

Marja-Liisa Olthuis, Suvi Kivelä, and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas: Revitalising Indigenous Languages: How to Recreate a Lost Generation

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Olthuis, Kivelä, and Skutnabb-Kangas' book *Revitalising Indigenous languages: How to create a lost generation* presents a comprehensive account of a one-time, one-year program aimed at revitalizing a single Indigenous language, Aanaar Saami (AS), in what is now Finland. The Complementary Aanaar Saami Language Education (CASLE) program recognized the need for “new language transmitters” to join its community of speakers, thus creating new AS users among adults aged 26–54 years. The alternating voices of authors reveal the struggles and triumphs that shaped the CASLE project locally, while tying it to the larger ideological issues of colonialism and globalization. Though Skutnabb-Kangas' final chapter avoids specific recommendations, the transparency of project decisions and the hopeful tone of much of the prose make this book an asset to language activists in nearly any Indigenous context, particularly those involved with adult learner oriented projects.

The book is organized into seven chapters, each presenting a different perspective of the project, and concludes with a series of eighteen information boxes, written by Skutnabb-Kangas, and intended to scaffold potentially unfamiliar textual references through explanations of the constructs and contexts associated with scholarship addressing language policy, revitalization, and acquisition.

Chapter 1 introduces Aanaar Saami (AS) and the fields of revitalization and language activism. This sets the stage for the one-year run of the CASLE program by characterizing the current state of AS as a language spoken by about 350 people, and underscoring the need for material and psychological resources in revitalization work. This chapter also introduces the three authors, mapping out their specific contributions. Olthuis, the only AS speaker with a PhD, is the driving force behind

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the book and the CASLE project. She writes with clarity and candor about the logistical ins and outs of planning and administering the program. Kivelä, a Finnish journalist and participant in the program, makes first-hand narratives of her CASLE experiences accessible through a conversational style of writing. Skutnabb-Kangas ties the project to the broader revitalization movement and its accompanying discourses.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 detail the planning and implementation of the CASLE year. Growing from a revitalization course taught ‘virtually’ by Olthuis, the project’s creation involved numerous moving parts. In Chapter 2, Olthuis describes these moving parts from an insider’s perspective and shows how the CASLE program fit into the existing AS landscape. Chapter 3 provides a portrait of AS and examines its forced decline in use, demonstrated through discussion of the relationship between language, culture, and identity. This chapter not only situates AS within the historical context of language shift, but also connects to current sociopolitical concerns around who does and does not identify as Saami—concerns that have implications for access to cultural and linguistic resources. Chapter 4 outlines the CASLE method for creating new adult speakers within a one-year timeframe by borrowing from previous revitalization models and university programs. This chapter describes the project’s objectives, methods, and rationale. The intentions behind each of the CASLE components (e.g., L2 teaching and learning, Master–Apprentice [M–A] sessions, partial and bilingual immersion) are well supported by local AS considerations and scholarship in revitalization and second language acquisition.

Chapter 5 describes the organization of the CASLE year from two different perspectives: (1) program manager and developer Olthuis, and (2) non-Saami student Kivelä. Their voices are distinct and focus on different aspects of the same program over the course of 2009–2010. Olthuis provides a rundown of the planner’s view of the program and the ways in which they worked to supplement the foundation of language lessons through university AS classes. She also outlines the time and geographical constraints (intense coursework and lengthy commutes) under which the students were working. Kivelä’s enthusiastic narrative of the year is dotted with stories of learner triumphs and trials. She describes close relationships the learners developed with one another and their Masters through the M–A strand of the program, which was, at least for CASLE, one of the most significant components of the program.

Chapter 6 portrays the project’s management from inception through completion. Olthuis incorporates the framework she used in her planning (Turley’s *PRINCE2 Principle*), including decision-making and contingency provisions. Indeed, it reads as an endorsement of Turley’s *PRINCE2 Principle* without actually providing a context-free overview of it. It would be beneficial to the reader to better understand how the frame was chosen at the outset and how it could perhaps be further modified to better serve revitalization goals. For example, Olthuis’ assertion that “the *PRINCE2 principle* [is] extremely useful for revitalisation projects, because its themes and principles create a strong frame for the whole project,” (p. 136) is an unsatisfactory explanation for why this planning frame was selected in the first place. Furthermore, this framework appears to be very market-oriented, therefore

suggesting an ideological position at odds with most minority language revitalization contexts (a sentiment that Skutnabb-Kangas addresses further in Chapter 7). Nevertheless, the budgetary struggles and financial constraints are also described with clarity and frankness in this section. Olthuis lays bare the enormous pressures she felt throughout the planning processes, and characterizes the team's risk-management strategies in depth, concluding her descriptions of various contingencies with a "learning from experience" reflective component that could be helpful for activists involved in projects like this elsewhere.

Chapter 7 includes reflections from all three authors and generally portrays the CASLE year as a success, while also acknowledging the vulnerability of its progress. The authors' initial assertion that "it is possible to revitalise a seriously endangered language" (p. 1) is revisited at the book's end, as they suggest revising the degree of endangerment ascribed to AS from "severely endangered" to "unsafe". Connecting the AS situation to enduring colonial ideologies and forces of globalization, this chapter shows "Finland's relative supportiveness," despite the struggles outlined by Olthuis earlier in the book, and connects the AS project to the structural obstacles faced by language revitalizers everywhere. Though reluctant to dispense advice, the authors portray one example of how innovation, flexibility, openness, and dogged determination can resist language shift, perhaps even reverse it.

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