Guyana’s Amer-indigenous languages:

The latent political weapon in the war for Guyana’s humanity

The emerging creative force in the making of Guyana’s humanity

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2019  RENFORESAP WORKSHOP, LETHEM, GUYANA
Objectives
At the end of the workshop we expect that you will:

- Appreciate the political dimension of the work being undertaken;

- Appreciate the specific Guyanese linguistic context;

- Understand that language awareness is itself a vital intangible cultural resource;

- Understand the importance of language rights advocacy in our work as cultural workers/organic intellectuals;

- Share your thoughts about this presentation.
Silent Witness: by the Guyanese Lokono artist, George Simon
From “Ethnologue” (2019) The linguistic demography has changed since the creation of this map. Creolese (Guyanese Creole) is much more widespread than is depicted here. Lokono (Arawak), Carib and Warrau are seriously endangered.
The main points drawn from the Charter on Language Policy and Language Rights in the Creole-speaking Caribbean

- Kingston, Jamaica -- January 14, 2011
HUMAN RIGHTS

- The Charter of the United Nations
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 1966
- The American Convention on Human Rights of 1969
The right to be recognized as a member of a language community;
The right to the use of one’s own language both in private and in public;
The right to maintain and develop one’s own culture;
The right to appropriate speech and language therapy in the event of a citizen suffering from language disorders.
Everyone has the following linguistic rights:

- to at least initial instruction and literacy in their first language;
- to learn the territorial languages of the territory in which he/she resides;
- to learn any other language.
Education and linguistic rights:

- “Education must help to foster the capacity for linguistic and cultural self-expression of the language communities of the territory where it is provided.

- Education must help to maintain and develop the languages spoken by the language communities of the territory where it is provided.

- Initial instruction in one’s first language is crucial as it enhances conceptual development, language acquisition and development, learning in general, and education of the child.
The persistent colonial project: monopolies of language corporate globalization – The case of Guyana
Guyana’s Education Goals 1966-2008 expressed as a linear path of “progress” from Ministry of Education Strategic Plan 2008-13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>GOALS</th>
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<tr>
<td>1966—1976</td>
<td>Development of an <strong>indigenous</strong> curriculum</td>
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<td>Expansion of educational opportunities</td>
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<td>1976—1990</td>
<td>Free education</td>
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<td><strong>Extension of access</strong></td>
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<td>1990—1995</td>
<td>Increase in <strong>capacity</strong> to meet manpower requirements for future economic development</td>
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<td>1995—2000</td>
<td>Free <strong>quality</strong> education from nursery to age 15 (Basic Education)</td>
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<td>2001—2008</td>
<td>Emphasis on the attainment of <strong>better levels of literacy and numeracy</strong> in Basic Education</td>
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<td>Evolution towards a sector approach</td>
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Monoculture of English vs Developmental Bilingualism/Multilingualism
The persistent colonial project: monopolies of language and corporate globalization - The case of Guyana

Persistent dependency, lack of national self-confidence, inter-ethnic rivalries

Poor expectations from children with rich cultural heritage in Guyanese languages other than English

Unequal delivery of English-only Curriculum (Subtractive bilingualism)
More than half the time is devoted to English literacy rather than on child-centred learning

English-only School Curricula

Various condescending concessions to Mother Tongues in the Classroom
“Deschool” society, introduce education

... colonial plantation slaves used their customary subsistence knowledges, cultures, and languages to resist, subvert, and eventually derail the processes of colonization, so are the wage slaves of today utilizing their traditional subsistence ways to undermine the processes of recolonization and the 'monopolies of language' upon which the entire enterprise of corporate globalization depends.

Faraclas et al.