

**The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals:
Opportunities for Multi-sited Language Policies**

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The United Nations [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) took effect in 2015 following a General Assembly resolution that set the 2030 development agenda. The SDGs follow on the heels of the [Millennium Development Goals](#) (MDGs), set forth in the early 2000s, which were not without controversy about their effectiveness. Saith (2006) points to general vagueness in the formulation of the MDGs as well as challenges related to measuring costs and outcomes. Bamgbose (2014) and Romaine (2013), among others, have been critical of the MDGs for not foregrounding language issues given that language is instrumental to the development of equality in education, health, and gender as well as in economic and environmental sustainability. Fettes (2015) laments that language continued to be ignored as a factor in the planning work that resulted in the SDGs. Nonetheless, as Bamgbose and Romaine have argued in relation to the MDGs, Fettes asserts that language issues must feature prominently in how the SDGs are addressed.

In this talk, I take up ways in which contemporary multi-sited approaches to language planning and policy (LPP) can be used to inform work that aims to meet the targets of the seventeen SDGs. The SDGs, which focus on areas ranging from poverty, health, and education to, *inter alia*, environment, industry, and cities, are themselves by definition multi-sited. I consider how an orientation to LPP that emphasizes the agency of individual policy actors across scales of social organization (Hult, 2010, 2015; Johnson, 2013) as well as situated policy making and negotiation in spheres such as education (e.g., Menken & García, 2010), business (e.g., Saulière, 2014), and linguistic landscaping (e.g., Hult, forthcoming) can be used to draw attention to linguistic factors that need to be managed in relation to specific SDG targets.

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Biography

Francis M. Hult works at the crossroads of sociolinguistics, discourse studies, and education. His research examines multilingual language management in policy and practice, focusing on linguistic landscapes and language policy and planning through an ethnographic discourse-analytic lens. His contributions in these areas include investigating ideological dimensions of national language policies, examining how language teachers engage with educational policy discourses, studying visual language use in multilingual communities, and advancing theoretical/methodological scalar empirical approaches to these topics. He is an associate professor at the Centre for Languages and Literature at Lund University and the 2016 Charles A. Ferguson Fellow at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC. He has also been a UNESCO senior visiting scholar, a *Language Learning* Distinguished Scholar-in-Residence, a visiting researcher at the National Institute of Education in Singapore and the University of Calgary Language Research Centre, and he is a member of the UNESCO International Bureau of Education network of experts. His most recent book is [*Research Methods in Language Policy and Planning: A Practical Guide*](#) (2015, Wiley; with Johnson).