

Compiled by the Taiwan Alliance for Advancement of
Youth Rights and Welfare and the
Indigenous Mission Committee of the Presbyterian
Church in Taiwan

A Total of 163 Indigenous Children and
Youth in Taiwan

Report of Children and Youth's Self-
Identification and Use of Indigenous
Languages

(Information of individual children and youth with specific identities is not
provided in the report)

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I. Introduction

The chances of Indigenous peoples in Taiwan to speak their languages have been more limited and restricted after they were successively governed by Japan and the Nationalist Government. As there are no written words in Indigenous languages, they are preserved mainly through the Indigenous language versions of the Bible prepared by Western missionaries very recently using a romanization system. However, under the rule of colonial policies, Bible translations into Indigenous languages were confiscated, reducing the number of Indigenous peoples who could speak their mother tongues as time passed. The preservation of Indigenous languages has become extremely difficult since this major impact.

The Grade 1-9 Curriculum launched in 2001 included Indigenous languages as part of its courses. In about 21 years, the Taiwanese government made many adjustments and amendments to the policies and plans for learning Indigenous languages. Nevertheless, the languages are disappearing so fast that such adjustments and amendments seem unable to keep up.

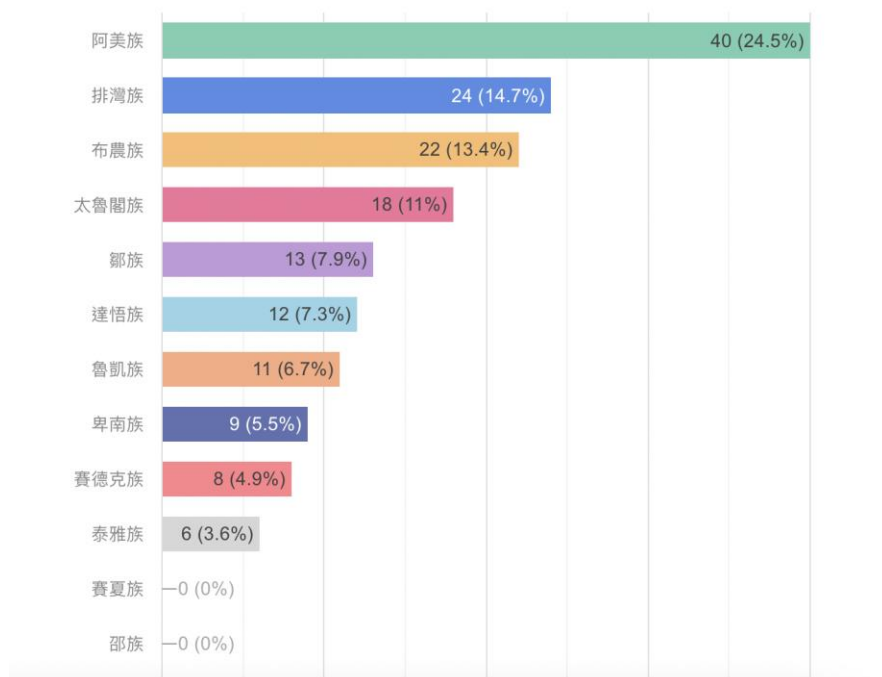
We understand the context and perceive the disappearance of the Indigenous languages, but we lack an accurate and comprehensive understanding of underage Indigenous children and youth's actual use of their mother tongues. Given this, the Indigenous Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan was invited by the Taiwan Alliance for Advancement of Youth Rights and Welfare to work together and invite 163 children aged from 7 to 18 from churches for Indigenous peoples around Taiwan under the organization to participate in the training for making reports regarding Indigenous language education, family education and self-identification. We look forward to understanding the actual use of Indigenous languages of Indigenous children and youth from different regions in Taiwan and thereby determining whether learning the Indigenous languages can encourage Indigenous children to know their cultures through training. We also hope that the training can help improve ethnic identity and give the Taiwanese government guidance on designing policies for protecting and empowering ethnic minority children and youth according to their needs.

II. Work Method

The training personnel (including social workers, priests, preachers, etc.) of the units gathered a total of 163 effective questionnaires from October to December 2021.

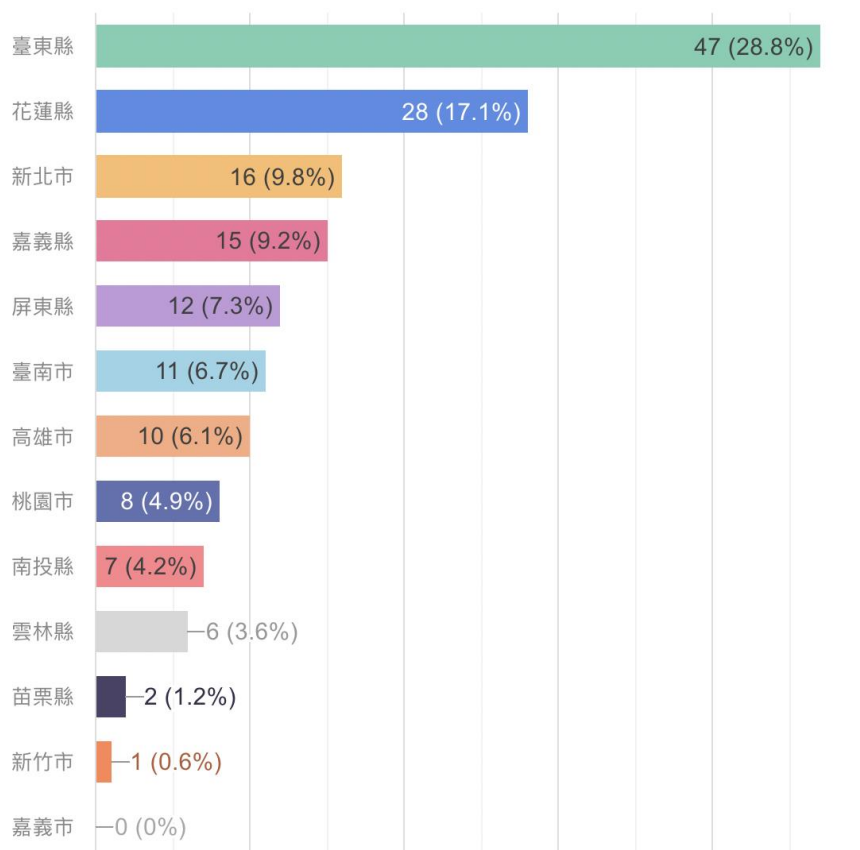
III. Basic Information of Children and Youth

1. Distribution of the children and youth by ethnicity (10 ethnicities)



| | |
|------|----------|
| 阿美族 | Amis |
| 排灣族 | Paiwan |
| 布農族 | Bunun |
| 太魯閣族 | Truku |
| 鄒族 | Tsou |
| 達悟族 | Tao |
| 魯凱族 | Rukai |
| 卑南族 | Puyuma |
| 賽德克族 | Sediq |
| 泰雅族 | Atayal |
| 賽夏族 | Saisiyat |
| 邵族 | Thao |

2. Distribution of the children and youth by city and county (12 cities and counties in total)



| | |
|-----|-----------------|
| 台東縣 | Taitung County |
| 花蓮縣 | Hualien County |
| 新北市 | New Taipei City |
| 嘉義縣 | Chiayi County |
| 屏東縣 | Pingtung County |
| 臺南市 | Tainan City |
| 高雄市 | Kaohsiung City |
| 桃園市 | Taoyuan City |
| 南投縣 | Nantou County |
| 雲林縣 | Yunlin County |
| 苗栗縣 | Miaoli County |
| 新竹市 | Hsinchu City |
| 嘉義市 | Chiayi City |

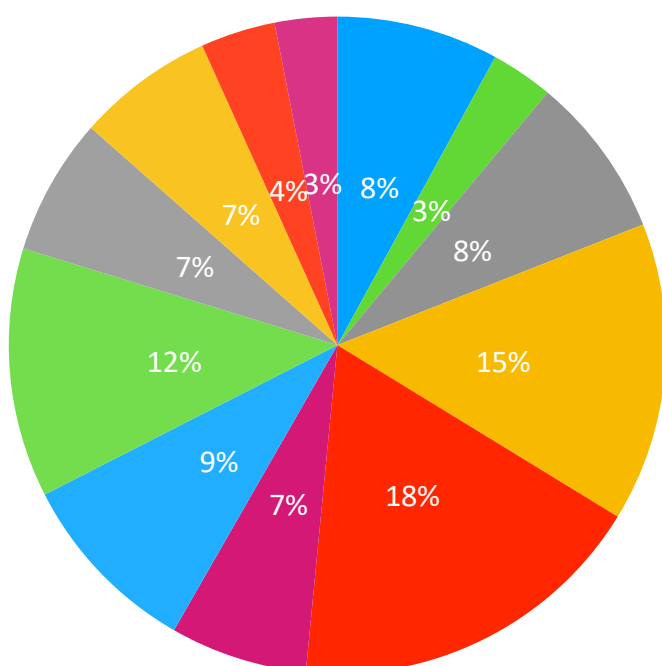
3. Percentage of areas where the children and youth live

| | | |
|--------|-----|-------|
| ■ 原鄉部落 | 109 | 66.8% |
| ■ 平地城鎮 | 54 | 33.1% |

| | |
|------|-------------------|
| 原鄉部落 | Indigenous tribes |
| 平地城鎮 | Urban areas |

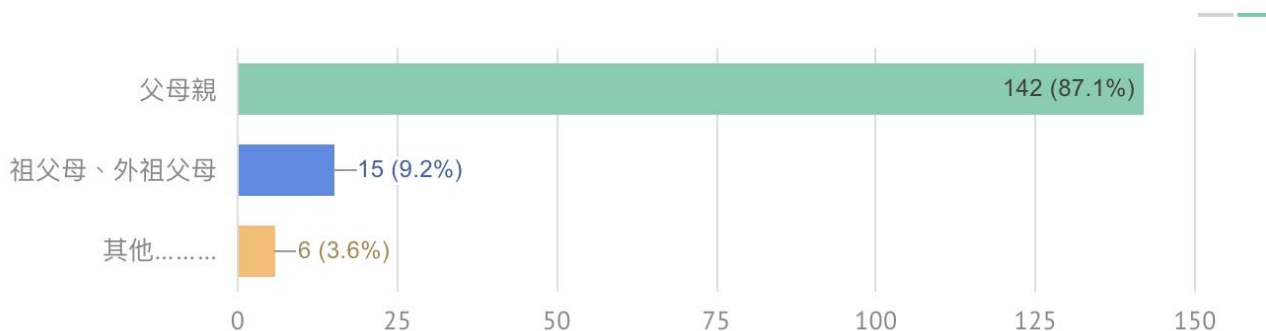
4. Age distribution

- 7歲
- 8歲
- 9歲
- 10歲
- 11歲
- 12歲
- 13歲
- 14歲
- 15歲
- 16歲
- 17歲
- 18歲



| | |
|------|--------------|
| 7 歲 | 7 years old |
| 8 歲 | 8 years old |
| 9 歲 | 9 years old |
| 10 歲 | 10 years old |
| 11 歲 | 11 years old |
| 12 歲 | 12 years old |
| 13 歲 | 13 years old |
| 14 歲 | 14 years old |
| 15 歲 | 15 years old |
| 16 歲 | 16 years old |
| 17 歲 | 17 years old |
| 18 歲 | 18 years old |

5. Percentage of main caregivers:



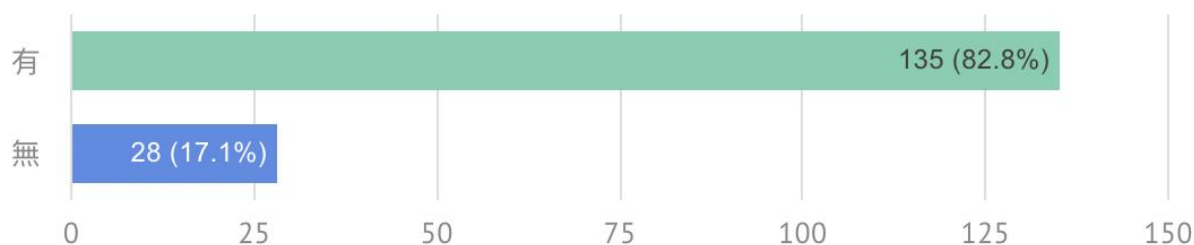
| | |
|----------|--------------|
| 父母親 | Parents |
| 祖父母、外祖父母 | Grandparents |
| 其他 | Other |

6. About 65.6% of the parents of children and youth had the same ethnicity.

7. Nearly half of the children and youth were surrounded by Indigenous peoples in their lives.

IV. General Survey of Mother Tongue Education for Children and Youth

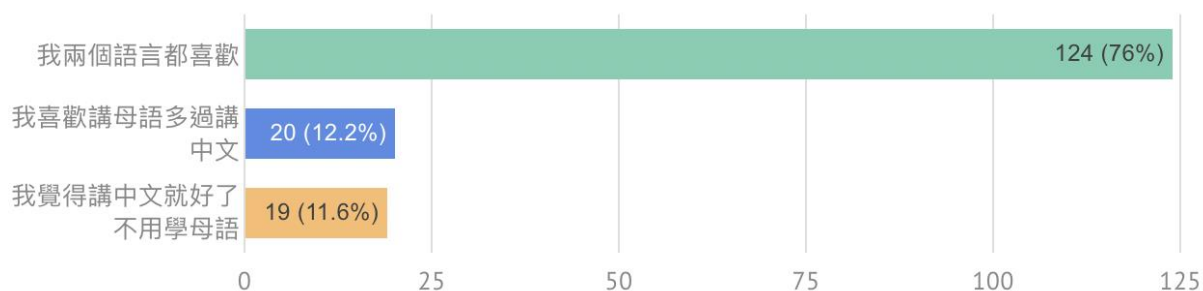
1. Whether schools offered mother tongue lessons:



| | |
|---|-----|
| 有 | Yes |
| 無 | No |

2. For students whose schools offered mother tongue lessons, the average scores (0-10 points) of “I like the mother tongue lessons” and “native speaker teachers” were 7.69 and 7.45, respectively, which were high scores exceeding the threshold.

3. Language preference:



| | |
|-----------------|---|
| 我兩個語言都喜歡 | I like both languages |
| 我喜歡講母語多過講中文 | I prefer speaking my mother tongue to speaking Chinese |
| 我覺得講中文就好了 不用學母語 | I think speaking Chinese is enough for me, I don't need to learn my mother tongue |

4. Have you passed any language proficiency exams for your mother tongue?

| 答案選項 | 填答數 | 百分比 |
|------|-----|-------|
| ■ 有 | 94 | 57.6% |
| ■ 無 | 69 | 42.3% |

| | |
|-----|-------------|
| 有 | Yes |
| 無 | No |
| 填答數 | Respondents |
| 百分比 | Percentage |

5. The total time of mother tongue lessons per week was 66 minutes.

6. About 4% of the children and youth learned languages that were not their mother tongues in the mother tongue lessons.
7. 17.6% of the children and youth took mother tongue lessons using the languages of their ethnicities that were not used by their clans or in their regions.
8. The average self-evaluated score for the native language level before the mother tongue lessons was 5 (out of 10 points), and the score after the lessons was 6.79.

V. Children and Youth’s Family Status and Indigenous Self-Identification

1. The frequency of speaking mother tongues at home scored only 4.69 points (out of 10 points). As for the family members who used mother tongues the most, 93 people answered the question with “grandparents” and 70 people answered it with “parents”, showing that the number of people using their mother tongues is declining generation by generation.
2. Percentage of people who think they are familiar with their ethnicities:

| | | |
|--------|----|-------|
| ■ 一點點熟 | 90 | 55.2% |
| ■ 蠻熟 | 45 | 27.6% |
| ■ 非常熟 | 23 | 14.1% |
| ■ 完全不熟 | 5 | 3% |

| | |
|------|--------------------|
| 一點點熟 | A little familiar |
| 蠻熟 | Fairly familiar |
| 非常熟 | Very familiar |
| 完全不熟 | Totally unfamiliar |

3. Does your family share with you the fairy tales, cultures and customs of your tribe?

| | | |
|-----------|----|-------|
| ■ 偶爾 | 73 | 44.7% |
| ■ 普通 | 41 | 25.1% |
| ■ 很長 | 21 | 12.8% |
| ■ 不曾 | 18 | 11% |
| ■ 強烈的一直分享 | 10 | 6.1% |

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------|
| 偶爾 | Occasionally |
| 普通 | Normal |
| 很長 | Often |
| 不曾 | Never |
| 強烈的一直分享 | Strongly share all the time |

4. The average score (0 meaning not at all; 10 meaning total agreement) of “I’m proud and honored to be an Indigenous person” was 8.45.
5. Up to 91% knew that Indigenous peoples are allowed to use their traditional names.
6. 81% were willing to solely use their traditional names, if possible.
7. 5% of the children and youth would not like to be “Indigenous peoples” if they could choose. Up to 95% of the children and youth would love to become Indigenous peoples again for the following reasons:

A. Unwilling

I may be discriminated against (1 person)

I don’t know (5 people)

B. Willing:

I love being an Indigenous person (12 people)

I'm proud of being an Indigenous person (9 people)

I'm willing to because my parents are Indigenous people (7 people)

It's great (5 people)

I love my own culture (4 people)

Because the identity can help me get bonus points (3)

Because I can learn about much of the culture of our tribe (3 people)

I'm honored to have my own culture and traditions (2 people)

I'm willing to because I like living in the mountain (1 person)

The Amis has a very rich culture (1 person)

I'm proud of being an Indigenous person and happy to live on this land (1 person)

It's great like this (1 person)

For example, if I use Chinese or English which is commonly used to talk about serious matters on a plane, many people will understand what I'm talking about. If I use my mother tongue to communicate, only people from my own tribe can understand (1 person)

I'm used to being an Indigenous person (1 person)

God sent me this present (1 person)

My dad is awesome (1 person)

I have a lot of good friends (1 person)

I'm super proud of our varied and rich culture! (1 person)

I'm not only proud of it, but also treat it as a responsibility and duty (1 person)

I like my ethnicity a lot as I can learn my mother tongue, sing songs from my native language happily, and dance hand in hand with others. I love that kind of feeling (1 person)

I love the Atayal because we are a friendly ethnicity (1 person)

I would like to learn my mother tongue (1 person)

It's fun (1 person)

Because Indigenous peoples are happy (1 person)

Because my senior family members are Indigenous people (1 person)

Because I can understand what adults are talking about and talk to them (1 person)

My mother tongue is a present given by God (1 person)

Because I'm happy to be an Indigenous person and I like taking the mother tongue lessons (1 person)

Because we have land (1 person)

Because it is the mother tongue of my father and grandfather (1 person)

Because I'm proud of my identity. I'm an Indigenous person (1)

I feel good being an Indigenous person, I can experience different things (1)

Because I'm proud of being an Indigenous person and having our own unique culture! I can also wear beautiful clothes and enjoy much culture (1)

Because I think hunting is fun (1)

Because I am an Indigenous person, I think Indigenous peoples should not be abandoned (1)

Because I like to speak my mother tongue (1)

Because we have the Harvest Festival and tribes (1)

We have a special culture. I like to listen to folk tales and I think the wisdom of vuvu is awesome (1)

Because I can live in the countryside rather than in a city (1)

Because Indigenous peoples are cool! It's great (1)

Because Indigenous peoples are creative (1)

Because Indigenous peoples are pure (1)

Because our faces look like foreigners (1)

I enjoy the life in the tribe and I always want to dance at the Harvest Festival. The classmates and teachers in my class all like Indigenous peoples (1)

I love living in the tribe as I can learn the Indigenous language (1)

I like different cultures and want to promote them (1)

I can learn our traditional mother tongue (1)

There are a lot of old ballads in Indigenous languages that are pleasant to hear, and

Indigenous peoples are athletic (1)

Indigenous peoples work hard (1)

Indigenous peoples are smart (1)

Indigenous peoples are warm-hearted (1)

Indigenous peoples are optimistic (1)

Indigenous peoples have a gift for art (1)

Indigenous peoples are delightful (1)

VI. Detailed Comparison of the Use of Indigenous Languages among Children and Youth

1. One-fourth of the children and youth in New Taipei City were not sure whether or not they would like to be “Indigenous peoples” if they could choose, accounting for the largest proportion.

2. It is affirmed that the preference for and the frequency of using mother tongues depend on whether schools offer mother tongue lessons.

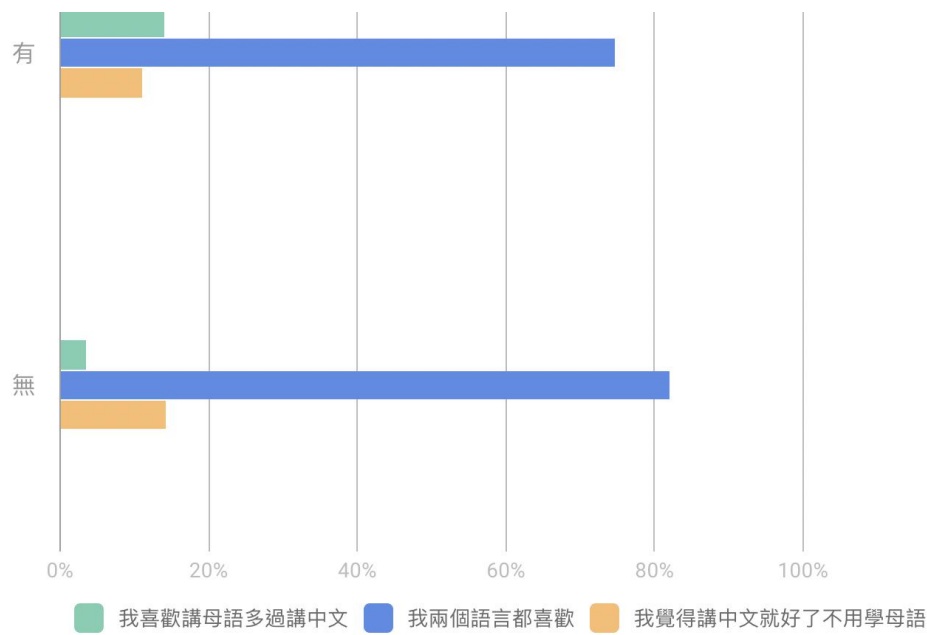
In the survey, we found that the number of the children and youth whose schools offered mother tongue lessons and who preferred using their mother tongues was 10 percent higher than the number of those who did not receive mother tongue education and preferred using their mother tongues.

3. However, we also found that nearly one-fifth of the interviewed children and youth had no access to mother tongue lessons at school, with the percentage of children and youth whose schools did offer mother tongue education as follows: Taitung County 10.64%, Hualien 35.71%, Pingtung 41.67%, Chiayi 26.67%, Tainan 9.9%, Taoyuan 25%, New Taipei City 6.25%.

In addition, the languages that the children and youth learned in the mother tongue lessons offered by the schools not being those of their ethnicity (e.g. Bunun children and youth learning Bunun in the mother tongue lessons they take) occurred most in New Taipei City (15.38%), followed by Chiayi (7.14%), Taitung (4.44%) and Hualien (3.57%).

Furthermore, the percentage of the children and youth who received mother tongue education using the languages of their ethnicities that are not used by their clans or in their regions was as follows: (Such circumstances exist in Hsinchu, Hualien, Chiayi, Pingtung and Taitung)

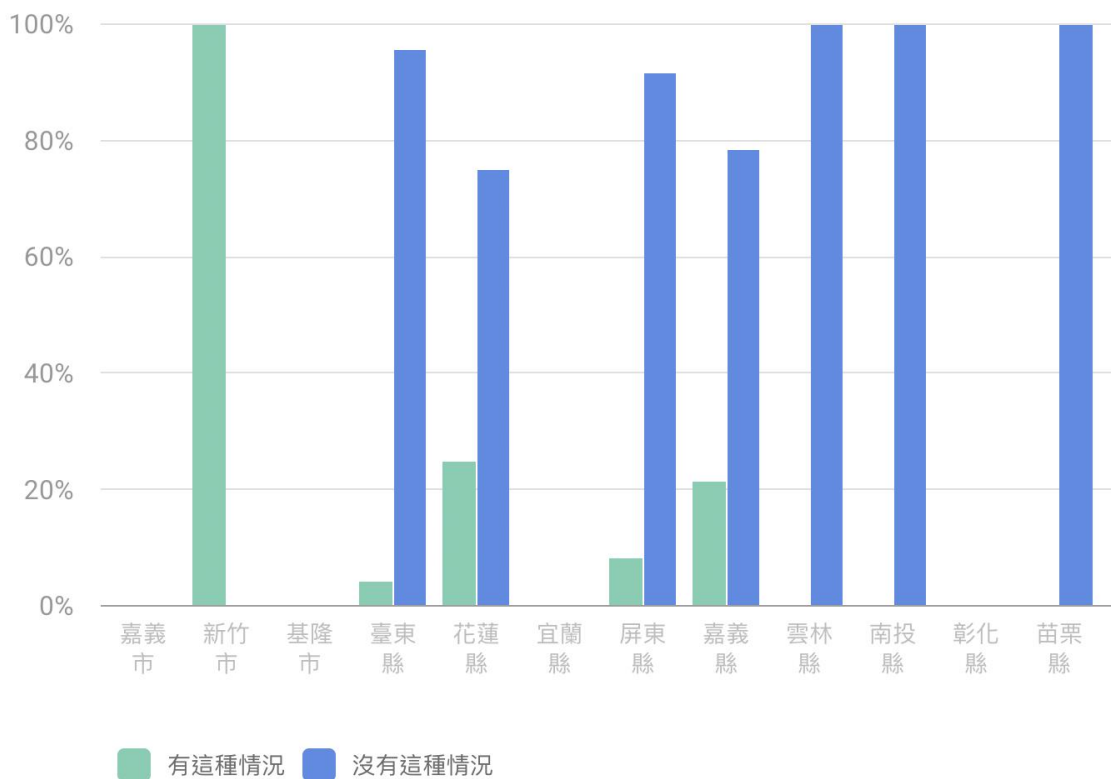
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The vertical axis shows “whether schools offer mother tongue lessons”

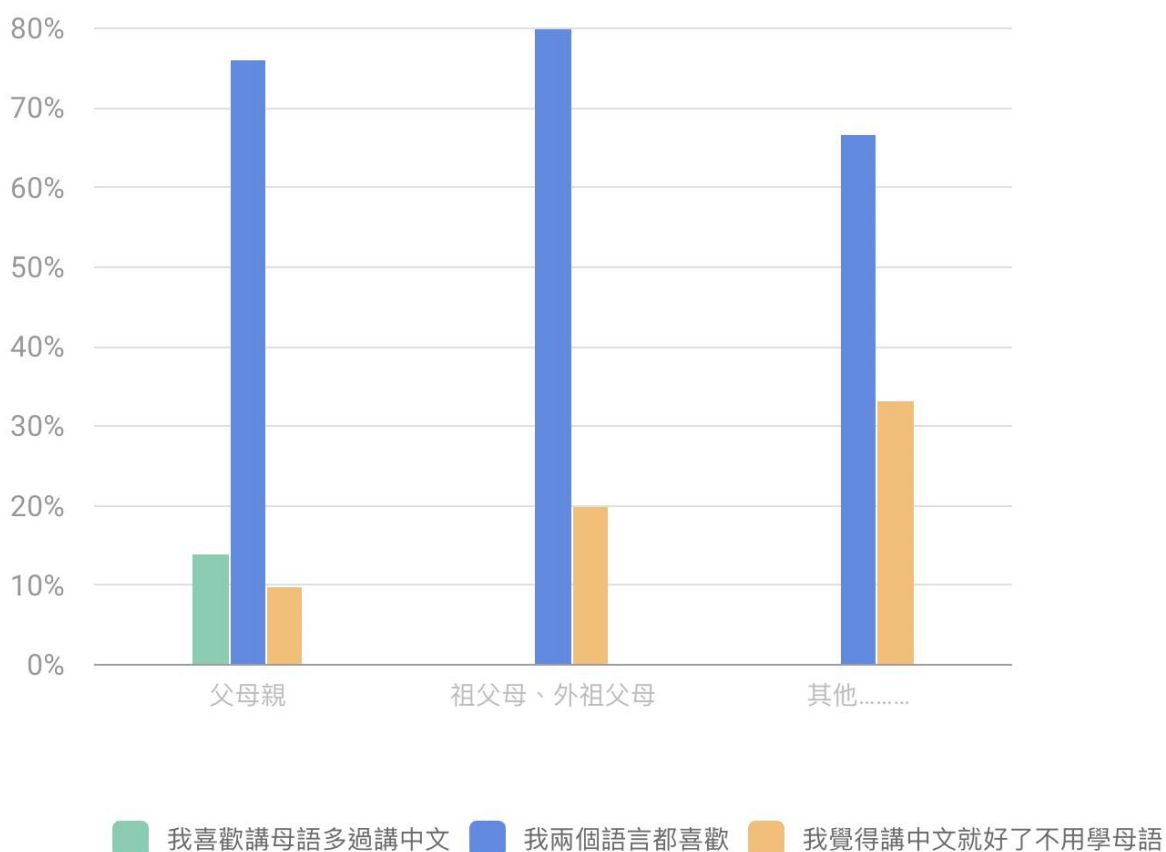
| | |
|----------------|---|
| 有 | Yes |
| 無 | No |
| 我喜歡講母語多過講中文 | I prefer speaking my mother tongue to speaking Chinese |
| 我兩個語言都喜歡 | I like both languages |
| 我覺得講中文就好了不用學母語 | I think speaking Chinese is enough for me, I don't need to learn my mother tongue |

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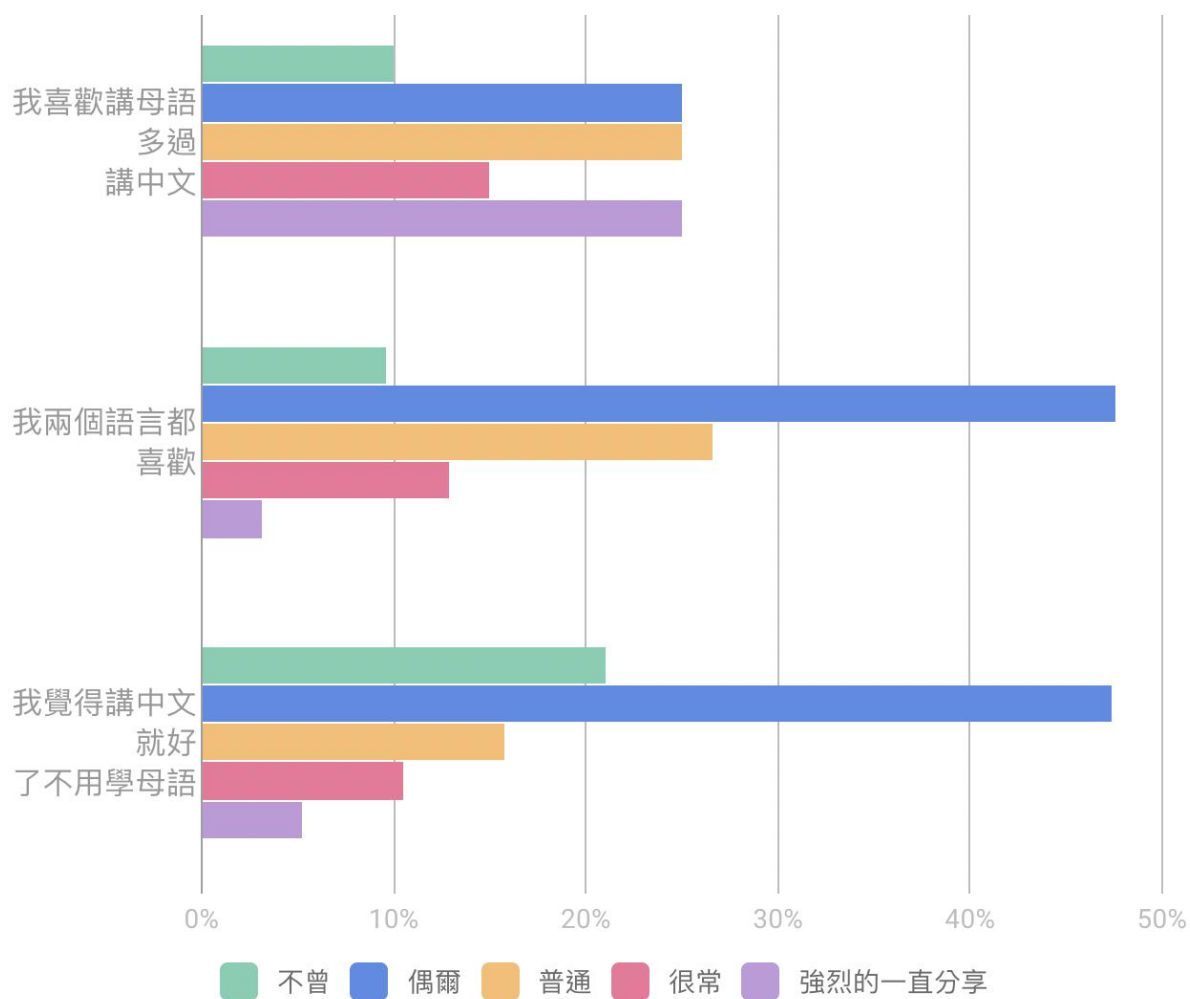
| | |
|--------|-------------------------------|
| 嘉義市 | Chiayi City |
| 新竹市 | Hsinchu City |
| 基隆市 | Keelung City |
| 台東縣 | Taitung County |
| 花蓮縣 | Hualien County |
| 宜蘭縣 | Yilan County |
| 屏東縣 | Pingtung County |
| 嘉義縣 | Chiayi County |
| 雲林縣 | Yunlin County |
| 南投縣 | Nantou County |
| 彰化縣 | Changhua County |
| 苗栗縣 | Miaoli County |
| 有這種情況 | Such circumstance exists |
| 沒有這種情況 | There's no such circumstances |

4. Regarding the correlation between the main caregivers of children and youth and their preference for speaking their mother tongues, we found that the percentage of the children and youth whose main caregivers were their parents and who liked to speak their mother tongues was much higher than that of the children and youth who were raised by their grandparents or other relatives and liked to speak their mother tongues: 14.08% of the children and youth whose main caregivers were their parents preferred using their mother tongues as their main language over using Chinese.



| | |
|----------------|---|
| 父母親 | Parents |
| 祖父母、外祖父母 | Grandparents |
| 其他.... | Other... |
| 我喜歡講母語多過講中文 | I prefer speaking my mother tongue to speaking Chinese |
| 我兩個語言都喜歡 | I like both languages |
| 我覺得講中文就好了不用學母語 | I think speaking Chinese is enough for me, I don't need to learn my mother tongue |

The frequency of children and youth’s family members sharing the fairy tales, cultures and customs of tribes with them was proportional to their preference for using their mother tongues. According to the questionnaire survey results, it was found that the children and youth from families where their family members rarely share with them the cultures, myths, customs and traditions of Indigenous peoples tended to think that it was not important to preserve or use their mother tongues.



| | |
|----------------|---|
| 我喜歡講母語多過講中文 | I prefer speaking my mother tongue to speaking Chinese |
| 我兩個語言都喜歡 | I like both languages |
| 我覺得講中文就好了不用學母語 | I think speaking Chinese is enough for me, I don't need to learn my mother tongue |
| 不曾 | Never |
| 偶爾 | Occasionally |
| 普通 | Normal |
| 很常 | Often |
| 強烈的一直分享 | Strongly share all the time |