality) as critical ...cont.

- (Instead), by accenting the African's preference of relationship, experience, and community, FEU challenges the quality and process of education to be **decolonized** and be shaped by the experiences of the people it serves and equip the beneficiaries first and foremost with indigenous or contextual knowledge systems using relevant language and media of transmission of knowledge
- Invites the education process to be a journey that ascertains the equality and justice of every member—as with personhood and dignity, especially women and girls
- It also should ensure that the focus on girls co-empowerment does not reduce them to being sacrificial lambs at the altar of the community's wellbeing...their good as an important part of the common good..



Why feminist ethics of ubuntu (FEU-intersectionality) as critical ...cont.

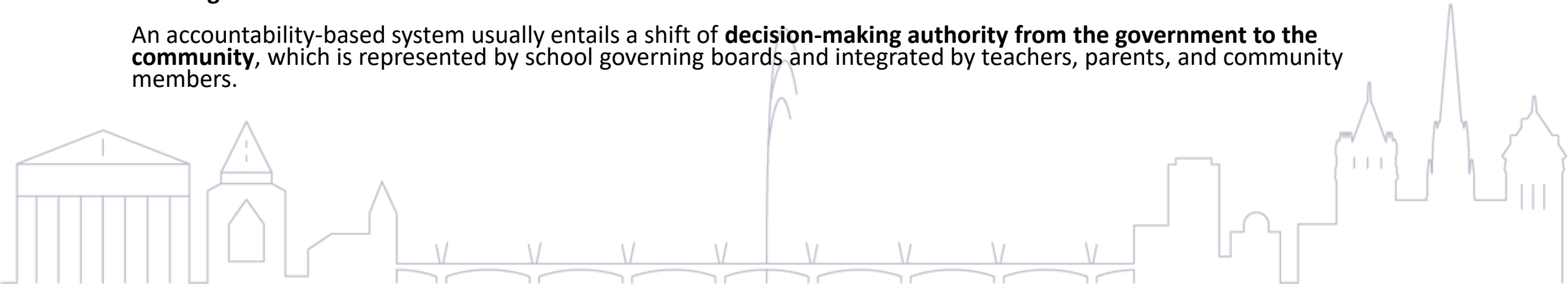
- So I recommend the feminist ethical *ubuntu* analysis into:
- SDG4 Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all; and
- SDG5 Achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls
- And the six necessary As to quality education: ***Assessment; Autonomy; Accountability; Attention to Teacher; Attention to early childhood development; Attention to Culture (use of mother tongue)***



FEU- intersectionality) analysis into 6As of Quality Education.

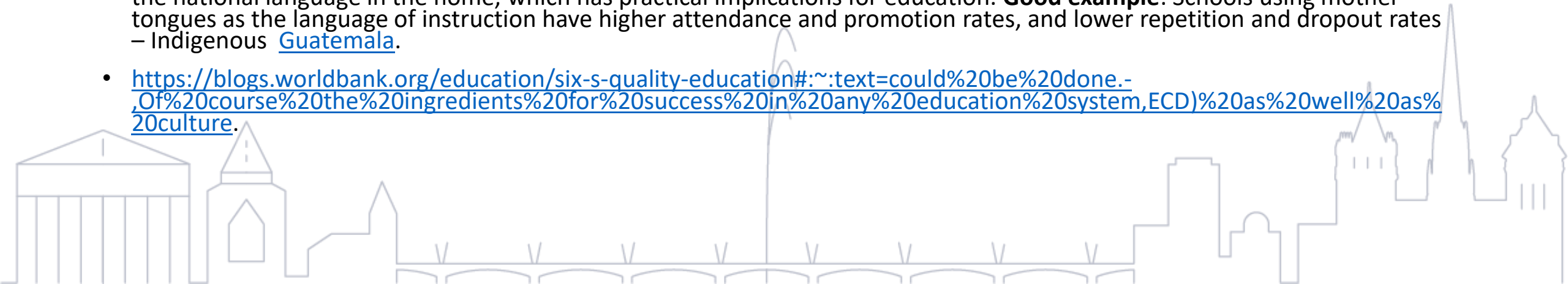
- **Assessment.** Benchmarks and benchmark-based assessments are the cornerstone of education planning and reform aiming to improve quality. Good example: Jordan: international tests for benchmarking and the use of feedback loops led to impressive gains. **Whose experience?**
- **Autonomy.** Empowering schools will determine quality improvements. This includes giving them ownership, resources, and voice while enhancing school competitiveness. Good examples: Australia, Canada, Finland, Japan and Korea – the five OECD countries with both an above-average student performance in science and a below-average impact of socio-economic background on student performance – 80% of 15-year-olds are in schools which report competing with one or more other schools in the area for students. **Is Autonomy accompanied by enhanced accountability mechanisms?**
- **Accountability.** Accountability increases time on task and academic achievement. As decision-making power is redistributed, local authorities, school principals, teachers, and students are given new responsibilities for resource deployment and school activities. **School heads held accountable to both parents and local authorities for improving the learning environment and outcomes.**

An accountability-based system usually entails a shift of **decision-making authority from the government to the community**, which is represented by school governing boards and integrated by teachers, parents, and community members.



FEU- intersectionality) analysis into 6As of Quality Education.

- **Attention to teachers.** Studies across the world show that a good teacher adds value to the learning process– can be effective in helping students to improve their learning outcomes. **Good examples:** The top-performing school systems recruit their teachers from the top third of each graduate cohort: top 5% in South Korea, top 10% in Finland, and top 30% in Singapore and Hong Kong SAR, China. This screening helps to ensure that teachers possess the skills and knowledge necessary to be effective educators. Additionally, in-service training helps teachers to maintain those skills.
- **Attention to early childhood development.** Early childhood development (ECD) may be the most cost-effective educational investment. Empirical evidence demonstrates that quality ECD interventions increase educational success and adult productivity, and decrease public expenditures later on. **Good example:** A [study in Jamaica](#) found that children in a treatment group, whose mothers were taught ways in which to promote cognitive, physical, and emotional development during their child's early years, earned on average 42% more as young adults than children in the control group who did not receive these benefits.
- **Attention to culture.** Culture is important and often neglected. The use of the mother tongue as the language of instruction is one cultural area frequently disputed in many countries. In many countries, a significant number of students do not speak the national language in the home, which has practical implications for education. **Good example:** Schools using mother tongues as the language of instruction have higher attendance and promotion rates, and lower repetition and dropout rates – Indigenous [Guatemala](#).
- [https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/six-s-quality-education#:~:text=could%20be%20done.-,Of%20course%20the%20ingredients%20for%20success%20in%20any%20education%20system,ECD\)%20as%20well%20as%20culture.](https://blogs.worldbank.org/education/six-s-quality-education#:~:text=could%20be%20done.-,Of%20course%20the%20ingredients%20for%20success%20in%20any%20education%20system,ECD)%20as%20well%20as%20culture.)



Thank you

