

We'd like to host a GRUNDTVIG-assistant

Name of the organisation: Valodu Vestnieciba
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non-formal educational organisation

Please specify:

Language school <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Private company <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Main characteristics of the organisation:

Rural

Nr of staff dealing with adult learners : 9
 Nr of adult learners : 80
 Age range of the adult learners: 16-60
 Nr of female learners: 70 % Nr of male learners: 30 %
 Instruction languages: English (mostly), Latvian, Russian
 Languages taught: English, Spanish, Latvian, Russian, Swedish
 Adult learners with special needs: Yes No
 If yes: number of learners with special needs: 10
 Specify the 'special needs' : wheelchair bound, blind

It's our first experience with an assistant from abroad:
 Yes No (tick the right box)

Reasons why we'd like to host the Grundtvig-assistant:
 Our company is in a constant search for potential innovations. One of the ways to promote innovation is to take action – thus our company is working on development of new methods of language acquisition. For the last two years we have worked on adapting a Callan method of English (a direct method) to teaching Latvian and found it very successful. The idea is to do the same to other languages and consequently broaden the scope of services provided by

the company. Hosting a Grundtvig assistant would help us to evaluate the potential of such project to the assistant's native language (or country of origin) and even start some procedures of development process.

Language Embassies is based in Liepaja, Latvia. Since 1995, Language Embassies has grown to become one of the top ten largest language teaching service providers in Latvia, and having a superior lead in the Western part of Latvia known as Kurzeme as well as being about to finish its third year of successful entree in reaching its market potential in Riga. Language Embassies coordinates a group of freelance translators and provides translation services to/from all languages used in the Baltic region. Its freelance network covers all three Baltic states and has enabled it to be a worthy partner of many large translation agencies in Europe, USA and Asia.

Additionally, Language Embassies also offers a new type of service in the Baltics - Guided Services. Being a foreigner in Baltics can often be a challenge both due to the language and the cultural barrier. Language Embassies helps foreign companies and individuals in finding or locating almost all that is needed for a successful business and private life.

Possible tasks for the Grundtvig assistant in our organisation:

Teaching native language to our adult / young learners (either or both options); researching and developing a new method of teaching assistant's native language;

Characteristics of the teachers / adult learners the Grundtvig assistant can be an assistant for:

Love towards teaching, flexibility, desire to work on unusual linguistic projects.

Other comments / remarks:

When recruiting for new teachers in Latvia we always set three standards that the potential candidate has to meet:

- outgoing personality. That means they have to love people. Be friendly and kind. Humbleness doesn't hurt.
- native language skills (or native like). This is very important when coming down to pronunciation.
- flexibility. We're a bunch of young people – average age in the company is 35 (thanks to our English teacher who is 50 + - the rest of us are late twenties/early thirties) – so, as it happens with young crowd – we're often behind schedule and can alter things at a very short notice (or sometimes at no notice at all). AND some things, even though, important can be left out hanging in the air hoping for a better future – like our website for example.

Just to add a few more details – we're still the top 5 language company in Latvia with over 600 students (most of them are young learners). AND we love working together! Really, really.

Just to get an idea what we're like – a few (not so professional videos) :

<http://www.youtube.com/user/ValoduVestnieciba>

If possible – we'd like to organise a skype video call of any people interested.