

HUNDRED RESEARCH REPORT #012

Spotlight: Bilingual Education

Report

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EMOTIONS
relaxed
nervous
energetic
sleepy
excited
happy
panicked
spectacular
stressed
absent-minded
cranky
angry
frightened
bouncy
confused
restless

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SPOTLIGHT: BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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Foreword from the Swedish Cultural Foundation

Having a range of language skills and an awareness of other cultures is becoming increasingly important in our global world. At the same time, several trends in society point in the opposite direction. For the Swedish Cultural Foundation, whose purpose is to promote Swedish in Finland, it is therefore important to support bi- and multilingualism and to endorse projects that cross borders in different ways.

The homes, early childhood education and the schools still play a crucial role for our children and young people to grow up to become language skilled citizens who naturally seek contact with new groups of people – adults who experience linguistic and cultural diversity as a part of their own identity. However, from our Finnish-Swedish perspective, there are challenges in a number of areas.

Even though language immersion is widely recognised as a good pedagogical method for providing children with a strong sense of bilingualism, the number of municipalities in Finland that offer Swedish immersion for Finnish-language children has long stayed unchanged. It was also this realization that was the starting point for this report and our cooperation with HundrED. We wanted to know more about successful pedagogical methods for educating bi- and multilingual children and youths in other countries.

A lot can be learned from other countries about how to better value and strengthen all languages spoken by children in multicultural schools.

Another challenge is the still relatively low number of people with an immigrant background who are integrated in the minority language Swedish in Finland. Many Swedish-language schools therefore have little experience working with children and young people with a foreign language as their mother tongue, and the schools are in need of more support to do this. A lot can be learned from other countries about how to better value and strengthen all languages spoken by children in multicultural schools.

A third trend we want to emphasise is the decreasing interest in studying foreign languages among young people. This does not only include Finland-Swedish schools but the whole of Finland and many other countries too. This is why we think it is important that this report highlights fun, creative and communicative methods to learn a new language.

Presented here is thus a colourful collection of pedagogical innovations for learning languages that can be implemented by anyone and in any context. We wanted to make sure that as many target groups as possible can find something useful in the selected innovations. Some methods build on cooperation between home and school, others are about students inspiring each other to learn languages. There are some good examples that require digital tools but also highlighting methods that do not require any technology at all. All you have to do is pick and choose!

Berndt-Johan Lindström & Katarina von Numers-Ekman

Advisors in Education at the Swedish Cultural Foundation





Foreword from HundrED

Working on this research report on bilingual education has been deeply rewarding as we were able to not only explore our bilingual identities, but connect with people from all over the world who are passionate about language learning and its benefits. The power of discussing bilingual education with experts in the field globally highlights the importance of communicating and understanding the perspectives of others through language. Language learning is able to bring people together, foster understanding, acceptance and cultivate a kinder world. We are extremely proud of the selected innovations and grateful to all the individuals from our HundrED Advisory Board, experts that we interviewed and people who shared their personal stories that made this report come to life.

Through our research, we have discovered that bilingual education is about learning how to think and act in two (or more) languages and how to navigate between them. In addition to language learning, the bilingual learning process involves a certain amount of reflection on how your own language community and how the community of the target language understands and experiences the world – because in its essence, you are learning how to live the world twice in both languages!

While this is a thematic Spotlight report with a global outlook, it was launched with a regional ambition: the hope to increase the appeal and interest of the Swedish language in Finland (equal in status but not in numbers to Finnish) and to raise pos-

itive awareness of Finnish and Swedish individual and societal bilingualism in education. As bilinguals ourselves, we are excited to join the Swedish Cultural Foundation, the partner of this Spotlight, in their mission to support the Swedish language in Finland by enhancing the understanding of the value of living in a bilingual country.

Because of this regional focus, the key criterion of scalability has been vital in this Spotlight. One of our underlying objectives has been to find pedagogically sound that can inspire Finnish educational stakeholders to potentially adopt new ideas and methods, and therefore, to socially, culturally and individually rethink how to better enrich bilingual education in Finnish and Swedish.

More generally, we have been mindful of searching for innovations that best support the learning of languages in positive and welcoming bilingual and multilingual environments – innovations that in one way or another can bring together and support all members of a school community. Many of these selected innovations

therefore serve a multilingual purpose, as they promote togetherness, awareness, intercultural dialogue and positive experiences by **encouraging a higher interest and motivation to learn, appreciate and love languages!**

Katija Aladin

Researcher



Heidi Gärkman

Project Researcher





Introduction

Few educational challenges have become as globally important as bilingualism. The process of globalisation and technological advancements are blurring the lines between linguistic and cultural communities. In today's multilingual and multicultural world, more than half of the world's population is believed to be more or less bilingual (Grosjean, 2010). Because of this, many seem to agree that bilingualism is the norm, and that monolingualism, then, is becoming the exception. With this in mind, perhaps there is an ounce of fairness to the claim that *"monolingualism is the illiteracy of the twenty-first century"* (Roberts, Leite & Wade, 2018, p. 116).

Indeed, the many benefits of being bilingual are increasingly recognised as essential practical and emotional skills needed in the 21st century. Bilingualism is empowering – it helps individuals to compete in the global economy and to connect and communicate with the world. The lifelong, positive cognitive results of bilingualism, such as increased creativity, are widely researched (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson & Ungerleider, 2010). Moreover, as bilingual education helps us to understand and experience other languages and cultures, it plays a key role in advancing mutual tolerance and respect.

Given the arguments laid out above, promoting bilingualism in school should be a no-brainer. However, the value of linguistic diversity often goes unrecognised, and bilingual education is not always made easy. This is where HundrED and the Swedish Cultural Foundation step in!

With this Spotlight, we are proud to highlight innovative practices and approaches in bilingual education that excite, inspire, enable, create and support bilingual teaching and learning, language awareness and confidence, mother tongue education, bilingualism and multilingualism, cultural exchange, inclusion and diversity.

THE SWEDISH CULTURAL FOUNDATION

The mission of the Swedish Cultural Foundation in Finland is to promote and strengthen the culture and education of the Swedish-speaking minority in Finland by supporting education, arts and culture and social cohesion through non-profit organisations. The main task is to annually grant scholarships and contributions to individuals, working groups and communities, who enhance the Swedish language in various contexts in Finland. The foundation promotes good relations between the language communities and encourages a positive language environment.

HUNDRED

Finnish based, not-for-profit, HundrED, discovers, researches and shares inspiring innovations in K12 education. Their goal is to help improve education and foster a movement through encouraging impactful and scalable innovations to spread, mindful of context, across the world. HundrED Spotlights are projects that create unique opportunities for both educational professionals and partner organisations of the Spotlight to gain a thorough insight into the education innovations taking place in either a specific area of education, like literacy or sustainability, or within a certain geographic location, for example, India or London. For each Spotlight, we select around 10 of the brightest education innovations, which then undergo a thorough study by our Research Team and an expert Advisory Board. HundrED Spotlights are organised with partner organisations, who help to discover innovations in their area of expertise.

HundrED Manifesto

INTRODUCTION

The world of education is full of inspiring innovations, yet they struggle to spread beyond their immediate environments. This is why we exist. Our mission is to help every child flourish in life by giving them access to the best possible education innovations.

Since 2016, HundrED has been conducting rigorous research in all continents, selecting 100 inspiring innovations annually and sharing our Global Collections with the world, for free. All of the insights and selected innovations are documented, packaged and available to global educators through our website and yearbooks.

HundrED Manifesto

The purpose of education is to help every child flourish, no matter what happens in life.

In a fast changing world focusing on traditional academic skills will remain important, but that is not enough. To thrive as global citizens, children must be equipped with a breadth of skills.

While we are advocates of a child-centric approach and personalised, passion-based learning, the relationship between an inspired teacher and a motivated student will remain essential.

Assessment has to be aligned with the core purpose of helping kids flourish and all of this should be reflected in the learning environments of the future.

To make this happen, we need visionary leadership at every level of our education system with ambitious, impactful and scalable education innovations that are globally effective.

The world of education is full of hardworking specialists who are making this happen every day.

Our mission at HundrED is to give them the recognition and visibility they deserve.

Theory of change

1. Identify innovations

We have researched over 5000 innovations globally over 3 years

Our academy of academics, teachers, students, and educators review every innovation that gets selected to a collection

3. Help innovations spread

Our connect platform gives innovators the resources they need to spread

We also act as a trusted partner between funders and innovators to make change happen faster

2. Change the tone

Improvements in education are shared every day on our website and social channels

We drove nearly 1M views to our innovation pages in 2019

4. Co-develop solutions

We work with educators to improve excellence and equity

Our approach goes in-depth with innovators and educators to implement sustainable innovations



Background & Context

Definitional issues: What is Bilingual Education?

Setting out to define bilingual education is not as easy or straightforward as initially expected. Not only is bilingual education strongly context driven to the time and place of different cultures, but it is also a highly politically, economically, socially and emotionally loaded term. This complexity makes finding a uniform definition of bilingual education difficult.

The basic and often used definition of bilingual education as involving *the use of two languages in instruction/education* does not, according to many scholars, sufficiently encompass the wider approaches and goals of bilingual education, nor does it include the various statuses of languages (majority, minority, official, national...) There is consensus among many scholars that bilingual education indeed is a “simple label for a complex phenomenon” (as cited in Baker, 2001, p. 192).

Within bilingual education, there is a variety of pedagogical methods, models and programs for bilingual teaching and learning. Bilingual education programs may differ in teaching methods, societal and educational aims, student profile, language use and linguistic goals (see frameworks by Baker 2006, pp. 215–216; and García & Beardsmore 2011, p. 172). A few notable models of bilingual education are Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), dual language bilingual education and language immersion.

Bilingualism is another multi-dimensional concept, which is usually understood as an individual phenomenon or a societal possession (Laitinen, 2001). Bilingualism within a specific society depends on its “linguistic make-up”: language contact, distribution and policy (Grosjean, 2010). Individual bilingualism is not easy to outline, as there is no one way of being bilingual. On the individual level, bilingualism can refer to a dual linguistic identity, to the proficiency in or the use of two languages, or to individuals from bilingual families or environments (Tandefelt, 2001).

Language learning overall is not a zero-sum game (i.e. the learning of one language does not automatically rule out another) (Sundell, 2015), **bilingualism** is not “monolingualism times two”, and **bilingual education** is not about “one language plus a second language equals two languages” (García & Beardsmore 2011, p. 17).

These are common misconceptions and over-simplifications, which may easily overlook the individual, communal and societal advantages of bilingualism and bilingual education.

Bilingual education is about so much more than only learning another language. **Bilingual education is an inclusive environment where more than one language is used to learn – it is about learning what the world looks like in more than one language!**

Bilingual education is an inclusive environment where more than one language is used to learn – it is about learning what the world looks like in more than one language!



We use bilingual education as a broad term for education that uses two or more languages to teach content.

What do we mean by Bilingual Education?

Having recognised the complex definitional issues, let's begin by addressing our understanding of bilingual education in this Spotlight:

We use bilingual education as a broad term for education that uses **two or more** languages to teach content. With this flexible definition, we are able to celebrate the wide range of practices and solutions, the languages used for instruction that can be integrated in various shapes, forms, varieties and combinations.

Our definition is strongly inspired by García & Beardsmore's expanded definition of bilingual education, which encompasses what could be considered as "multilingual education". They view bilingual education to be "more grounded in theory, research, practice, and reality than 'multilingual education'", and argue that it is "easier to understand the complexity of bilingual education if we start with a discussion of two languages, and then extend these notions when considering more multilingual possibilities" (2011, pp. 18–19).

We recognise that bilingual education goes beyond languages and language learning. The main focus does not necessarily lie in knowing the grammar or structure of languages, or reaching a specific level of language competence or bilingual ability. In this Spotlight, the underlying ethos in bilingual education provides, drives and supports a certain **awareness, tolerance and appreciation** of the value of linguistic and cultural diversity.

This **wider goal** of bilingual education is what separates it from traditional second or foreign language teaching, where the goal of learning an additional language is much narrower (García & Beardsmore, 2011, p. 16).

The million-dollar question is: **how can bilingual education make children excited about languages?** It is important to consider languages in their own unique individual and social setting, and linguistic and human diversity. We have identified the following elements which should be strongly supported and encouraged in bilingual education:

- **Empowerment:** knowing other languages may provide children with the power to access something they could not access in their own language(s) (especially outside of school and in the online world);
- **Self-confidence:** language learning is very emotional and subjective, and addressing the issue of anxiety is critical;
- **A sense of belonging:** language is key to both understanding and identifying with other communities and cultures. This aspect is important for boosting the curiosity, enthusiasm and hunger to learn and experience languages!



Rationale: Bilingual Education Matters!

While bilingual education might be difficult or dubious to define, and while there are numerous perspectives on which model or method of bilingual education is the most successful in which context, one matter seems to be less contested: **the benefits of bilingualism, and therefore, the importance of bilingual education.**

Bilingualism and language learning is beneficial to everyone, whether they come from a bilingual background or not. In our global world, education is most powerful when used as both a tool for and reflection of linguistic and cultural diversity (UNESCO, 2003). It is important to increase the awareness and support for language education in school – education that promotes bilingualism and a real understanding and appreciation of the people and cultures involved!

We wish to highlight the following benefits and aspects of bilingualism, and as such, account for why bilingual education matters:

Advantages of the bilingual mind: is believed to include improved attentional and cognitive control, increased creative and divergent thinking, better working memory and higher metalinguistic awareness (i.e. the ability to think about language). The “mental flexibility” associated with bilingualism has also been found to protect somewhat against cognitive decline and dementia. (Adesope et al., 2010 and Bialystok, Craik & Luk, 2012).

Social cohesion & integration: Bilingualism is reported to foster open-mindedness, offer different perspectives on life, and reduce cultural ignorance (Grosjean 2010, p. 100). For this reason, many underline the social and cultural bridge-building capacity of bilingual education, as it paves the way for greater social equality and tolerance.

Global citizenship: Languages open doors, and bilinguals can participate in the global community and job market in more diverse ways than monolinguals. Additionally, social and cross-cultural awareness are considered to be fundamental skills needed in the 21st century (UNESCO, 2015).

Languages are a “natural resource”: Languages can be exploited for cultural, spiritual and educational growth as well as for economic, commercial and political gain (Baker 2001, p. 374). The school system should learn how to better “capitalise” on the language repertoires found in the community, and on students who already have the experience of navigating between two or more languages and cultures (bilingual, language minority, immigrant...).

Speaking one's own language is a basic, human right: A fundamental part of cultural identity and empowerment, both for the individual and the group (UNESCO, 2003, p.16). The UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 is inclusive and quality education for all. This means children from indigenous or minority backgrounds should have the right to study and learn in their own mother tongue, as well as in the official language of the country (UN Report A/HRC/43/47).



Language & Identity

When you ask someone ‘what languages do you speak?’ it quickly becomes a rich conversation that goes beyond the language itself, but how one identifies with language. A simple question opens a plethora of possibilities and opportunities to get to know someone on a deeper level. This simple activity promotes the notion that language is deeply connected to our history, culture, nationality, education, interests, etc. and can be an effective starting point to better understand one another and ourselves. As bilingualism is a necessary skill to thrive in the world, there is a growing need to not only teach languages but also understand the culture & people that enable authentic language learning.

We believe that identity plays an important part in the adoption and sustainability of language. Identity research has become increasingly popular in the last decade, predominantly with a focus on teacher identity. The following outline provides a brief overview of identity and the role of language drawing on elements of teacher identity (Akkerman & Meijer, 2011) that can be applied to all stakeholders.

The social nature of identity: Recognising how the role of ‘others’ influence the self and perception of language learning is important. For example, the attitude of a student learning a second language can be influenced by their parents, peers, teachers and community. This influence can be seen at the macro (society), the meso (school) and the micro (classroom) (Costa & Norton, 2017). Below are examples of how relationships within the society, school and classroom can influence the perception of a student to a language.

“The languages you master at different levels help you to develop as a person and figure out what your identity looks like.”

– MINNA TAMMIVUORI-PIRAUX, UPPER SCHOOL ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL,
INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF HELSINKI

- At the **macro level**, the way language is represented and used in society, for example, in a predominantly anglophone province like Alberta, Canada, French is seen on products and road signs, however not readily heard. This can influence the students’ relationship with the language because the role of French is not apparent in the community.
- The **meso level** refers to the language culture at the school, often set by the leaders, teachers and parents. The beliefs of a principal on the topic of bilingual education will effectively set the tone of the school and influence the relationship of the staff and students towards the language within that school context.
- Lastly, the **micro level** happens in the classroom, where the attitude of the teacher, parents and peers can influence the relationship of the student and the language.

The multiplicity of identity: Hermans (2001) discusses the concept of “multi-voicedness” (p. 324) viewing identity as composed of identities. Akkerman and Meijer (2011) describe an I-position “as a ‘voiced’ position, that is, a speaking personality bringing forward a specific viewpoint and story” (p. 312). Each identity has a different stance (I-position) in different contexts. For example, a bilingual Swedish student in Finland would have sub-identities such as Finnish, bilingual, student, daughter/son, brother/sister etc. When we view identity in such terms, we can better understand how multiple identities are negotiated in different circumstances. Understanding identity arguably leads to a better understanding of bilingual education and can help promote bilingualism in a more holistic way throughout the world.

The discontinuity of identity: refers to the notion that identity is stagnant. In the case of bilingual education, there is an interesting discourse between the identity of the maternal language and the identity of the second language(s). For example, the introduction of a new language can completely alter perception of self in relation to the “old” identity. We are therefore in a state of constant change.



Language immersion in two bilingual countries

As mentioned in the foreword, the starting point for our partnership with the Swedish Cultural Foundation in this report was the stagnant interest for Swedish immersion in Finland (despite its over 30 years of practice). This report therefore highlights inspiring pedagogical approaches to encourage bilingualism and language learning that might require other or less resources than immersion.

Nevertheless, language immersion is an established and well-recognised pedagogical model, we will therefore dedicate this section to briefly exploring it within the context of two officially bilingual countries: Swedish immersion in Finland, and French immersion in Canada.

Language immersion is an umbrella term for a number of approaches to immerse students in a second language. Since its origins in Canada in the late 1960s, the immersion method has been adopted and developed in a variety of contexts and objectives. For a bilingual program to be labelled *immersion*, researchers identify several “core features” which need to be more or less present, to name a few (Swain & Johnson, 1997 and Laitinen, 2001):

Language immersion
is an umbrella term for a number
of approaches to immerse students
in a second language.

- The L2 language is the medium of instruction;
- Students in an immersion class should be of the same homogeneous language background, and enter with the same level of (limited) skills in the L2;
- Exposure to the L2 is largely confined to the classroom;
- When immersion is voluntarily chosen by the parents, the students should also have a positive attitude and motivation towards the L2;
- For effective bilingual communication, immersion teachers should be trained and devoted bilinguals.

Swedish immersion in Finland and French immersion in Canada both immerse **majority-language students** in the other official language of the country, which is in a minority. Both programs also have similar intranational aims to maintain and boost societal bilingualism (Swain & Johnson, 1997). Language immersion in Finland is a local adaptation of the original Canadian French immersion model, first implemented in the late 1980s.

There is one important difference worth mentioning, the bilingual context in Canada involves **two large and high-status world languages**, French and English (Baker, 2001, p. 237). It is easy to argue for the economic and marketable value of language skills in both English and French. Finnish and Swedish on the other hand, are both **internationally minor languages** (Björklund, 1997, p. 99), and some Finnish-language views tend to favour the economic value of larger languages over Swedish, such as English or Russian.

A short comparison of a few selected features of language immersion in the Finnish and Canadian context is featured below. Next, we will let the voices of two experienced immersion teachers shed some light on the overall topic of immersion education: one from Finland and one from Canada.

As in Canada, parental pressure and promotion has played a major role in the implementation and spread of Swedish immersion in Finland.



THE FINNISH CONTEXT

Finnish bilingualism: In Finland, the rights of the two official languages, Finnish and Swedish, are equal. However, Finland is a highly linguistically homogeneous country, where Finnish is the majority language at over 87%, and **Swedish a (decreasing) minority language**, representing **5,2%** of the population (Statistics Finland, 2018). Finnish societal bilingualism is practiced as dual monolingualism, where one is registered as either Finnish or Swedish speaking, not bilingual (Bergroth, 2016, p. 10). Although the language political debate on the mandatory status of Swedish in Finnish schools can get heated, a majority still express **support** for Finnish and Swedish societal bilingualism (Sundell, 2015).

Swedish immersion in Finland: is curricular based, and is of the **early total**¹ type, the “*hard-core*” version of immersion (Bergroth, 2016, p. 15). The main immersion language in Finland is Swedish, as there is a clear need to support the vitality of the minority language and encourage positive attitudes towards it. Moreover, Finnish-speaking families who enrol their children in immersion realise the **political, economic and social value** of the Swedish language in Finnish society, but also as a gateway to the Nordic labour market and other Germanic languages. As in Canada,

parental pressure and promotion has played a major role in the implementation and spread of Swedish immersion in Finland. However, a nationwide parental organisation like *Canadian Parents for French* is yet to be established (Björklund, 1997).

Functional bilingualism: is the outset of Swedish immersion in Finland, and refers to the ability and confidence to *functionally* communicate in two (or more) languages in different every-day situations, and for different purposes (Bergroth, 2015). When discussing functional bilingualism, Laitinen (2001) also finds the notion of **biculturalism** worth mentioning, because “the further one progresses in bilingual ability, the more important the bicultural element becomes” (p. 17). As Finnish and Swedish are globally small languages, an important feature of Swedish immersion in Finland is its **multilingual orientation**, introducing over four languages² (Björklund & Mård-Miettinen, 2011, p. 20).

Visibility & Awareness: Swedish immersion is **still rather small-scale** in Finland, despite its positive results, engaged academic research, relatively positive public attitudes, governmental support and political credibility. Many municipalities in Finland actively offer Swedish immersion, but many also struggle with structural problems related to funding or lack of bilingually competent teachers. Overall, Swedish immersion receives **little public attention**, which affects the public awareness of the broader bilingual goals of immersion, and is ineffective in turning passive attitudes into enthusiastic ones. (Sjöberg et al., 2018).

1 Early total immersion expands from kindergarten level (ages 3–6) to grade 9, and begins with 100% immersion in the target language, gradually reducing after a few years to 50% (Baker, 2006, p. 245).

2 Apart from Finnish (L1), and the immersion language (L2) Swedish, a third (often English) and one or two optional foreign languages (e.g. French or German) are integrated into the program (Björklund & Mård-Miettinen, 2011, p. 21).



THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

Canadian bilingualism: Canada is an officially bilingual country, with French and English as the two official languages. Although English is dominant throughout the majority of the country (excluding Quebec), French speaking Canadians represent **22.8%** of the population (Census Canada, 2016). This is more than four times the amount of Swedish speaking Finns, as **French-Canadians represent almost a quarter of Canada's population**. Official bilingualism is regarded relatively positively in Canada, however, less than 20% of the total population is English-French bilingual, and bilingualism remains much more common among French speakers (Hayday, 2015).

French immersion in Canada: is truly a grassroots movement, led by Anglophone parents in the province of Quebec in the mid 1960s. There was a clear need to improve second language education in the francophone province, as the focus for Anglophone students was predominantly grammar, memorisation and drill rather than oral competencies that allowed students to work and socialise with native French speakers (Swain & Johnson, 1997). The initial departure from traditional French as a second language structure to early immersion was viewed as successful in Quebec. The rest of Canada took note of the many **political, economic and social advantages** of language immersion, and the early total immersion program spread to the all Canadian provinces – soon also to other countries, such as Finland.

Additive bilingualism: has from the beginning been the goal of French immersion, with many reported positive effects. The main idea of this model is that the second language is *added* to one's linguistic "tool-kit", while maintaining the first language (Cummins, 2000). Fortune and Tedick (2008) observe that "additive bilingualism is the belief that all students are capable of fully acquiring two, or more, languages" (p. 29). Although, one could also argue that additive bilingualism is a form of "double monolingualism", as bilinguals are expected "be and do with each of their languages the same thing as monolinguals" (García & Beardsmore, 2011, p. 41).

Visibility & Awareness: Language immersion in Canada is **often a topic of positive conversation in the news**.³ On a societal level, bilingualism has been portrayed as an added benefit in the media highlighting bilingualism as enhanced cognitive ability, cross-cultural skills and economic benefit (Berg, 2007). On a critical note, Baker (2001) points out that "linked to the finding that children from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to be over-represented in immersion programs" (p. 238), some Francophones perceive French immersion to be somewhat of a "Trojan horse of further English assimilation" (p. 238).

3 With headlines such as *Demand for French Immersion grows as spots shrink* (Global News, 2019) and *Immigration fuelling French-immersion demand as provinces vie for teachers* (CTV News, 2018).



Lars Nyberg /
SWEDISH IMMERSION TEACHER IN FINLAND

WHY DID YOU BECOME AN IMMERSION TEACHER?

I have been working as a teacher since 1991, teaching math, IT, physics and chemistry in Finnish. The language immersion in Turku started soon thereafter, first in kindergarten. In the year 2000 the first immersion class had reached the level where I teach, i.e. grade 7–9, and I was asked to teach the class. I am bilingual (Finnish and Swedish) with experience from a bilingual family, meaning the basic concepts were already familiar to me.

**IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE
WITH LANGUAGE IMMERSION,
WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DOESN'T?**

When the kids have eight years of language immersion behind them they are fairly fluent. This makes the life for a subject teacher a lot easier. All I had to do was teach! What worked well was to heap enough of stuff on them, because otherwise the class gets restless. The work ethics is mostly on a high level, you can do almost anything. Colleagues often told me immersion classes were fun to teach, because the class was eager to work in any way possible and to follow the teacher anywhere – when other classes were more negative regarding new methods and new locations. For the same reason, however, immersion classes are more demanding too.

Life is never boring as an immersion teacher. The support from the families has always been great, which motivates both the kids and teachers.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT
LANGUAGE IMMERSION AS A METHOD
FOR BILINGUAL LEARNING?**

Language immersion is the best method, but the teachers must (in order for it to be a good version) speak the immersion language fluently. Teachers who do not teach in the immersion language should also be well versed in the system, as the method has its impacts on the immersion class as a whole and on the possibilities even other teachers can enjoy.



Meghan McKee /

FRENCH IMMERSION TEACHER IN CANADA

WHY DID YOU BECOME AN IMMERSION TEACHER?

I became a French Immersion teacher for several reasons. I myself am a lifelong language learning in a variety of contexts. I was a French Immersion student from kindergarten to grade 12, I took Japanese courses in high school, I have a Bachelor of Arts in French and Spanish, and I've taken Continuing Education classes in Dutch. When applying to the Bachelor of Education program, I chose the French Immersion program because I wanted to share my love of language learning with students, and the French Immersion program in Canada is a very successful and recognized model. I think learning in a second language is important for neurological, cultural, and economic reasons.

IN THE CONTEXT OF YOUR EXPERIENCE WITH LANGUAGE IMMERSION, WHAT WORKS WELL AND WHAT DOESN'T?

French Immersion teachers in Canada know that what works well is a full immersion experience – so from Kindergarten to Grade 2, students learn exclusively in French as the language of instruction for all subject areas. It works well to have parents understand the program and understand that they don't need to speak any French at all for their child to be successful, and that any child can learn a second language, including children with learning disabilities or other needs. A challenge can be a lack of resources for this unique context – using resources developed for French first language speakers is not always useful or a good fit for French immersion students.

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT LANGUAGE IMMERSION AS A METHOD FOR BILINGUAL LEARNING?

I think immersion is the best method for language learning. Children pick up the language quickly and easily because they are immersed in it all day. It is the closest thing to learning a language in a first language environment and therefore helps second-language learners build well-rounded language skills relatively quickly. After one year, students are able to read, write, listen and speak in their second language.

Bilingual Education: A Collection of Voices

The beauty of bilingual education lies in the authentic voices of the stakeholders that teach, learn, promote and fight for the benefits of bilingualism & multilingualism each and every day. These stakeholders have not only played an integral part in the landscape of language learning in their context, but have also helped inform our understanding of bilingual education throughout our research process. This report is dedicated to the voices of the teachers, researchers, leaders, parents, students who are forging a better understanding of language, culture, nationalities and self through their personal experiences, frustrations, hopes and dreams. Here is a snapshot of their stories. All highlighted answers are based on the experiences, opinions and contexts of the individuals.

What are your personal experiences with bilingual education?



**CHIARA NICASTRO,
FULBRIGHT MENTOR AND
ENGLISH TEACHING ASSISTANT**

Before I was diagnosed with severe dyslexia, I went to school in California and typically from kindergarten, most schools in California teach Spanish and English. When I was in the 5th grade, during a parent-teacher conference, I was told I was going to be removed from over 70% of the classes I was taking, because I was learning at a slower pace than my classmates. This was especially disappointing, as Spanish was my favorite class. When I went to college, I knew I wanted to get a degree in international studies, because I wanted to learn more about cultures and I was determined to start Spanish again.



**DAVID MARSH, PH.D., FRSA,
DIRECTOR OF INNOVATION AND
OUTREACH, EDUCLUSTER FINLAND**

I develop bilingual education models to support the enhancement of widely and less widely used regional, minority, and migration languages. I also develop a specific bilingual methodology *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL), and lead meta-research on the impact of knowing more than one language on the mind and brain.



**HAYO REINDERS, PH.D.,
PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION,
UNITEC, NEW ZEALAND**

My work in bilingual education has mostly been in teacher development and leadership training, especially in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. It is wonderful to experience teachers' passion for language and culture and see how it can transform a good classroom into a great one.



**KAISA ISOTALO,
PRINCIPAL OF SEINÄJOKI
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, FINLAND**

I think bilingual education (using CLIL-method) is a great opportunity for those students who are good in languages. Our school system seems to be a bit too easy for talented students. Bilingual education makes our students challenge themselves and the results are good.



**ANU PALOJÄRVI,
PROJECT RESEARCHER,
DEPARTMENT OF TEACHER EDUCATION,
UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ, FINLAND**

I have researched, written and lectured on bilingual pedagogy in early childhood education (ECE). Currently, I am working at the IKI-project, where we observe, develop and share innovative ways of working with languages in different types of bilingual education and in other contexts.



**EDISON HUYNH,
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION RESEARCH
AND SPECIAL PROJECTS,
WHITTLE SCHOOL AND STUDIOS**

My personal experiences of bilingual education is through being part of a team working to build a new school spread out over the number of different campuses around the world. Over the past year, thinking about how to construct the types of learning environments that best cultivate bilingualism has made me reflect on my own childhood growing up – speaking one language at home and one language at school. It's only been when I've gotten older that I've understood what a blessing it is to be able to 'access' different cultural tools in order to connect to a greater number of people.



**STANLEY WANG,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
AT TEACH FOR TAIWAN**

As an educator of Asian languages in Australia, I have always been a proud advocate and ambassador for bilingualism. While bilingual education is conceptually well appreciated by the general public, it is significantly less well practised.



**WILMA ENGSTRÖM,
STUDENT**

I live in Finland, which is a bilingual country with a Fenno-Swedish minority. Personally, I belong to the Fenno-Swedish minority and attend a Swedish speaking school. The Swedish speaking schools start teaching the other domestic language (Finnish) to everyone in the first grade. In most Finnish schools you can choose to study Swedish from fourth grade, most people don't however and start studying it in 6th grade when it starts becoming compulsory. Most of the time Fenno-swedes speak better Finnish than Finnish speaking people speak Swedish. This is a problem because in theory we're supposed to be able to get customer service in Swedish.



What are your frustrations with bilingual education?

One of my biggest frustrations correlates to my own story learning Spanish to now teaching in bilingual education. Students with very separate needs are all being placed into one classroom from second language learning to students with disabilities. In my teaching context, I was able to work closely with the school administration to find ways for me to engage in the classroom and create a different curriculum that was more specific to the different needs of those students.

CHIARA NICASTRO

There is a difference between teaching *in* another language, and teaching *through* another language. Schools which claim to be bilingual often do the first – and they do this through a failing monolingual paradigm. Genuine and successful schools use a bilingual methodology. Here the students *use language to learn and learn to use language*. Truly wonderful examples of bilingual education exist, but market forces use ‘Bilingual Education’ as a catchphrase to sell products and services which are not true to what can be achieved through quality practices.

DAVID MARSH

My greatest frustration is the lack of leadership in this area. Many teachers and administrators are willing to implement change but simply do not have the tools and support to do so.

HAYO REINDERS

Sometimes we are in a situation, where we should put English speaking immigrants in the CLIL class. In my opinion, this should not have to happen. If somebody is going to live in Finland, they have to learn Finnish. But if they constantly speak English they do not learn it. This kind of learning is not bilingual for them. Their classmates learn good English, but we have to make sure our school system is good for all of our citizens.

KAISA ISOTALO

As an early childhood educator and researcher, I can get frustrated when the great potential of ECE as a context for bilingual education is often overlooked. Within the field, there is also little knowledge on the different ways of implementing bilingual education, and not enough training for those who would be interested in working with bilingual education.

ANU PALOJÄRVI

My frustrations really stem from the fact that language education is often divorced from real-life application. Unfortunately only a few students are privileged enough to have the chance to practice a second (or more!) language with a native speaker on a regular basis – in an environment which affords opportunities to practice, to fail, and ultimately to improve. I used to think I was rubbish at languages until I got the opportunity to study, live, and learn abroad in China – it was then that I realised that for a lot of people, it’s about improving accessibility for them and to expose them to discover the practical benefits of bilingualism for themselves.

EDISON HUYNH

Challenged by the ‘monolingual mindset,’ commitment to language learning among young Australians today is still a rarity, a good-to-have, an elective, a hobby, and sometimes even a cultural burden.

STANLEY WANG

My frustrations with bilingual education are the way we’re taught Finnish in Swedish speaking schools. In the lower level of Finnish language education, students on this level are mainly taught grammar and barely any speaking, whereas, in the higher level of Finnish education, it’s assumed that everyone already knows the grammar and hence it isn’t taught out in class.

WILMA ENGSTRÖM

Many teachers and administrators are willing to implement change but simply do not have the tools and support to do so.



What are your hopes and dreams for the future of bilingual education?

My hope is that we are able to grow with the changing of times and the globalization that is happening within bilingual education. I think the future of bilingual education needs to be something that is flexible to change and not so conformed to the rigidness of a textbook. We need to listen to the students. Be adaptable.

CHIARA NICASTRO

The future of bilingual education needs to be something that is flexible to change and not so conformed to the rigidness of a textbook. We need to listen to the students. Be adaptable.

When a baby is born it is primed to learn languages, just as a bird is primed to fly. In largely monolingual contexts, the natural advantages of knowing more than one language and the positive impact on mind, brain and wellbeing had been lost. Now, thanks to advances in science (on the neurological, cognitive, & motivational bases of learning), awareness of people (to embrace the positives of linguistic diversity), and pioneering educators (who change the status quo of inadequate language teaching) the future is bright.

DAVID MARSH

It is my hope that through better education we can give teacher-leaders real agency and in so doing make bilingual education more sustainable.

HAYO REINDERS

My hopes and dreams for the future of bilingual education centre around improving access and opportunities for young people to see the tangible benefits of bilingualism. By tangible benefits, I don't just mean in terms of future employment – unfortunately, many governments are seeing language skills in a purely instrumental way. For me, being able to speak in multiple languages means so much more. It means being able to 'code switch' and swap out a different lens through which to see the world. And in doing so, you experience the joy of understanding differences in our world in a deeper, more nuanced way.

EDISON HUYNH

My hopes and dreams for the future of bilingual education in Australia is that one day, it would simply be 'normalised,' to a point that our 'language crisis' will no longer be making the headlines, and that Australia would transform from being a 'graveyard of languages' to a 'hotbed for language learning.'

STANLEY WANG

The hopes I have for bilingual education is that both Finnish and Swedish could be treated equally since we, after all, live in a bilingual country.

WILMA ENGSTRÖM

Methodology

At HundrED, we use the following **definition of innovation in education**: Innovation in education can be defined as meaningful improvements in a new or modified practice and/or technology that supports any part of the educational ecosystem (for example: skills, teachers, assessment, environment and/or systems, and leadership).

Definition of Bilingual Education

We use bilingual education as a broader umbrella term for education that uses **two or more** languages to teach content. Our definition is strongly inspired by García & Beardsmore's expanded definition of bilingual education, which encompasses what many would refer to as "multilingual education" (2011, p. 18).

Our innovation selection process can be distilled into four distinct stages:

STAGE 1

involved discovering leading innovations with HundrED's global community of over 400+ ambassadors and 100+ youth ambassadors. By the end of our innovation search, we discovered over 100 innovations submitted globally. Of these:

- 89 target primary level and 65 for secondary
- 48 require digital devices
- 42 require the internet
- 36 promote playful learning
- 43 non-profit, 46 for-profit, others emailed to find this information
- 26 target adults and 93 target students

STAGE 2

Is where we thoroughly reviewed each innovation for its impact and scalability. A shortlist of 30 innovations that are eligible and are of high quality on both criteria was created by HundrED's Research Team.

To be shortlisted, innovations must have demonstrated a significant amount of evidence for the following two main criteria:

Impact: Evaluated as a valuable improvement within the innovation's context. All innovations must have at-least 1-year of being implemented with its intended users.

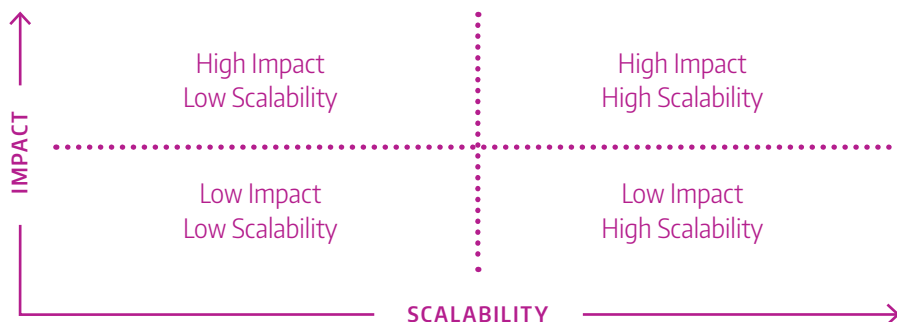
Scalability: Either the innovation is actively expanding to other contexts or has a high degree of transferability for others to adopt its practice/technology.

STAGE 3

The Advisory Board reviewed the shortlist of innovations – made of over 40 experts in Bilingual Education from around the world including: academics, educators, and leaders in education.

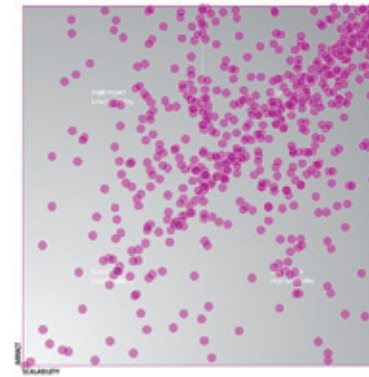
We believe that the diversity of experienced perspectives from a wide range of contexts is fundamentally important to our selection process. With help from these highly experienced perspectives, we can be much more certain an innovation is potentially both impactful and scalable to other contexts.

The selection of the Advisory Board involved ensuring they support HundrED's mission to help every child flourish in life and a careful balance for a range of experienced stakeholders in Bilingual Education (particularly for gender and cultural diversity).



The factors of impact and scalability were plotted on a graph by each Advisory Board Member using HundrED's evaluation tool, which is divided into four quadrants. We were looking for innovations that many stakeholders in education consider to be highly impactful and scalable in the top right quadrant.

Each plot on the graphs below represents a review for one of the shortlisted innovations in this Spotlight.



Each reviewer also provided specific comments about each innovation that explains their evaluation on our mapping tool. Finally, they recommended if each shortlisted innovation should be selected by selecting Yes, No, or Maybe.

All Advisory Board Members responses were considered to identify strengths and weaknesses from multiple perspectives about each innovation.

STAGE 4

All shortlisted innovations were reviewed by the Advisory Board and were ranked from most favourable responses based on our criteria to the least. Any negative comments identified by the Advisory Board were seriously considered first as to whether the problem raised ruled the innovation out.

Finally, the HundrED Research Team and the Swedish Cultural Foundation participated in a structured workshop that selected the innovations to be highlighted in this Spotlight. In this workshop, they considered the Advisory Board reviews while aiming to cover a diverse range of: (a) approaches to bilingual education, (b) levels, and (c) target groups (e.g. educators, parents, and students).

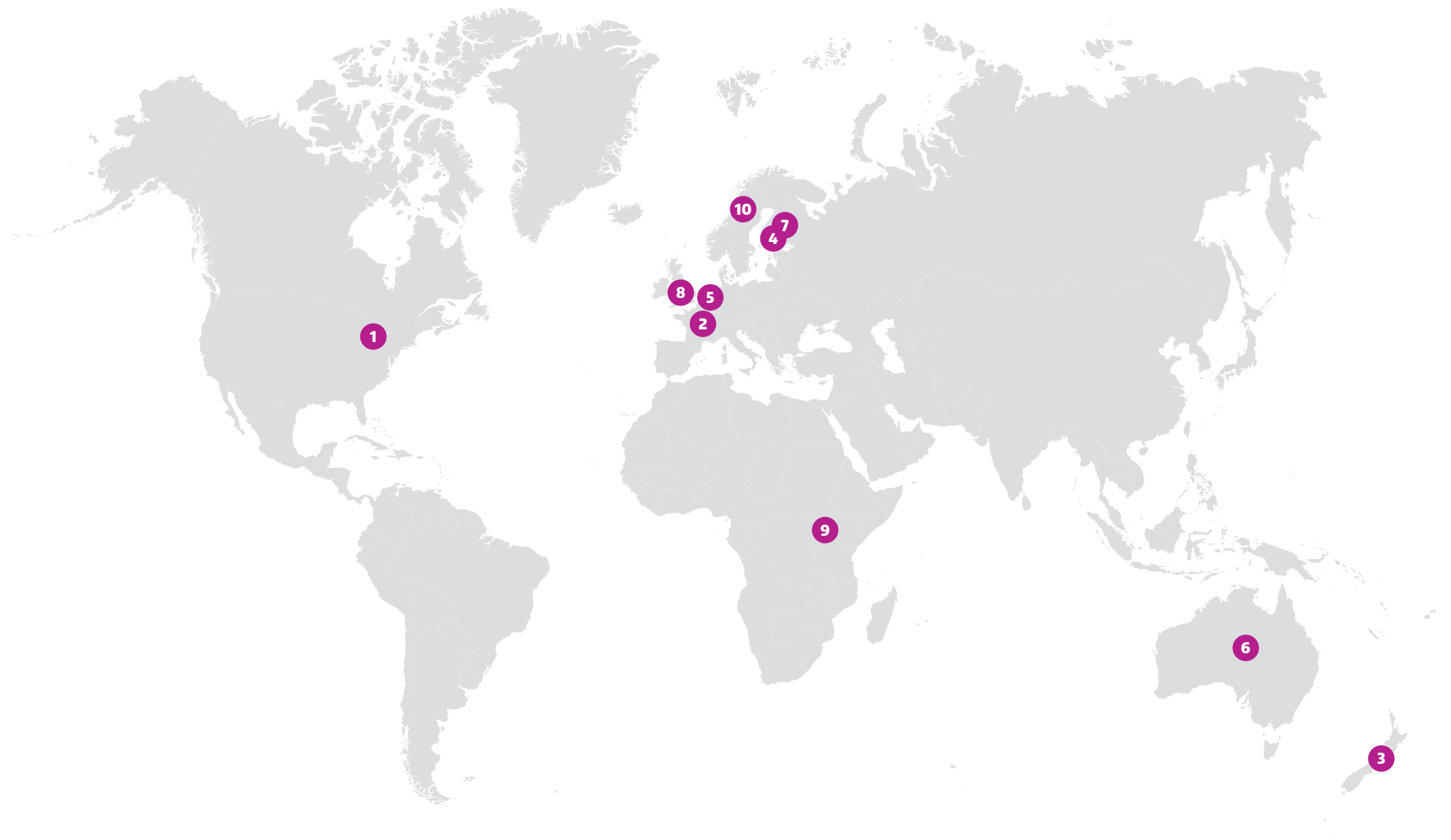
Innovations

Selected innovations

The final selection of innovations have:

- been established from 2003 to 2019
- spread from 1 to 71 countries
- a range from 1200 to 103 000 total users.

1. Global Minds Initiative
2. Kamilala
3. Kiwa Digital
4. The Language Ambassadors
5. Language Friendly School
6. Language Party
7. Language Showering in Jyväskylä
8. Linguacuisine
9. Mother Tongue Education for Early Learners
10. Norden i skolen (Norden in School)





Promoting cross-cultural understanding and empathy through youth-led extracurricular activities.

Global Minds Initiative

Pittsburgh, United States

In schools across the United States and Canada, students from over 50 countries meet after school to combat intolerance and foster intercultural friendships. Designed, led, and run entirely by youth, this program pairs native English speakers with English-language learners to support academic performance and forge social understanding.

“The Global Minds club changed my life. It helped me share my story, make new friends, and helped me feel at home. I never felt more welcomed.”

– ISRAA ABDULMUTTALEB – GLOBAL MINDS PARTICIPANT

As global migration increases, communities around the world are becoming more diverse. Cultural diversity is at an all-time high in the United States, and continues to rise. And with increased diversity comes cultural conflict and misunderstanding, which can lead to xenophobia, discrimination, and violence.

Over half of the world's refugees are under the age of 18. In order to flourish, these children need a positive, welcoming environment that supports their language learning and social integration.

HOW CAN YOUTH LEAD THE WAY IN CREATING A WORLD WHERE IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE STUDENTS CAN THRIVE?

Designed, led, and run entirely by youth, Global Minds does two things at once: it forges intercultural understanding among diverse groups of young people while supporting immigrant and refugee students learning English.

Native English speakers and English-language learners come together after school once a week to learn about each other's cultures and practice English through structured activities. They also complete service projects that benefit immigrants, refugees, and people of color in their communities.

Since establishing the first club at Allderdice High School in Pittsburgh, Global Minds has launched a chapter model to support students at 22 other schools across the United States and Canada, with new chapters being formed monthly.

In the schools operating Global Minds chapters, students of different nationalities sit together at lunch, go to the movies, and smile at one another in the hall. These might seem like small acts, but they represent steps toward a cultural shift that is needed for every child to flourish.

For more information, data, and stories check out our end of the year evaluation: <http://globalminds.world/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Global-Minds-Year-Book-web.pdf>

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- Minimal resources required, can be run in a school library or computer lab or classroom.
- This project shapes children and adolescents into a humanity that is truly admirable.

Global Minds Initiative
peyton@globalminds.world
www.globalminds.world

11-18
AGE GROUP

2016
ESTABLISHED

2
COUNTRIES



Promoting creative projects
that value languages and cultures.

Kamilala

France

What is Kamilala? Kamilala, coordinated by the DULALA association, is an international network of actors working in the education sector who share a common goal: to make linguistic and cultural diversity a resource to value by sharing the artistic experience of a multilingual kamishibai.

Kamishibai literally means « paper-play » in Japanese 紙芝居. It is a storytelling technique that comes from Japan. Street storytellers would perform in front of children with the support of illustrations displayed through a wooden frame (butai).

Each image reproduces an episode of the story while the corresponding text can be read at the back of the frame.

Multilingual Kamishibai Competition offers educators and children a creative and innovative project open to the diversity of languages: each group creates a multilingual story (using at least four languages) according to the kamishibai format.

“Creating a Kamishibai is a great way to ready children to open up to the world and to increase their self-confidence. These are fundamental for success at school and successful integration in society.”

Multilingual kamishibai implies telling a story in a fun and captivating way. It is also a powerful tool for teachers to help children learn to read, write, express themselves with words and through the arts... while opening them up to languages at the same time!

At least four languages integrate the story or the illustrations. Multilingual texts reflect the diversity of languages spoken by numerous pupils who come from the local area as well as beyond.

Creating a kamishibai using several languages leads to a reflection on the language of instruction at school, which remains the main language of the story. It is also a great way to allow other languages spoken by children, families or educators within school.

MULTILINGUAL KAMISHIBAI COMPETITION

A multilingual kamishibai is the result of a collaboration between peers. Children cooperate to come up with a story sharing all their language skills. They are then recognized as experts of their languages. As a storytelling form, multilingual kamishibais encourage children to speak up and perform in the language of the school and in other languages that are new to them or known from their own family background.

Multilingual kamishibais may be used at all levels from nursery to schools, within libraries, community or youth centres, by educators, social workers, speech therapists or other professionals.

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- I really love how the organisation is using a peer-to-peer relationship in order to build up the love for their language. This is a good idea to spread and improve friendships among classmates.
- The interdisciplinary nature makes the engagement with more than one language highly authentic.

First introduced by DULALA association in 2015, the Multilingual Kamishibai Competition has seen 8000 children and professionals create their own kamishibais using a variety of languages.

Today, competitions are hosted in different areas of the world: Switzerland, Portugal, Italy, Greece, Spain, Senegal, Louisiana State in the USA, AEFE French schools in Asia-Pacific area, Canada (Ontario and Quebec states), France and French speaking schools throughout the world.

Kamilala

info@kamilala.org

www.kamilala.org/en/home

3–15

AGE GROUP

2015

ESTABLISHED

10

COUNTRIES



Bringing stories to digital life,
across languages and cultures!

Kiwa Digital

New Zealand

Kiwa Digital is a world-leading production house for experiential digital apps. Kiwa Digital brings stories to digital life across languages and cultures, using cutting edge technology to create immersive, interactive, and instructive experiences. Digital publishing is the core of Kiwa Digital, and the technology enables indigenous groups to communicate their own stories in their own language!

“Your work is a great example for New Zealand about how the use of ICT, combined with innovation and Māori passion can succeed globally.”

– MINISTER TE URORO A FLAVELL, NEW ZEALAND

Kiwa has a passion for bringing stories and cultural treasures to life for the digital generation!

Digital publishing is at the core of Kiwa Digital. By partnering with content owners to provide digital publishing services, Kiwa Digital brings content to life in the way the original author always intended.

Kiwa Digital has developed a number of innovative specialised services to meet customer needs:

- Proprietary processes and technology that enable the **digitisation of stories** for indigenous communities to promote language revitalisation;
- A **Cultural Intelligence toolkit** that brings cultural competency into business and government in a fun, helpful way;
- An **Indigenous Media toolkit** that brings traditional stories to life in compelling digital formats; for example in Alaska
- A **unique storytelling workshop for schools**, the KIWA SLAM, that empowers students to tell their own stories, in their own language, and publish it to the world;
- A customised version of the SLAM that enables **digital storytelling to promote causes**;
- A licensed version of our software that enables businesses and organisations to develop their own capability to bring their content to life digitally.

At Kiwa Digital, technology is seen as an enabler. The **experiential apps** are kin-aesthetic and tactile. They are not just apps; they are immersive, interactive, and instructive experiences!

Kiwa Digital also **sets the standard for accessibility across languages and cultures**, and for readers of varying abilities, delivering learning benefits that include:

- sound synchronised with text, word-by-word, to reinforce understanding;
- audio and text in multiple languages and levels, to make content more accessible;
- design that supports special education needs; and
- interactivity that reinforces learning, such as Swipe-to-Read™ to highlight and play back the story at your own pace, Touch-to-Hear™ to have individual words spoken, and Touch-to-Spell™ to hear the letters that spell each word.

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- The innovation is based on e-publishing but has taken this technology several steps further to make it a far more immersive and multi-sensory experience.
- Students at schools are not only applying their language skills, but also making it meaningful to the target audience and community.

Kiwa Digital
info@kiwadigital.com
<https://www.kiwadigital.com>

All
TARGET GROUP

2003
ESTABLISHED

1
COUNTRY



Languages
open doors!

The Language Ambassadors

Finland

The Language Ambassadors visit schools and talk about their own unique and inspiring experiences with language learning. With the school visits, the students get a concrete understanding of the personal benefits of knowing languages in the world outside of school. The goal is to increase the students' motivation to learn languages, with an emphasis on learning Swedish in Finland.

“Why should I learn Swedish?”

Many are proud of the languages they know and have learned, and are eager to share their own language learning story. This is what the Language Ambassadors™, or Kielilähettiläät (Fin) – Språkambassadörerna (Swe), network is all about!

The network wants to improve the attitudes towards bilingualism and increase the understanding of what a great personal resource knowing and speaking languages really is. With the help of living and local language learning stories, the goal is to **awaken the students inner motivation to learn and use languages**.

In order to make the experience more relatable, language ambassadors usually visit schools from their own home area. As of now, the emphasis lies on the two official languages of Finland: Finnish (majority) and Swedish (minority), and the main purpose is to evoke greater interest for the national minority language.

The ambassadors visit schools and organizations, and talk about their own **fun and inspiring experiences with language learning**. During the visit, the students can also discuss their plans for the future, and how proficiency in Swedish and/or Finnish can further these or open new doors.

The ambassadors represent all ages, backgrounds, levels of education, and geographical areas. The ambassador can be from Finland or an immigrant – it does not matter. As the emphasis lies on sharing the experience of learning and knowing a language, the language ambassadors are **non-native** speakers. Visits in Finnish-speaking schools are held in Swedish, and visits in Swedish-speaking schools are held in Finnish.

The Kielilähettiläät – Språkambassadörerna network coordinates language ambassadors to schools, and help those interested to become language ambassadors. The Network is also actively in contact with Swedish teachers through their association.

Once a mutual time for the visit has been found, the responsibility of planning and execution of the visit passes on to the teacher and the ambassador. With the help of a handbook they are able to build a working concept that suits the pupils/students. This handbook has been developed based on the feedback we have received during the project and is updated continuously.

The network also maintains a language podcast, which discusses various aspects of language learning together with the Language Ambassadors. Many teachers have made their pupils/students listen to some of these podcast prior to a visit.

During its first year of operations (April 2019 to March 2020), the Language Ambassadors visited 496 classes and we were able to reach almost 9000 students in over 180 schools all around Finland. The Corona virus stopped our Language Ambassadors of physically visiting the schools but currently we are doing a pilot with distance visits.

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- The idea of language ambassadors is innovative and interesting. The ambassadors serve as role models of successful language learners.
- This approach could also be broadened to different foreign and minority languages.

Our future goal is to start implementing the Language Ambassador -method with other languages. Maybe one day Language Ambassadors -method could be implemented in other countries as well.

The response has been very positive! According to feedback given by 3600 students, 100 teachers and 50 language ambassadors:

- 95% of teachers wanted to arrange more school visits with language ambassadors
- more than half of the students felt that the school visits increased their motivation to learn Swedish
- nearly half of the students noted that the school visits provided them with new information and/or perspectives
- all language ambassadors have visited more than one school.

The Language Ambassadors

jaan.siitonen@kielilahettilaat.fi
www.kielilahettilaat.fi

All
TARGET GROUP

2019
ESTABLISHED

1
COUNTRY



By allowing students' home languages in school, multilingual students get the chance to strengthen their cognitive and social skills.

Language Friendly School

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

A Language Friendly School is an answer to the increasing multilingualism present in schools across the world; a result of people migrating to other places seeking employment, reuniting with loved ones or escaping war and conflict. Within a Language Friendly School, everyone welcomes and values all languages spoken by the students, the parents and the school stakeholders. Join us in our mission and let's make the world a language friendlier place: one school at a time.

"ALL children should be valued for who they are. They should feel safe, be able to express their views, and be successful in their learning."

– UNESCO

A Language Friendly School is a school where all languages spoken by the pupils are welcomed and valued.

A Language Friendly School is a bottom up whole school approach. There is no blue print of what schools must do. Rather it starts with what schools need and what they can realistically accomplish. Also, it expressly targets all the stakeholders: school managers, teachers but also parents and especially children.

At the very minimum, schools commit not to punish children speaking their mother tongue. For some schools this is already a significant step. By connecting with other Language Friendly Schools they can share good practices and teachers can be inspired to take a next step forward.

Our Roadmap provides ideas for activities as a school and in the classroom.

WHY SHOULD YOUR SCHOOL BECOME A LANGUAGE FRIENDLY SCHOOL?

There are many benefits associated with an education that takes into account children's mother tongues or home languages:

- Children learn better and faster in a language they can understand
- They enjoy school more, they feel more at home
- Children tend to show increased self-esteem
- Parents participation is increased
- Studies have reported that when children take advantage of their multilingualism they also enjoy higher socioeconomic status, including higher earnings
- On average, the schools perform better, reporting less repetition
- Finally, schools report children stay in school longer.

By joining the network of Language Friendly Schools you become part of a global community of teachers, parents and community leaders who value the cultural and linguistic diversity of our children. You will have access to innovative ways of supporting multilingual children and providing them with the best opportunities to achieve their educational goals.

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- This does not take large budget input, it promotes harmony and an inclusive environment. These are keystones of most educational establishments.
- Focuses on school-home communications, which is crucial to provide students with a holistic learning environment.

With the Language Friendly School, we envision a world in which no child is punished for speaking his or her mother tongues in school by 2030, the deadline of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Language Friendly School is an initiative of the Rutu Foundation for Intercultural Multilingual Education, a non-profit organization based in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The Language Friendly School is endorsed by Prof. Dr. Jim Cummins.

Language Friendly School

ellen-rose@rutufoundation.org
www.languagefriendlyschool.org

All
TARGET GROUP

2019
ESTABLISHED

2
COUNTRIES



Stories in the original languages,
told by people who live in our midst.

Language Party

Australia

A language party is a fresh and intimate style of community-based gathering that celebrates the sea of languages spoken in our neighbourhoods, towns and cities. At any gathering, held anywhere in the world, storytellers share tales in their mother tongue then translate them into the dominant language of the audience.

“Safi performed amongst people twice her age and with much more life experience and education. She stole the show with her beautiful speaking voice, infectious smile and warm heart.”

– JENNY JENKINSON, DARWIN HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Storytellers hail from local communities. They may include indigenous people, migrants, expats or refugees. They are not professional performers, but living conduits for languages that are little known, or rarely heard. By speaking and sharing their languages, storytellers forge a deeper and richer connection to their community, and enrich our common life. The languages grow stronger.

What is the purpose of a Language Party? Storytelling in language enlivens and enriches communities. It encourages speakers of lesser-known languages to keep their oral traditions strong. Past audience members describe the experience of attending shows as “an awakening”, “unexpectedly enjoyable and inspiring”, “moving and compelling” and “a privilege to be part of”. Most of all, the purpose is the relationships that are created in the process of putting on a language party.

Who is behind this? Language Parties, previously called Treasure Language Storytelling, is an initiative of the Aikuma Project, founded by Steven Bird, Robyn Perry and Manuel Maqueda in California. It is under ongoing development in Australia by Steven Bird and Jennifer Pinkerton. Our mission is to design scalable methods for strengthening small languages in urban centres.

So far, we've held Language Parties in places with strong linguistic diversity, such as the San Francisco Bay Area and all around Australia. More recently the format has been adopted by groups in Asia, Africa and Europe. Schools have incorporated language parties into their cultural programs. Several Language Parties took place as part of UN International Year of Indigenous Languages in 2019.

THE GOALS

The purpose of a Language Party is to celebrate and connect: celebrate the linguistic diversity in our midst, and connect people who are keeping their languages strong. The ultimate goal is social change in which urban centres become welcoming and nurturing spaces for indigenous and immigrant people.

In many places linguistic diversity is barely tolerated. People living in English-speaking countries often have no personal experience of bilingualism. When they hear someone speaking a different language, they assume the person cannot speak English and is not participating as a citizen, and react negatively. We heard of a Turkish shopkeeper in San Francisco who realised that he had to use English when phoning his wife; if he spoke to her in Turkish the customers would leave his shop. We want to educate the wider population through displays of bilingualism: a story in language followed by the same individual interpreting it into English (or the locally dominant language).

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- This kind of event would be nice to organize in schools or daycares as a part of the ordinary activities.
- This innovation is universal and can be used in any country and with any languages.

In reality, the people who attend a Language Party are already ‘converted’. Thus, we see the primary audience of social change as the storytellers themselves. By owning their language in a public place and by having people listening attentively, storytellers experience recognition, new pride in their identity. They resolve to keep their languages strong. For recently-arrived immigrants, this is a ‘strengths-based approach’ to learning the locally dominant language. Language Parties are a source of refreshment and encouragement for anyone in the ‘linguistic front line’.

Language Party

aikumaproject@gmail.com

www.languageparty.org

All
TARGET GROUP

2015
ESTABLISHED

6
COUNTRIES



Natural language learning and teaching
in everyday activities & routines!

Language Showering in Jyväskylä

Jyväskylä, Finland

Language showering is a method of foreign language teaching where preschool teachers, at times, use target languages during the children's everyday activities. The primary aim of the method is to provide positive experiences of languages and language learning. In the city of Jyväskylä, language showering has become a permanent activity, creating positive experiences for all involved!

The foreign language is used **occasionally and where it fits naturally**, which enables the majority of the language being spoken to be the country's official language with the foreign language being **showered** here and there.

Language showering is an official part of the early childhood education curriculum in the city of Jyväskylä, where the showering languages are **English, German, French and Russian**. The variation of languages is up to the teachers: some prefer to mix them up daily, but it is recommended to use one foreign language over a longer period of time so as to not confuse languages and to further support learning.

Pedagogically language showering takes advantage of **the critical period of the children's nervous system** when they are more heightened to language stimuli. Language showering also incorporates language learning through **functionality and music** by utilizing foreign language versions of games and songs the children are already familiar with in their own mother tongues.

As part of everyday life, **language showering enables busy staff to focus on their daily curriculum** as showering is not something to be incorporated into a certain time slot, and children won't view it as studying and there is no pressure in achieving a certain level of language learning. Using a foreign language, the teacher can, for example, greet the children each morning, count the children in attendance, play a game of I spy using colors outside, praise the children for their good deeds and wish them well at the end of the day. Naptime stories can also be read in a foreign language, and if the teacher is not confident in, for example, their French reading abilities, the teacher can find stories online in video or audio formats.

The primary goal is to create positive experiences of languages and language learning! As the primary goal is not to learn the language, language showering can be applied with a very basic vocabulary and the use of a target language is encouraged even if one makes mistakes in it. Few people have time to learn four foreign languages fluently while working and as such, language showering does not require one to be trained as a language teacher or to have native-like skills in the target language. With a very basic vocabulary **anyone can apply language showering!** Children's parents are encouraged to maintain the enthusiasm towards languages and employ language showering at home as children often want to demonstrate their knowledge of a language to their family. Tips and games for language showering at home can be found on our Youtube-channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCiiFh_noxkAlgk3Crt9qO9Q/videos

Language showering is **often compared with language immersion**. Whereas in language immersion the target language is used almost constantly, in language showering it is used occasionally and where it fits naturally. In language showers, language learning and use are, of course, encouraged, but **the primary goal is to get children excited about foreign languages!**

Language showering was invented in Jyväskylä, Finland and celebrates 10-years of operations in 2020! For more information please visit:
<https://peda.net/jyvaskyla/kielisuihkus/in-english>

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- This is an excellent way to introduce and get children (& teachers) familiar with using another language without the pressure / anxiety of tests or getting everything right.
- I can't think of a place where this educational practice couldn't be used to enrich the days at the kindergartens and preschools and the life of the children.

Language Showering in Jyväskylä

teemu.kuutila@jyvaskyla.fi

www.peda.net/jyvaskyla/kielisuihkus/in-english

All

TARGET GROUP

2010

ESTABLISHED

1

COUNTRY



Learn languages while you cook!

Linguacuisine

The United Kingdom

The Linguacuisine project promotes and explores learning of digital literacy, languages, cuisines and cultures. The free Linguacuisine app helps you learn a language while you're cooking a meal. With text and video, your smartphone or tablet will talk you through the stages of cooking a recipe in the chosen foreign language. Best of all, when you've finished, you can eat the food you've cooked!

"Delighted to see the new Linguacuisine app:
clever idea attractively presented.
Hope it attracts many new language learners."

– DAVID CRYSTAL, PROFESSOR

The free, Linguacuisine app uses cookery to help make learning a new language and culture easier!

When using the app, your own smartphone or tablet will speak to you in the chosen foreign language and talk you through all of the stages of cooking the recipe.

By joining our online community, you can also tell other people around the world about your own cooking, language and way of life!

LINGUACUISINE FOR TEACHERS

- The Linguacuisine app can be used for **foreign language lessons**, but also for cookery lessons and cross-curriculum projects. Students can use the app to cook and learn in the kitchen at home as well as at school. There is a prize for the best recipe!
- The app is a good way of **preparing students for a foreign trip** as it helps engage them with the cuisine, culture and language in advance.
- Students can also **write their own recipes** in their own language, informing people abroad about their culture and cuisine.
- It is also an excellent way of getting learners to **communicate with learners in other countries**. Video links have been available for some time, but Linguacuisine means that learners in different countries can do enjoyable shared activities together, cooking recipes from the other countries whilst learning about the other language and culture.
- **Digital skills** can also be developed by using the 'recipe builder' authoring software. Linguacuisine has produced a certification system for the app's digital competences.

Check out our Top 10 tips for language learning with Linguacuisine and Comic Book on how the app works!

When you are cooking, you involve all of your senses in the learning experience – touch, smell and taste as well as hearing and seeing (multi-modal & multi-sensory language learning). You learn foreign words better when you are physically touching food and cooking utensils and using them to prepare food.

We now have recipes available in: English, Greek, Italian, French, Spanish, Catalan, German, Arabic, Quechua, Turkish, Korean & Chinese!

The Linguacuisine app is the end result of a 10-year collaboration between computing scientists and linguists at Newcastle University. The Linguacuisine project is a collaboration between Newcastle University, Action Foundation (UK), Hellenic Open University (Greece), Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia (Italy) and the Workers' Educational Association (UK). It is funded by an Erasmus+ KA2 Strategic Partnership grant.

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- Brings an indirect but important connection between language and culture.
- I think this could be used quite easily in my context.

Linguacuisine

paul.seedhouse@newcastle.ac.uk

www.linguacuisine.com

All

TARGET GROUP

2018

ESTABLISHED

71

COUNTRIES



Education in the language
in which you have been brought up.

Mother Tongue Education for Early Learners

Uganda

Mother Tongue Education for Early Learners, or MTE, provides the training and develops the learning and teaching materials required, to teach learners in their mother tongue. MTE works to produce early reader books and other materials to support literacy and numeracy that are locally appropriate and culturally relevant.

There are a huge number of different languages in most African countries, but typically only one or two of them are recognised as national languages in order to make communication more effective. However, many remote rural and pastoralist groups do not speak the national language, despite it being the language of instruction in their children's schools. This creates a huge problem for children in these communities because from the first day of school, they are not able to fully understand the content of their lessons. For many children, this lack of understanding will nega-

tively impact on their entire education, leading to poor performance and high rates of drop-out. Without finishing school, the cycle of illiteracy and poverty continues.

There is a solution to this problem. Research shows that teaching learners in their mother tongue in the first three or four years of school improves their performance and makes them more likely to complete their education. This has been internationally acknowledged, and many countries now prescribe mother tongue instruction in primary schools. Unfortunately, without teaching materials and teacher training, it is very difficult to provide.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

By teaching children in their mother tongue when they start school, learners are not only able to learn more quickly but are better prepared to learn the national language or any second language e.g. English. This sets them on course to receive all the benefits that are available to people who complete their education.

MTE provides the training and develops the learning and teaching materials required to teach learners in their mother tongue. MTE works to produce early reader books and other materials to support literacy and numeracy that are locally appropriate and culturally relevant. This can range from reading material derived from local stories and poems to material that addresses important social issues such as healthcare.

In supporting local language instruction MTE works closely with parents in the community, who are often keen to have their children instructed in the national language, seeing this as the language of success. MTE helps parents to understand that local language literacy will better prepare their children for the future, and MTE also supports parents themselves to gain local language literacy, enabling many of them to read and write for the first time in their lives.

WHO DOES IT HELP?

Uganda: MTE started the Ugandan project in 2009, developing early childhood education materials and training resources in five local languages. These are now being used in six districts and reached over 100,000 children and their parents. These tools were incorporated into the national teacher training curriculum, and are now available for any teacher seeking to offer instruction in these five languages. This video provides a greater insight of the project -Transforming Learning and Teaching Experiences via Mother Tongue Education in Uganda.

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- Considering mother tongue on the one hand and teachers training on the other, will make a big impact to the community which leads others to implement the same strategy to make a difference.
- This innovation is very powerful in tackling social and linguistic inequality, since the right to use one's mother tongue is a key to successful education.

Kenya: The Kenyan MTE work has grown over the last four years, and is now working in 27 primary schools and 45 Kindergartens. This means MTE has now reached over 7000 learners. The learning resources aren't just geared towards preschoolers, MTE has also ran programs with over 800 adults and have provided them with functional literacy and and numeracy classes in their first language.

Mother Tongue Education for Early Learners

info@africaeducationaltrust.org

www.africaeducationaltrust.org/our-projects/mother-tongue-education

3-10

AGE GROUP

2009

ESTABLISHED

2

COUNTRIES



Allowing Nordic students to discover and understand the value of the Nordic languages and cultural community!

Norden i skolen (Norden in School)

The Nordic region

Norden i skolen (Norden in School) is a free educational platform for the whole of Norden! The platform offers K12 educational material in all Nordic languages. Norden i skolen is a forum where Nordic students can genuinely experience and connect with their closely related neighbouring languages and countries through common Nordic themes, subjects and perspectives.

The first and only of its kind, Norden i skolen is the largest joint Nordic educational platform. **The stated objective of the common non-profit project is to revitalize the education in the Nordic languages and to strengthen the awareness of Nordic cultural understanding.**

The educational material is multilingual – available in all Nordic languages – and diverse: extracts from books and novels, short films, games & music videos, covering

the subject areas of “Language and Culture”, “History and Society”, and “Climate and Nature” from a Nordic perspective. The material is centred around reading and listening comprehension.

Norden i skolen offers teachers and students from all Nordic countries the possibility to work with the neighbouring languages in basic and upper-secondary education. Norden i skolen makes education in the Nordic languages easier, more convenient and more accessible!

Norden i skolen is also a platform where individual school classes can find and establish relations with so-called “friend-classes” from other Nordic countries. Cooperation with a “friend-class” from another Nordic country (and of the same grade) opens up for many exciting possibilities, both culturally and socially. While learning in a way that is quite different to traditional classroom teaching practices, the students can also find new friends and have fun. Students will discover the value of the common Nordic languages and culture as they themselves get to experience it!

Norden i skolen is developed and administrated by Foreningerne Norden with support from the The Nordic Council of Ministers.

A few comments from the Advisory Board reviews:

- My country doesn't belong to a Nordic region, so I would not be able to implement it in my context, but I can use the idea of connecting classes in neighbouring countries in collaborative educational experience using the resources in multiple native languages.
- It will also be interesting to think about how much of this is possible because of the languages being linguistically related? I think it would be great to see something like this for languages that are rooted in Chinese characters, Arabic alphabet, or Cyrillic alphabet for example.

Norden i skolen (Norden in School)

thomas@fnfnorden.org

www.nordeniskolen.org

Teachers

TARGET GROUP

2011

ESTABLISHED

8

COUNTRIES

Concluding Remarks

Bilingual education is about so much more than learning another language or reaching a high level of fluency. In this report, the underlying ethos in bilingual education supports an awareness, tolerance and appreciation of the positive value of linguistic and cultural diversity. Through celebrating diversity, Bilingual Education can enable an environment where everyone can benefit from deepening and broadening an understanding of the world we live in.

We summarised the comments made from the reviews of our Advisory Board Members and the interviews of experts we conducted for this Spotlight into five major recommendations. These recommendations will help enable the successful implementation of the highlighted innovations in this Spotlight:

1. ENACT RADICAL INCLUSION BY NORMALISING BILINGUALISM IN SCHOOLS

An inclusive environment is arguably one of the fundamental features to the success of bilingual education. The freedom to embrace one's own language identity within the greater school-wide culture, increases acceptance of self and sense of belonging which lies at the heart of bilingual education. All innovations selected for this Spotlight in one way or another embody the spirit of radical inclusion by encouraging and promoting the power of embracing one's mother tongue, language learning & bilingualism.

"Bilingualism is the superpower I hope every kid gets to enjoy. Indeed governments, schools, businesses, everyone (!) should be trying to create more, not less, opportunities to exchange, connect, and swap lives through the medium of another language."

– EDISON HUYNH, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION RESEARCH
AND SPECIAL PROJECTS, WHITTLE SCHOOL AND STUDIOS

2. IDENTIFY ROLE MODELS IN EACH COMMUNITY AND CELEBRATE THEM REGULARLY

The importance of role models in education goes beyond the language itself, but exposing students to the authentic opportunities and possibilities that knowing multiple languages offer. This is an easy and effective way to bring real-life bilingual experiences to students, liberating the language from the confines of an educational context. Selected innovations to help the recognition and involvement of role models in bilingual environments are Global Minds Initiative, Language Ambassadors and Language Party.

"Good ambassadors are like idols to young people. This works."

– ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER ON THE LANGUAGE AMBASSADORS

"I like this innovation. It is based upon authentic language usage (story telling) and face-to-face meetings where languages mix but at the same time allow everyone to use the language they feel comfortable to use."

– ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER ON LANGUAGE PARTY

3. LEADERS/PRINCIPALS NEED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION INNOVATIONS

Bilingual education innovations work best in circumstances where the educational leader and principal is not only able but also strongly committed to participate in their implementation. With the support from the educational and school leadership, the consciousness of a whole community can be built to cultivate a healthy and successful environment for bilingual education. The innovations Language Friendly School, Language Showering in Jyväskylä and Mother Tongue Education for Early Learners provide whole school, city and community approaches to bi- and multilingualism.

"I would like to build such a network, where we can exchange information, methods and experiences with each other. This means that there has to be a planned format for the work and occasionally we would need to meet in person. This way the network would not feel like a burden but rather a pond of educational innovations."

– KAISA ISOTALO, PRINCIPAL OF SEINÄJOKI JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, FINLAND

"This group is doing amazing work helping children into education, thus having a dramatic impact not only on the lives of individual children but of their communities."

– ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER ON MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION
FOR EARLY LEARNERS

4. CREATE REGULAR OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARENTS AND THE COMMUNITY TO COME TOGETHER IN ORDER TO CELEBRATE THEIR VARIOUS LANGUAGES AND CULTURES

The saying “it takes a village to raise a child”, is certainly true when it comes to bilingual education. The responsibility of language learning does not stay within the confines of a school but rather involves the entire community. Global Minds Initiative, Language Friendly School, Language Party and Mother Tongue for Early Learners all enable, support and encourage positive multilingual and multicultural mindsets within the whole community.

“Parents can support children's language learning in collaboration with early childhood education and school in various ways”

– HEIDI HARJU-LUUKKAINEN, PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION, NORD UNIVERSITY, NORWAY

“Active involvement of youth is the one of the most effective ways to support community building and understanding among peers.”

– ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER ON GLOBAL MINDS INITIATIVE

5. ASK WHAT SUPPORT EDUCATORS NEED AND PROVIDE IT TO THEM

Involving and empowering bilingual educators all requires communication. Communication on what the educators actually need – materials, knowledge, people, instruments – to build functioning and creative bilingual classrooms. The selected innovations Norden i skolen (Norden in School), Kamilala, Kiwa Digital and Lingua-cuisine provide educators with interactive and interdisciplinary tools and ideas to play around with and apply to their respective bilingual teaching environments!

“I hope that research based information and ideas for bilingual education would be easier for teachers to find and try out. This would encourage even more teachers to try out bilingual teaching on a smaller or bigger scale. I also hope that in the future, bilingual education will acknowledge and make better use of all the linguistic resources that the children have at their disposal, not just the target language and the majority languages. Bilingual education should include the diverse linguistic resources of the children to enhance the learning and the identities of the children as multilingual learners.”

– ANU PALOJÄRVI, PROJECT RESEARCHER, UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ, FINLAND

As we share in the report, the beauty of bilingual education goes beyond language learning, but rather the interconnectedness and sense of belonging that comes with language, a concept deeply connected to our hearts. Through our conversations with educational experts, principals, educators, teachers and students, we were able to not only better understand how bilingual education is interpreted in a variety of contexts, but the many benefits that bilingual education offers world-wide. Our hope is the innovations and ideas presented in this Spotlight will help bring more excitement and joy to bilingual education globally.

Bilingual Education can enable an environment where everyone can benefit from deepening and broadening an understanding of the world we live in.

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Contact information

HUNDRED HEADQUARTERS

Pursimiehenkatu 26 C
Helsinki 00150
Finland

info@hundred.org

hundred.org

facebook.com/hundredorg

twitter.com/hundredorg



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