



# RISEUP

REVITALISING LANGUAGES AND SAFEGUARDING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

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## Report on teachers & teacher education in RISE UP's case study communities



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## Content

1	Introduction.....	5
2	Aranese.....	5
2.1	Teacher Provision.....	5
2.2	Teaching materials .....	6
2.3	Pedagogical training.....	6
2.4	Language proficiency .....	7
2.5	Conclusion.....	7
2.6	References .....	7
3	Aromanian.....	9
3.1	Teacher provision.....	10
3.2	Teaching materials .....	10
3.3	Pedagogical training.....	10
3.4	Language proficiency .....	11
3.5	Other issues .....	12
3.6	References .....	12
4	Burgenland Croatian.....	14
4.1	Teacher provision.....	14
4.2	Teaching materials .....	14
4.3	Pedagogical training.....	15
4.4	Language proficiency .....	16
4.5	References .....	16
5	Cornish.....	17
5.1	Teacher provision.....	17
5.2	Teacher proficiency.....	17
5.3	Teaching materials .....	18
5.4	Pedagogical training.....	18
5.5	Conclusion.....	18
5.6	References .....	19
6	Seto.....	20
6.1	Teaching Seto language in the Estonian state school system and the supplementary sector 20	
6.2	Teaching materials for Seto language.....	21

6.3	Teacher provision and pedagogical training of Seto language teachers .....	21
6.4	Language proficiency of Seto language teachers .....	22
6.5	References .....	22

## 1 Introduction

The following report addresses several issues around teachers and teacher education in the five case study communities, including teacher provision, teaching materials, pedagogical training, language proficiency (of teachers and students) and well as other case study specific observations.

## 2 Aranese

The Aranese school system is trilingual (Aranese, Catalan and Spanish), and schools are all public in Val d'Aran. Law 8/2022, passed by the Catalan Government on 19 April 2023, states that 'in the educational centres of Aran, *Projecte Lingüístic de Centre* must grant the learning and regular curricular and educational use of Aranese as the territory's own and vehicular language'.

According to official policy, Aranese is the medium of instruction during pre-school and primary education, with Catalan and Spanish as taught languages. In practice, it is up to each school how to interpret / manage this policy. In secondary and high school, Catalan is the official medium of instruction, with Spanish and Aranese used freely depending on individual teachers' choices and language competence. In practice, this 'represents a smaller presence of Occitan in favour of the other two languages' (Suïls & Torres, forthcoming).

In terms of accountability/governance, there is no specific inspection for the Aranese territory (Suïls & Torres, forthcoming) and consequently no evaluation of the distribution of the three languages as vehicular.

### 2.1 Teacher Provision

Teacher provision in Val d'Aran is 'sufficient', according to a contact who coordinates the *Conselh Consultatiu der Occitan Aranés*, an advisory body to the *Government of Aran*, on issues of language policy. The same source then contextualises this statement by emphasising that teacher provision in Val d'Aran 'at least isn't lower than in other places [in Catalonia]' where 'the public school system [...] suffers from a structural shortage of teachers, mostly in subject areas like Catalan, Spanish and Maths'. Similar qualifying statements can be found in the reports on all other case study communities. Attracting teachers to positions in remote rural areas poses an additional difficulty for teacher provision, not just in Val d'Aran, but in all case study communities. Most minoritised language communities, not just the five RISE UP case studies, live in peripheral regions.

Two administrative hurdles to becoming an Aranese teacher have been identified. One is that Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) C1 or C2 is necessary for securing a teaching position in an Aranese centre - even if candidates have sufficient knowledge of Aranese. CEFR C1 in Catalan, however, is automatically awarded with a Catalan Batxillerat / A-level. The second hurdle is that a CEFR C1 certificate in Aranese is required to take up a teaching position in Aran. CEFR C1 in Aranese is not automatically awarded upon graduation from high school in Val d'Aran. The C1 Aranese language courses run by the *Conselh Generau d'Aran* that lead up to this certificate are frequently oversubscribed and with a limited offering / schedule. According to some student sources, people willing to learn Aranese are faced with no chances or too many hurdles to get a place on the CEFR

courses and/or take the exams. *Conselh Generau d'Aran* is willing to provide more learning opportunities but is confronted with a shortage of qualified Aranese teachers.

All consulted sources agree that there is a dichotomy between practitioners who see a teaching position in Val d'Aran as a long-term job and those who do not. The former tend to come from nearby areas, have prior knowledge of Aranese and prefer pre-school and primary level; the latter, including substitute teachers and temps, tend to be less invested in the Occitan language and culture and frequently move on within a year or less.

Suïls (personal communication 12/03/25) summarises teacher provision in Aran with 'so, yes, there are enough teachers but no, they don't respond to the needs in terms of minority language'.

## 2.2 Teaching materials

Teaching materials for **pre-school** and **primary** education are prepared in collaboration between schools, teachers and the *Conselh Generau d'Aran*. The *Conselh's* Language Services support teachers who do not use textbooks or choose materials that have already been published, the latter by translating the content, paying for the copyright license and the Aranese edition (Suïls & Torres, forthcoming). Materials for language teaching are still predominantly produced by the *Conselh*. For other subjects, the centres increasingly dispense with the book format and — driven by a move towards project-based learning — work with resources with a specific thematic scope, the so-called "suitcases" created by the *Centre de Recursos Pedagògics* (CRP, pedagogical resources centre). These materials, however, are not always produced specifically for an Aranese context (Suïls & Torres, forthcoming). Other materials in Aranese must be specifically created and/or oral explanations need to be given in Aranese.

For **secondary** education, the CRP of Aran is charged with the creation of new resources, customising them for different educational stages and tailoring them to the educational needs of the Aranese context. There is room for improvement regarding Aranese language resources at secondary level according to Suïls & Torres (forthcoming), and textbooks in Aranese are not available for all subjects / projects. Some teachers report minimal use of course books, preferring to create a digital environment tailored to their specific needs instead. If they are proficient in Aranese, this enables them to use the local language as the medium of instruction more effectively (ibid.).

Except for specific Aranese language subject teaching materials, the materials used at **vocational** levels are prepared in Catalan or Spanish, but not in Aranese.

Due to the move towards project-based teaching and learning, primary school teachers have to find a way of achieving a balanced distribution of the three languages as vehicular. In secondary education, the subjects tend to favour Catalan and Spanish for reasons such as scarcity of teaching materials or limited competence in Aranese on the part of teachers. The situation is similar for vocational education teachers. Efforts are, however, being made to correct this situation (see section on secondary education) so that Aranese is the language of instruction in most areas (Suïls & Torres, forthcoming).

## 2.3 Pedagogical training

Primary school teachers are predominantly trained at the University of Lleida, sometimes at universities in Barcelona. Aranese/Occitan language as a subject is absent from the curriculum of the

Primary Teacher Education Degree. However, it is offered as an elective in Lleida, alongside theoretical background courses such as *Linguistic Planning and Management of Multilingualism* (Suïls, personal communication).

Teaching at secondary level requires specialized Master's degrees, such as history, biology, philology, and practitioners are trained all over Catalonia and Spain. To the best of our knowledge, the only MA in Occitan is run at the [University of Toulouse](#)-Jean Jaurès, France.

## 2.4 Language proficiency

School leavers from one of the educational centres in Val d'Aran have some prior knowledge of Aranese when they take up a teaching position in Aran (approx. B2 according to a community consultant, personal communication).

Unless they are already speakers of Aranese (because they are of Aranese descent or have learned the language at home or in school, see above) most teachers do not have any training in Aranese before being assigned to a position in Val d'Aran. They have to learn Aranese after induction, while already teaching.

In primary education, a large proportion of staff members are of Aranese origin. Most Aranese teachers in secondary education are not of Aranese descent and did not go to school in Val d'Aran. This impacts on their language competence. Knowledge of Aranese is a merit (not a requirement) for accessing a position as a secondary school teacher in Aran; in practice it is minimal, 'equivalent to that of languages for which a practical application to teaching is not envisaged' (Suïls, personal communication 12/03/25).

The pool of subject specific secondary teachers is smaller than that of primary school teachers, and their mobility is higher. In addition, teacher candidates, especially ones of lower seniority or educational qualifications, are being appointed to centres. Rather than refusing an assigned position in Val d'Aran, which incurs a penalty, they accept the position but move on after a few months (see also section 1, Suïls & Torres forthcoming). On the other hand, if they want to stay in Val d'Aran, they may still have to leave if called elsewhere.

In summary, there are considerable bureaucratic hurdles for teachers to acquire and/or maintain the language competence required to teach (in) the Aranese/Occitan language.

## 2.5 Conclusion

This section on Aranese started with the use of Aranese as a vehicular language being enshrined in Law 8/2022 in Aran. It concludes with an ethnographic study on Aranese language education policy in practice (Marvin 2019). This study establishes that teachers and students construct their own language policies, in incoherence with the official policy that upholds Occitan as the *lingua vehicular*, but centered on mutual communication. Marvin (2019: 107) concludes 'These findings also impart a clearer image of the challenges that face language revitalization efforts, and the (in-)effectiveness of language education policy as a means of surpassing minoritized status for speaker communities.'

## 2.6 References

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### 3 Aromanian

The situation of teachers and teacher education is different in all five countries where Aromanian is spoken (Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, North Macedonia, Serbia and Romania) and the information available varies.

In **Albania**, Aromanian is a recognised minority language (Law 26/2017), and the Albanian state provides support for primary education in Aromanian. In state schools, Aromanian is taught as an elective in four localities. An intensive Aromanian teaching programme (three hours/week for six months) for emergent and proficient Albanian-Aromanian (Farsherot variety) bilingual children between the ages of 12 and 15 was launched in 2015 and is still running, be it with reduced number of students (Stoica, personal communication 29/01/23).

In **Bulgaria**, Aromanian is neither taught nor used as a medium of instruction in state schools; there are no official school programmes (Mercator 2024). Between 2003 and 2015, private language courses (approx. 100 hours of instruction) were organised in three locations in Bulgaria with an Aromanian population (approx. 50 participants). The financial support by the Bulgarian government was insufficient to keep the courses going (Kyurkchiev 2023).

In **Greece**, the law does not allow for Aromanian to be used as medium of instruction in school; neither does it make provision for the teaching of the language. The language is thus not taught in schools, but by a number of Aromanian/Vlach associations offer courses for both children and adults (Mercator 2024). The running of the courses depends on their demand.

In **North Macedonia**, the Aromanian language was introduced in the kindergarten in Kruševo in 2021. Currently, the elective 'Language and culture of Vlachs' is taught in state-run primary schools in four municipalities (used to be seven in 2001) with about 500 students (the number is declining rapidly, Nikolova 2023 & Nane, personal communication 16/01/25). The minimum number of pupils for the elective to run (15) was lifted in 2023.

*Integra Neau* have been running free Vlach language courses for adults between 2020 and 2023 (Nikolova 2023), and a summer school for children which focuses less on language than on culture (Nikolova, personal communication 30/04/24).

In **Serbia**, legislation does not provide for the teaching of the Aromanian language in schools. The Serbian-Aromanian association *Lunjina* ('light') offered Aromanian language courses (once per week) for beginners, advanced students as well as new speakers (Mercator 2024). *Lunjina* furthermore organises lectures on Aromanian culture, the audience of which was larger than that for the language courses. *In Medias Res* is purportedly hosting language classes in Pancevo.

In **Romania**, publicly funded schools can optionally introduce the teaching of the subject 'Aromanian culture and traditions' which also includes language lessons (Ministry of Education 2016; for course content see [here](#)). The course was attended by approx. 500 students in Constanca county in 2017 (ACR 2017). The Ministry furthermore approved the grade X optional course 'Aromanian Literature' (one hour/week) in 2007, and the elective 'Aromanian culture and civilization' in 2020. The Romanian government grants scholarships to Romanians from abroad (on the basis of 'certificates of Romanian-

ship', which can be issued by Aromanian associations in e.g. Albania), and reserves places at higher education institutions in Romania for grant holders.

The society Farsharotu organises beginner and advanced-level online Aromanian courses for adults living in the **diaspora**. The medium of instruction for these courses is English.

### 3.1 Teacher provision

A shortage of qualified Aromanian teachers is reported from all countries (community consultants, personal communication).

### 3.2 Teaching materials

For the teaching of Aromanian in **Albania**, a Romanian Alphabet/Grammar book was translated into the Farsharot variety (by Poci, S., Goci, K. and Caracota, N.), and adapted to the Albanian context by the *Aromanians from Albania*. The teaching materials used in the 2015 intensive Aromanian course include an alphabet chart illustrating grapheme to phoneme correspondence in the two languages, and a textbook (Fuduli, A., Gospodin, M., Nevaci, M. 2009) which covers CEFR A1 to A2.

In **Bulgaria**, the lack of schoolbooks is one of the main difficulties for the teaching of Aromanian, the other two being the lack of professional teachers and the different language knowledge of the participants (Mercator 2024).

In **Greece**, a dictionary for learning the Vlach language was published by the *Society of Aromanians of Athens* (Bletsas 2023). The main textbook (Tachis, T. 2020. Μαθαίνουμε τη Βλάχικη γλώσσα 'Learn the Vlach Language') is written in Greek and partly translated into English by the course teachers. Greek Vlach teachers tend not to have scientific background in the creation of educational materials (Mercator 2024). Each association and teacher have their own teaching materials, which are shared and handed over on an ad hoc basis (personal experience). In 2017, a common teaching method and the role of technology in transcribing and preserving the language and its varieties were discussed at a special workshop in Veroia.

In the early 1990s, the Romanian linguist Nicolai Saramandu led the writing and publication of an Aromanian alphabet book and grammar as well as an Aromanian-Macedonian dictionary for the teaching of Aromanian in **North Macedonia** (with financial support from the government). Textbooks in Aromanian for the first four grades, however, were only printed in 2012, for the remaining three grades in 2021.

*Integra Nau* published a bilingual manual for adults with accompanying audio material 'We read, write, speak Vlach' (with financial support from the Agency for Realization of Community Rights, Nikolova 2023).

The teaching of Aromanian in **Romania** is based on the language course 'Cultură și tradiții aromâne' (Gospodin, M; Fuduli, A. & Nevaci, M. 2001 and 2009). The Constanta branch of the Armenian Community is furthermore providing Armenian language rooms in educational institutions where the optional course 'Aromanian culture and traditions' is held.

### 3.3 Pedagogical training

In cooperation with the University of Tirana (Faculty of Foreign Languages), the *Aromanians from Albania* initiated a HE Aromanian language course in 2017. This initiative is ongoing and awaiting approval by the Senate of the University of Tirana (2023). Korce University recently launched a BA program in 'Albanian language and literature and minority languages' (Aromanian, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Greek, Romani). According to Stoica (personal communication 30/12/24), this is 'a unique program in Albania which prepares specialists and future teachers of minority languages for the public'. The teaching methods used for the intensive Aromanian course are innovative and include content-based learning and translanguaging as a teaching method (Stoica 2018 & 2023).

In **Bulgaria**, Aromanian is not taught at universities (Kyurkchiev 2023).

In **Greece**, the Aromanian language can also no longer be studied at university level; the course at the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, initiated in 1994, folded after a year. The Vlach teachers working for Greek Aromanian Associations tend not to have scientific background in the teaching process (Mercator 2024). A teacher employed by the *Society of Aromanians of Athens* approached the author of this report for information on MA programmes for teaching minoritised languages.

First attempts at training Aromanian teachers in **North Macedonia** were made shortly after the foundation of the Republic in 1991 (led by the then president of the Romanian Academy). In practice, however, continuous training for Vlach language teachers were often not provided ([Nikolova 2023](#)), and no governance measures were in place. Consequently, the expected results of the teaching were not obtained, interest decreased and classes sizes shrunk, frequently to zero (ibid.).

With the Framework Agreement of 2001 and the revision of primary education in 2007/08, more reliable foundations were put in place for the study of the mother tongues of smaller communities within the educational system of North Macedonia. Curricula were prepared for all seven grades (III-IX grades) in which the language and culture of the Vlachs is studied (grade III one hour a week, grades IV-IX two hours per week).

Attempts at introducing the Aromanian language into North Macedonian higher education institutions as an optional subject in 2004 and 2012 were not successful. '... the conditions for the election of the subject by the students were not defined, nor was the status and engagement of the teaching staff' ([Nikolova 2023](#)).

The University of Timisoara, **Romania**, in collaboration with Korce University, Albania, has applied for a PhD program in linguistic and cultural studies in the Balkan region. If this programme gets approved, it will involve research in the minority languages and cultures of the area.

### 3.4 Language proficiency

The teacher of the 2015 intensive Aromanian teaching programme in **Albania** is bilingual, with Aromanian as L1 and Albanian as L2 (Stoica 2018).

A lack of professional teachers and inhomogeneous language knowledge of the course participants were identified as main challenges for the teaching of Aromanian in **Bulgaria** (Kyurkchiev 2023).

**Greek** Vlach teachers are usually native speakers of the Aromanian language (Mercator 2024, personal experience). The Vlach language courses run by the *Society of Aromanians of Athens* use Greek and English as media of instruction and take a pluri-centric approach to the teaching of Vlach, i.e., they

accommodate the regional varieties of Vlach the course participants are most familiar with. This has been found to complicate the teaching process. Other challenges are the different levels of language proficiency of the course participants, the lack of a curriculum, and the absence of an official and standardized writing system (Ntasiou 2017). Potential solutions to these challenges have been identified as: systematic documentation and the creation of digital language archive; the adoption of an orthographic Latin writing system; the creation of an e-learning platform with text, video and audio documentation [NB all this is freely available in Romania]; a digital Glossary in English, Greek and Aromanian as well as summer schools and festivals (Ntasiou 2017, Tzarouchi, personal communication 24/01/25).

Despite some Aromanian-language programs introduced into public elementary schools in **North Macedonia**, use of the language has increasingly been confined to the household, even in historically Aromanian towns where citizens prefer to use the Macedonian language to communicate with each other (Ganea & Lascu 2021).

Teaching of Aromanian language is not hindered by the language proficiency of teachers in **Romania**, but by legal regulations: the minimum number of pupils; didactic quota for teachers; and teachers having to be both Aromanian and employees of the school (Mercator 2024).

### 3.5 Other issues

In **North Macedonia**, attendance of Aromanian classes is a documented issue:

‘Responsibilities lay on the parents. If the state and the law allows us this [teaching of Aromanian], it is our responsibility to use it. It’s a huge loss that Arman parents cannot even send twice a week their children to the Armaneashti classes’ (Babovski 2023; interview for TVM Scanteau 29.12.23).

‘In all the localities where we went, [...], they all say they don’t want to admit they are Aromanians, they don’t want to go, they don’t have children. But there are (Arman) children, it’s just that nobody takes them to school! All of this is our own fault for not sending the children to school’ (Kostovski 2023, interview for TVM Scanteau 29.12.23).

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## 4 Burgenland Croatian

The report on Burgenland Croatian focuses on the situation of teachers and teacher education in Austria as the majority of Burgenland Croats live in Austria (Burgenland & Vienna); smaller communities exist in Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. Burgenland Croatian is a recognised minority language in Austria and, like Aranese, can be used as a medium of instruction in state primary and some secondary schools in the “autochthonous” territory of Burgenland (*Minority School Act for Burgenland*, 1994), and in the supplementary and private sector in Burgenland and the Austrian capital, Vienna.

Croatian has to be admitted as the second educational language in educational institutions in 32 municipalities in Burgenland according to the *Burgenland Child Education and Care Act* (2009), and Croatian can be included as a second language in preschool institutions in other municipalities if at least 25% of parents make such a demand. Primary schools with Croatian as the language of instruction practically do not exist, but primary schools with Croatian and German as vehicular languages do. The *Minority School Act for Burgenland* requires at least seven children to be enrolled for a bilingual class to be installed, but also enables parents to opt out of bilingual education. Standard Croatian (in combination with Bosnian and Serbian) is also integrated into the system of native language education as elective classes, which is important for more recent Croatian speaking immigrants to Austria but criticised by (Burgenland) Croatian representatives. Several associations / organisations offer adult language courses, both in Burgenland and in Vienna.

### 4.1 Teacher provision

‘There is a general lack of trained bilingual kindergarten teachers, which means that existing positions may remain vacant’ (Mercator dossier on the Croatian language in education in Austria 2022: 41). The early 2020s saw a slight decline in the numbers of students training to become BC teachers. According to directorates of these institutions, the main challenge is finding possibilities for internships and training opportunities. Like the authors of the forthcoming Mercator dossier on Aranese, the author of the Mercator dossier on Croatia, Katerina Tryan (personal communication 22/01/25), notes that ‘generally, there is a lack of trained teachers for bilingual education, especially for the primary education level, but language education initiatives outside the school system also have problems finding language instructors and educators’. Teacher provision for BC seems to have stabilised ([PHB 2024](#)).

Due to the lack of official bilingual schooling institutions in Vienna, which lies outside the “autochthonous” territory of Burgenland, the approximately 10 – 15 000 Burgenland Croats living in the Austrian capital rely on the Hrvatski centar (Croatian centre) for language education on a private and voluntary basis. Courses are provided for school children and adults from the minority group and to any other interested people.

### 4.2 Teaching materials

The Austrian Department for the Minority School sector is responsible for publishing teaching materials and schoolbooks (Kinda-Berlakovich 2005: 186). Additionally, various cultural organisations such as *Hrvatsko kulturno društvo* (Croatian cultural organisation; HKD) and *Hrvatski kulturni i do*

*kumentarni centar* (Croatian cultural and documentation centre; HKDC) actively support the preparation of teaching material such as language learning games, songbooks, and audio and video material, or appear as publishers. The *Hrvatsko štamparsko društvo* (Croatian press association; HŠtD) also publishes materials such as children's literature in the Burgenland Croatian. In their weekly newspaper *Hrvatske novine*, articles and information especially for school children can be found in various article series published in irregular intervals.

Teaching materials for Croatian or bilingual education in pre-school are mostly provided by various organisations, such as the HKD and the HKDC. Nursery and kindergarten teachers also prepare their teaching materials individually or collaboratively. Teaching materials for all higher levels of education need to be approved by the *Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research*. Primary school teaching materials are developed and elaborated by teachers, also in cooperation with the PHB and the minority department of Austrian public service broadcaster (ORF). All teaching materials for secondary educations have been compiled by changing workgroups of local teachers and include course-, exercise- and grammar books as well as a schoolbook covering the history and culture of Burgenland Croats as a minority in Austria, published by HKD.

### 4.3 Pedagogical training

With Aranese, Burgenland Croatian is the only RISE UP case study language that benefits from pedagogical training of teachers at a regional didactic centre with a focus on minority languages, the University College of Teacher Education Burgenland (Pädagogische Hochschule Burgenland, PHB) established in 2008/2009. Since 2017/2018 the PHB has a chair for (Burgenland) Croatian.

Training of **pre-school** teachers at the PHB includes the elective on 'Croatian as a minority language', (2 hours weekly, 3/5 years of training). The PHB furthermore offers BA programmes for elementary pedagogy (six semesters) which include Burgenland Croatian language classes. The advanced curriculum has a focus on immersion teaching strategies.

For **primary** school teachers, the PHB offers a new curriculum with German and Croatian as the languages of instruction as well as Croatian language education in primary schools (since 2019). Within the optional master's programme, students need to choose a focus on teaching methodology, with 'Croatian' being one out of four possibilities.

Students training for **secondary** education at the PHB need to choose two focus subjects, 'Burgenland Croatian / Croatian' being one of them.

As part of continuing professional development (CPD) the PHB offers seminars focusing on the improvement of language competence and immersion as a didactic concept.

Despite these training opportunities, Tyran (2022 & personal communication 21/01/25) notes that 'for preschool education, there is undoubtedly a lack of training regarding bilingual didactical competence and language competence, as the first is not part of the curriculum at all, and the latter only with too few hours training to guarantee reasonable language transmission and education. Therefore, it is not guaranteed that children finish preschool education with enough language knowledge in both languages to continue their education at bilingual primary schools.

Given the heterogeneous language competences already present in kindergarten, the problem only increases in primary school and beyond. Teachers need more training with a specific focus on minority



languages, and methodology and didactics for handling and balancing heterogeneous linguistic backgrounds and language competences.

#### 4.4 Language proficiency

The practical role of both languages as a medium of education highly depends on individual factors in these schools and classes, such as the language competence of both pupils and teachers (Mercator 2022: 19).

Regarding the language proficiency of teachers, Tyran (personal communication 28/01/25) notes, ‘the higher the educational level, the higher the training of the teachers’, and singles out the course at the PHB with its explicit focus on BC as an important factor for teachers’ language competence.

Regarding the language proficiency of pupils, Tyran (personal communication 22/01/25) regrets that the L1 competence in BC is decreasing drastically, to the point that many children do not have active use of the variety when they enter the school system.

The amount of bilingual education at preschool level depends on the language knowledge of the children as well as the competence of preschool teachers and varies from effective bilingual education to only transmitting folk songs and counting rhymes (HKD).

Due to the limited number of hours of Croatian language use per week in bilingual institutions (12), and the inhomogeneous languages competence of pupils and teachers ‘it is not guaranteed that children finish preschool education with enough language knowledge in both languages to continue their education at bilingual primary schools’ (Mercator 2022: 41).

In secondary education, the actual usage of both languages is hardly definable, as teachers need to consider the language competences of their pupils individually (Mercator 2022: 27).

A regional linguistic portfolio for Burgenland (RePort) helps document minority language knowledge of pupils and supports teachers.

Since 2012, pupils can finish their school leaving examination in Burgenland Croatian (as well as Hungarian and Slovene). Melchior & Dolleschal (2024: 89) see this as a step towards raising the prestige of minority languages in Austria.

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## 5 Cornish

The Cornish language has experienced significant revitalisation over recent decades, yet the provision of qualified teachers and adequate teacher education remains a major challenge. This report examines the current state of teacher provision, teaching materials, pedagogical training, language proficiency, and other related issues affecting Cornish language education, drawing on recent studies and initiatives.

### 5.1 Teacher provision

The teaching of Cornish is heavily reliant on volunteers and external providers, which reflects a longstanding lack of systemic and institutionalised support for the teaching and learning of Cornish within Cornwall's educational institutions. According to Broadhurst (2020), Cornish does not yet have sufficient traction in the primary or secondary school systems, largely due to inadequate teacher provision. Cornish is often taught informally, and, following the introduction of the National Curriculum in the 1980s, it was only taught in schools through lunchtime or after-school clubs, typically led by volunteers or enthusiastic teachers who may have limited proficiency in the language (Schukking et al., 2019; Broadhurst, 2023). This reliance on non-trained teachers impacts the consistent delivery of high-quality Cornish language education.

One key factor responsible for the lack of teacher provision is the absence of Cornish in the National Curriculum, which limits its widespread adoption and growth (Broadhurst, 2023). As Stanford (forthcoming) argues, teacher professionalisation, including enhancing the language proficiency of teachers of Cornish, is essential for creating a sustainable model of Cornish education that aligns with broader revitalisation goals.

### 5.2 Teacher proficiency

The proficiency levels of Cornish language educators vary widely. Many teachers acquire their skills informally, which might impact the quality and consistency of instruction. Addressing this gap would require structured training and proficiency assessments alongside professional development opportunities. Due to the perennial inadequate provision of trained teachers, Cornish language teaching has tended to rely on untrained teachers, including those who do not speak the language. For instance, recently Golden Tree, with funding from the Cornwall Council, has attempted to address the challenge of teacher provision through its “Go Cornish” programme by providing teachers with ready-to-use teaching materials to enable teachers with no knowledge of Cornish to deliver its lessons. On the programme's website, it is stated that “[t]eachers don't have to speak Cornish to deliver [the lessons],” although they are required to watch a teacher orientation session before starting to deliver the lessons (Go Cornish, 2025, n.p.).

During an interview, a Cornish language teacher shared with the RISE UP team that she does not consider herself proficient in the language because, outside of her classes, she has limited, if any, opportunities to use it in her daily life. This lack of regular language use not only affects her confidence in teaching but also highlights the broader challenge of limited fluency among teachers of endangered languages in contexts where the language is not widely spoken.

### 5.3 Teaching materials

The lack of comprehensive and standardised teaching materials remains a critical issue in Cornish language teaching. Stanford (forthcoming) highlights that inconsistencies between different orthographies, such as the Standard Written Form (SWF) and Kernewek Kemmyn (KK), tend to complicate the provision of materials, as teaching materials are provided in different orthographies. Additionally, there is no centralised repository for Cornish teaching materials, which undermines efforts to create a cohesive curriculum.

Nevertheless, grassroots efforts have produced some notable resources. Schukking et al. (2019) document a variety of educational materials developed by language activists, including interactive CDs, animated videos, and colouring books aimed at early learners. Examples include the “Keur Kernewek” CD of songs for children under five and the animated “Konin ha Pryv,” which features spoken Cornish with English subtitles. In addition, the teaching resources provided by Golden Tree for schools running its Go Cornish programme have also been commended (Broadhurst, 2023). When the RISE UP team visited one of the schools to observe how these lessons are delivered, we noted the accessibility and efficacy of the materials, which enable teachers and teaching assistants to successfully engage young children in learning Cornish, even without prior knowledge of the language.

These initiatives demonstrate the creativity and commitment of the Cornish language community but are insufficient to meet broader educational demands. Nevertheless, “[t]he availability of teachers and quality educational resources remain one of the biggest problems [in Cornish language education]. Remedying this would necessitate the provision of training programmes for teachers and a wide variety of language materials” (Maddern, 2023, n.p.).

### 5.4 Pedagogical training

Formal training for Cornish language teachers is minimal and fragmented. The Association of Cornish Language Teachers (An Ros Dyski) provides support and online resources for aspiring educators, but there are no mandatory or standardised certification programmes. Broadhurst (2020) notes that teacher training is heavily reliant on voluntary initiatives and limited funding, which restricts the professionalisation of Cornish language education (Stanford, forthcoming). Furthermore, Golden Tree has expressed the need for teacher training programmes that include formal qualifications, such as basic exams provided by the Welsh Joint Education Committee (WJEC) (Broadhurst, 2023).

While volunteer efforts have driven much of the progress in Cornish education, reliance on untrained teachers has resulted in missed opportunities to implement more effective teaching practices and materials (Stanford, forthcoming). For example, the lack of centralised oversight has left teachers to adapt materials and methods on their own, often leading to inconsistencies in quality and approach. In light of this, Stanford (forthcoming) advocates for the establishment of a governing body or lead organisation to coordinate teacher training initiatives, which could include mentorship programmes and workshops tailored to the specific needs of Cornish educators.

### 5.5 Conclusion

The teaching and teacher education landscape for Cornish is characterised by significant challenges but also notable achievements driven mostly by grassroots efforts. One of the most pressing issues is the recognition of Cornish as a modern or ancient foreign language under the National Curriculum. It

has been emphasised that this recognition is key to integrating Cornish into mainstream education and expanding its reach. This absence exacerbates marginalisation and limits funding for the teaching of the language, as well as for teacher training and materials development. Without funding and institutional support, progress remains precarious.

Addressing the gaps in teacher provision, standardised materials, and professional training will be critical for the continued revitalisation of the language. Embedding Cornish within school curricula would provide the stability needed for long-term success, while institutional recognition through the National Curriculum could serve as a step towards mainstreaming Cornish language education.

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## 6 Seto

### 6.1 Teaching Seto language in the Estonian state school system and the supplementary sector

This description mainly relies on the Seto language and culture curriculum for basic schools in the Setomaa region from 2014 and a methodical description and syllabus that was created as an extension of the 2014 curriculum in 2020, as well as on one Master's and two Bachelor's theses on teaching Seto language and culture, and the Seto language development plan. The author also spoke to Seto language and culture teacher Jane Vabarna for information about the practical side of teaching Seto in schools.

Seto language and culture is taught as one subject in basic schools in the Setomaa region. In grades 1-7 and in grade 10 (first year of high-school), there is one lesson (45 minutes) per week of Seto language and culture. A curriculum was created for teaching the Seto language and culture subject in the basic schools and it was discussed and approved by the Seto Institute board in 2014. (Ainekava Seto keel ja kultuur Setomaa põhikoolidele. 2014). However, the curriculum is not used in practice, because the students' knowledge of Seto language and culture is not at a level required by the curriculum. Each teacher makes their own decisions about what to teach in class. For example, with children who do not have Seto roots and do not feel a connection with the Seto heritage, the teacher sometimes gives them tasks to look into their heritage culture instead.

The methodological material was created in the framework of the project "Heritage teaching" by a group of experts composed of teachers, who teach heritage subjects in Setomaa schools. The expert group led by Maarja Hörn started work in 2019 with the aim to supplement and renew the existing Seto language and culture curriculum and to create methodological guidelines for using the curriculum (Setomaa pärimusõppe metoodiline kirjeldus ja ainekavad 2020).

In 2021, a Seto language kindergarten group in the Värskä kindergarten was opened, where teachers speak only Seto to children. The initiative to create this group came from local families (Andreller 2022). As a continuation of the kindergarten group, a Seto language community class was opened in Obinitša village centre in 2024. The community class operates under the jurisdiction of the Setomaa school. It aims to provide innovative and flexible education in a multi-age classroom (currently only grades 1.-3.), where Seto language, culture and community are valued. Since 2012, there has been an after-school activity Seto Latsi Kuul (Seto Children's School) in Tallinn, where children can learn Seto language and culture once a week. (Seto instituut 2022)

The Seto Institute has asked for project money to teach Seto language courses for adults in the past, but currently there are no such courses. An introductory Seto language course is taught in the University of Tartu about once every two to three years, but its focus is more on language history and language structure rather than on practical understanding, speaking and writing of the Seto language. There are no higher education programmes or teacher training opportunities in the Seto language.

The Seto traditional polyphonic singing, *leelo*, has been an important factor in the preservation of the Seto language. Although *leelo* singers often use old melodies and old lyrics, improvisation and composition of new verses in the Seto language are an important part of *leelo* singing. Therefore, the *leelo* choirs in the Setomaa region as well as in other regions of Estonia have been important hubs

where some Seto language skills are passed on as well. Workshops on Seto handicraft are sometimes organized in Setomaa museums in Saatse, Obinitsa and Värskas and these likewise provide some opportunities to speak Seto for the participants.

## 6.2 Teaching materials for Seto language

A list of materials for teaching the Seto language provided by the Seto Institute is added to this description.

Agnes Keerpalu's (2023) Bachelor's thesis studied the availability of teaching materials for teaching Seto language and culture in the Värskas kindergarten Seto language group. In interviews with the kindergarten teachers, Keerpalu found that there are few teaching materials and teachers need to compose their own materials or adjust existing ones by gluing text in Seto into books in standard Estonian, or by translating Estonian story books to Seto while reading, for example (Keerpalu 2023:15-16). Interestingly, the teachers noted that children would benefit from materials that they could engage with at home, such as cartoons. The children mostly do not use Seto at home and teachers felt that their language skills would benefit from exposure to the language outside of the kindergarten as well (Keerpalu 2023:16).

There are children's books translated to Seto language as well as written originally in Seto. The Seto alphabet book was published in 2011 and there are complementary workbooks to be used with the alphabet book. Methodological description and syllabus (2020), CD-s and DVD-s with Seto fairy tales are also listed, as well as grammar books and various books about aspects of Seto culture.

The Eldia study report from 2014, however, noted that although there are materials in Seto language, there is a need for more. The RISE UP questionnaire results seem to affirm that this holds true today as well. Ode Oras from the Seto Institute also said that the supply of alphabet books is not sufficient for classroom use and the complementary workbooks are too complicated for today's children because of their scarce previous contact with the Seto language. Teachers need to make their own materials and be creative in class. Seto language and culture teacher Jane Vabarna said that there are materials about the Seto *leelo*-singing for example, but much less about other cultural aspects. Vabarna also notes that as times change quickly, it is understandable that materials age and lose relevance and therefore cease to be used. Teachers compile their own worksheets and read the Setomaa newspaper (published once a month). Once a year, the Estonian children's magazine "Täheke" publishes an issue in Seto language, which the teachers also use in class. The children also work in class to compose contributions for the Seto "Täheke". CD-s with songs and plays are used as well.

## 6.3 Teacher provision and pedagogical training of Seto language teachers

There is a general shortage of teachers in Estonia, especially in the subjects of Science and Mathematics. Jane Vabarna said that at the moment there is no shortage of Seto language and culture teachers in the Setomaa area. She also finds that it is not difficult to find community members to visit classes to talk about their activities in the Seto cultural field, for example. However, while there are people who speak the Seto language well, it has not always been simple to find Seto enthusiasts who are also trained as language teachers. As Andreller (2022) mentions, when the Seto language kindergarten group was created, it was quite difficult to find teachers who have pedagogical training and experience, the ability to speak Seto as well as the willingness to teach in an outdoor kindergarten

group. It is important to note that several teachers of other subjects, such as handicraft, speak Seto language to children in their lessons. Jane Vabarna teaches the Seto language and culture subject in Värskä and Mikitamäe schools and Evi Kambrimäe does so in Obinitsa and Meremäe schools. Helen Külvik and Meel Valk have also taught the Seto language and culture subject in schools for some time. The only Seto language teacher who, in addition to being fluent in the Seto language, is also trained as a language teacher (although not for Seto in particular) is Silvi Palm. There is no teacher training specifically for Seto language teachers.

## 6.4 Language proficiency of Seto language teachers

We are not aware of any studies focusing on the language proficiency of Seto language teachers. Keerpalu's (2023) thesis indicates that some kindergarten teachers feel not very self-confident about writing in Seto. However, more research is needed on this topic. From the author's conversation with the teacher Jane Vabarna, it left the impression that inadequate language proficiency of Seto language and culture teachers is not currently a problem.

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