

LOCAL INITIATIVES OF THE “HOUSE OF THE KARELIAN LANGUAGE” IN THE VEDLOZERO VILLAGE

“A Place where the Meaning of Village Life Becomes Clear”

The Karelian regional public organization “House of the Karelian Language” was registered in 2013 in Vedlozero. It is located in Pryazhinsky district of the Republic of Karelia. Four years later, a language nest was created here. The language nest in Vedlozero uses the technique of total early language immersion. It means that the Karelian language is used in all situations. Children can speak Russian to each other or teachers, but adults answer them in Karelian only. These field notes are based on the results of a trip to the “House of the Karelian Language”. The original task was to get acquainted with the methodology of language immersion. However, my tasks expanded in the process of analysis — observation, informal communication with visitors and leaders, while collecting interviews. Based on the analysis of empirical data collected in Vedlozero I try to answer the following questions: why parents choose a language nest for their children or prefer municipal kindergarten, what links have emerged between the organization, on the one hand, and local and municipal institutions, on the other. The case of Vedlozero shows the Russian experience of civic participation. The author concludes that the possible reasons for the emergence of such a space in Vedlozero are the organization leaders’ proactivity, their cultural ties and involvement in international experience. There is a significant factor of flexibility in the work of the organization and the ability to go beyond the “sectoral thinking”.

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