

HITZARGIAK – Languages illuminating each other

Võru-language immersion day

GENERAL INFORMATION

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| 1 | Name | Võru-language immersion day (aka Keelepesa or Language nest) within the normal Estonian-language week in kindergartens in Võrumaa |
| 2 | Language | Võru-language |
| 3 | Working area (education, communication, teaching, leisure, administration...) | Education, teaching |
| 4 | Email and phone number for contact | wi@wi.ee
Ms Triin Toom |
| 5 | Social networks (Webpage, Facebook, Twitter...) | |

DESCRIPTION OF GOOD PRACTICE

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| 1 | Description of the practices | Teaching the Võru language, culture, and heritage to 3-7 year old preschoolers is provided by local kindergarten teachers in 18 kindergarten groups of the region once or twice a week. As a method, the partial language immersion is applied. |
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2	Brief description of the practices	<p>The curriculum of the Language nest follows the official curricula of preschool child care institutions in Estonia.</p> <p>The project managers of the Võru Institute assist in the implementation of the language immersion day twice a month. They have teaching experience and are well-informed with the methods of immersion. They support and advise teachers in teaching the language and culture, but also help to organise events, solve problems, and find teaching materials.</p> <p>At professional development sessions, (in-service) teachers benefit from both exchanging best practices and building a sense of community; they are encouraged, and encourage each other to teach in the Võru language. With project assistance, teachers create and collect materials related to language immersion. These materials are used to build a special library with collections that can be used by all teachers applying language immersion methods.</p> <p>The Võru Institute organises different Võru-language events for language immersion groups: a singing day, a theatre day, and a Võru-language week. Additionally, the project people organize (coordinate) 2 to 3 tours of the mini puppet theatre where different Võru-language folk tales are told.</p> <p>The language-immersion groups have their own mascot, poster and logo; the logo can be applied to everything which is connected with language immersion.</p>
3	Precedents (reasons, needs...)	<p>As with many Estonian regions that have preserved their unique language variety and culture, the Võru--speaking region has as well. Unfortunately, the older generations who still speak the language and practice the customs, do not speak to their (grand)children in the Võru language. Younger generations acquire the language somewhat passively. In order for the language to transfer to the next generation, local kindergartens are teaching the Võru-language applying language immersion methods.</p>
4	Objectives	<p>The objective is to teach the Võru language and culture to children, to value tradition, and encourage parents to speak the Võru language to their children.</p>
5	Main and close working areas	<p>Minority language education, language policy and planning, regional development</p>
6	Collaborating entities and their working areas	<p>The sponsors include the Estonian Ministry of Culture via its programme Vana Võrumaa kultuuriprogramm 2010-2013 (with its follow-up in 2014-2017; earlier the state programme "Lõunaeeesti keel ja kultuur", 2000-2009) and the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, another language nest in Haani, and the Language Immersion Centre of Foundation Innove</p> <p>Lectors from Estonian universities and outside are also engaged.</p>
7	Implementation period	<p>Since 2009</p>

FILE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT BEST PRACTICES



8	Expansion (number of influenced people, internal and external expansion...)	By the end of 2015, the project included 18 immersion groups in the Võru-speaking region (population of ?) with 60 kindergarten teachers and 400 pre-schoolers.
9	Investment (economic, time, people...)	<p>The Võru Institute employs two full-time and one part-time project managers. Their annual pay totals ca 33,000 euros. In addition, different projects such as professional development training and the puppet theatre amount annually ca 2,500 and 2,000 euros, respectively.</p> <p>Additional pay for teaching the Võru language is not provided for teachers working in immersion groups in local kindergartens; their salaries come from the budgets of local municipalities who are the owners of kindergartens.</p>
10	Results	The project has grown from three groups in 2009 to 18 in 2015. It has received welcoming feedback from parents, children, and teachers. Every year a teacher or a kindergarten joins the project.
11	Documentation, reference material	<p>The language-nest project people have received the Prize of Language Deed (Keeletegu) issued by the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research and the annual prize of the local committee of the Cultural Endowment of Estonia, both in 2012.</p> <p>That many stories have been published both in local print media as well as national print- and visual media.</p> <p>E.g. see:</p> <p>http://www.lounaleht.ee/?page=1&id=15548</p> <p>http://uudised.err.ee/v/eesti/4745d2ca-04f7-4c61-91da-5fee94417937</p> <p>http://maaleht.delfi.ee/news/maaleht/elu/voru-keele-pesapunujad-egle-vodi-ja-triin-roomusoks?id=64207733</p>
12	Presentation video	
13	Other relevant information	(in Võru language) http://wi.ee/tegemise/keelepasa-2/