Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA), or Sanna to its speakers, is a ‘severely endangered language’ registered in both the UNESCO Red Book and the UNESCO Atlas of Languages in Danger. In 2008, the Republic of Cyprus recognized CMA as a minority language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and established a Committee of Experts to make recommendations for its protection and revival. Efforts have been underway to develop a structural policy for the protection and revival of CMA; however, there remains a lack of communal facilities, relevant experience and coordinated and well-targeted action. In 2009, the Sanna Project was funded jointly by the European Economic Area Grants and the Republic of Cyprus with the aim of supporting CMA revival through activities targeting Cypriot Maronite children and youth. To this end, the Sanna Project has created a novel community centre, the Payt el Sanna – House of Sanna – which functions as a cultural and language centre. This has provided opportunities for recreation that have constructively engaged Maronite children and youth in cultural activities which explicitly or implicitly immerse them in CMA. The Sanna Project has also raised awareness among Maronite youth and children, in particular, and Cypriot stakeholders working with children and youth, in general, as to the benefits of protecting and reviving CMA. Quite importantly for current efforts of revival, it has transferred knowledge and best practice from a Sámi NGO involved with revitalising the Sámi language in Norway to the Cypriot Maronite community.

This Report outlines the current efforts and recommendations for CMA revival in the light of the experiences of the Sanna Project and the Committee of Experts. It suggests ways and means that interested parties can build upon so as to make CMA revival possible and through which the members of this Cypriot minority community can be empowered to make their own distinct contributions to an island that is and should remain culturally rich and diverse.
The Sanna Project

Empowerment through Language Revival: Current Efforts and Recommendations for Cypriot Maronite Arabic

EDITED BY
BRIAN BIELENBERG AND COSTAS M. CONSTANTINOU

PCC Paper 2/2010
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SUMMARY

Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA), or Sanna to its speakers, is a ‘severely endangered language’ registered in both the UNESCO Red Book and the UNESCO Atlas of Languages in Danger. In 2008, the Republic of Cyprus recognized CMA as a minority language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and established a Committee of Experts to make recommendations for its protection and revival. Efforts have been underway to develop a structural policy for the protection and revival of CMA; however, there remains a lack of communal facilities, relevant experience and coordinated and well-targeted action. In 2009, the Sanna Project was funded jointly by the European Economic Area Grants and the Republic of Cyprus with the aim of supporting CMA revival through activities targeting Cypriot Maronite children and youth. To this end, the Sanna Project has created a novel community centre, the Payt el Sanna – House of Sanna – which functions as a cultural and language centre. This has provided opportunities for recreation that have constructively engaged Maronite children and youth in cultural activities which explicitly or implicitly immerse them in CMA. The Sanna Project has also raised awareness among Maronite youth and children, in particular, and Cypriot stakeholders working with children and youth, in general, as to the benefits of protecting and reviving CMA. Quite importantly for current efforts of revival, it has transferred knowledge and best practice from a Sámi NGO involved with revitalising the Sámi language in Norway to the Cypriot Maronite community. This Report outlines the current efforts and recommendations for CMA revival in the light of the experiences of the Sanna Project and the Committee of Experts. It suggests ways and means that interested parties can build upon so as to make CMA revival possible and through which the members of this Cypriot minority community can be empowered to make their own distinct contributions to an island that is and should remain culturally rich and diverse.
INTRODUCTION TO THE SANNA PROJECT
Costas M. Constantinou and Brian Bielenberg

This small booklet is one outcome of the Sanna Project, funded by the European Economic Area Grants and the Republic of Cyprus in September 2009. The dual purpose of the Sanna Project has been to provide childcare and youth empowerment for the Maronite community of Cyprus while simultaneously protecting and reviving its seriously endangered language. This language is known to its speakers as Sanna and officially as Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA); in this report the two terms are used interchangeably. To achieve its stated goals, the Sanna Project (led by Xki Fi Sanna, and supported by Kormakitis Club, Várdobáiki and PRIO Cyprus Centre) established and has run a multipurpose cultural/language centre for Cypriot Maronite children and youth (the Payt el Sanna - House of Sanna). It also organized a practitioners’ workshop for educators, activists and youth leaders concerned with protecting and reviving CMA.

The Sanna Project has four specific objectives: (1) to create a novel community cultural/language centre targeting Maronite (pre-school and school) children and youth; (2) to provide healthy opportunities for recreation that constructively engage Maronite children and youth in cultural activities which explicitly or implicitly immerse them in CMA; (3) to raise awareness among Maronite youth and children, in particular, and Cypriot stakeholders working with children and youth, in general, as to the benefits of protecting and reviving CMA; and (4) to transfer experiences and best practices from Várdobáiki, a Sámi NGO involved with revitalising the Sámi language in Norway, to the Maronite community and beyond.

To these ends, the project has established: (1) a “Language Nest,” that is, a childcare facility that combines play with language learning for preschool age children; (2) a theatre class, which delivers rehearsals and performances of plays in CMA; (3) a music class, which delivers music nights and the production of a CD of songs in CMA, including new compositions; (4) a comprehensive multimedia Greek to CMA dictionary and phrasebook targeting those interested in learning the language; and (5) a workshop on minority language protection and revitalization, drawing on experience with Sámi children and youth.

1 In some academic work the language is also referred to as Cypriot Arabic or Kormakiti (Maronite) Arabic.
Why Was This Action Necessary?

Following the 1974 war in Cyprus, the vast majority of Cypriot Maronites were forced to relocate from their traditional villages in the northern part of Cyprus to the urban areas of the south, primarily Nicosia. This dislocation, coupled with the placement of Maronite children into a variety of Greek-medium schools, has played a major role in the gradual loss of Maronite culture and language, to the point where today there are fewer than 900, mostly elderly, speakers of CMA, with another 600 young Maronite adults retaining good to basic understanding. CMA has been classified as an endangered language by UNESCO and the Council of Europe and was recognized by the Republic of Cyprus as a Minority Language in November 2008. Efforts are currently underway to develop a structural policy for the protection and revival of CMA; however, there remains a lack of communal facilities, relevant experience and coordinated and well-targeted action. Promises from the Cypriot government of funds to construct a Maronite school and cultural centres were slow in coming, with St Maron Primary School opening only in the Fall of 2002. Childcare facilities and youth centres specifically targeting Maronite young people are still essentially non-existent.

These circumstances have resulted in the vast majority of young Maronites speaking only Greek. The loss of their mother tongue has, in turn, meant a reduction in the intergenerational transfer of cultural knowledge, and with this, the disappearance of a wealth of information about Maronite history, culture, stories, songs and traditional practices. For young people, the loss of language also means a loss of a part of their identity, and uncertainty in terms of belongingness. For most young people, language is an integral, positive and vital part of self- and cultural identities. As such, there are a number of socio-cultural as well as personal benefits in fully maintaining and developing minority languages and bilingualism. When circumstances lead a family, group of people, or even a nation to lose a language, the net results often include a breakdown of socialization practices within families and communities. The consequences of such a breakdown affect the local group in different ways, such as the progressive devaluing of its cultural heritage and lower self-esteem, as well as society in general through increases in social problems like social marginalization, maladjustment and structural discrimination. Through improved childcare services and opportunities for young Maronites to participate in cultural life, the Sanna Project has sought to foster a healthier community that is empowered to promote its cultural heritage through active and equal participation in civil society. Moreover, the Sanna Project has contributed towards the emerging but as yet incomplete language revitalization effort by addressing the linguistic and cultural needs of the children and youth of a historical but small minority (approximately 6000 people), who currently face strong pressures of assimilation.

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2 Here we refer to the current and former inhabitants of Kormakitis, the largest Maronite village, as the inhabitants of the three other villages (Asomatos, Ayia Marina and Karpasha) transitioned linguistically to Greek well before 1974.
Sanna Project Activities

More specifically, the House of Sanna was planned as a cost-effective multipurpose centre and is used for various activities and programs (that is, the CMA “language nest” childcare program, CMA theatre and music groups, and a language materials development group). The activities target both preschool age children as well as Maronite youth who attend primary and secondary Greek and English medium schools. Currently there is no other childcare and youth support provision in CMA despite Council of Europe recommendations and the intentions, in principle, of the Cyprus government for one to be established. The creation of the House of Sanna encourages the participation of young Maronites in social and cultural affairs, enabling them to protect and promote their distinctive ethno-cultural identity, itself a sign of Cypriot cultural wealth. It has been a means of supporting meaningful multiculturalism, whereby the minority culture is given equal opportunity to transmit and disseminate its culture.

The Sanna Project has also provided a variety of opportunities for recreation and entertainment that constructively engage Maronite children and youth in cultural activities that explicitly or implicitly immerse them in CMA. These are of particular importance as today’s Maronite children and youth are mostly children of internally displaced Cypriots and have grown away from the cradle of their language (following the 1974 war and division of the island which forced the vast majority of Maronites to relocate to the south and away from their socio-cultural habitat). Implicit in the Sanna Project is the recognition that their special linguistic needs can best be met by creating CMA immersion programs and environments, a practice that has been seen to be effective in a number of communities around the world. This is necessary as the current situation is such that these children are no longer being socialized into the language in their homes and have extremely limited opportunities to hear and practice the language outside of the home. CMA is currently only available as an after-school extracurricular option in the primary school of St Maron in Anthoupoli (the only Maronite school in Cyprus) and is not at all available at the secondary level, a provision that has been rightly described by the Council of Europe as inadequate. The playgroup and cultural activities planned in the Sanna Project were therefore paramount for the protection and revival of CMA and for making it a socially meaningful practice for children and youth. In so doing, the Sanna Project has helped to meet the special linguistic needs of Maronite children and empowered youth to learn about, practise, promote and protect their cultural heritage.

In addition, the Sanna Project has raised cultural awareness among Maronite youth and children, as well as among Cypriot stakeholders more generally, as to the benefits of protecting and reviving CMA. Cultural and artistic activities in the House of Sanna constitute attempts to keep the children and youth culturally engaged and entertained while indirectly immersing them in CMA, often a more effective and sustainable way of protecting and reviving endangered languages. The existence of the House of Sanna and the dissemination of the outcomes of the project have helped Maronites to regain pride in a language that many (especially the younger generation) have often felt embarrassed to use in public. Its activities also have provided a forum for Maronite youth to discuss identity, cultural continuity, peer pressure, and belongingness.
Finally, the Sanna Project has aimed to transfer know-how from groups with experience in language revival, specifically the Sámi community of Norway and its success in revitalising the Sámi language, to the Maronite community, which has just begun to seriously address language renewal. The project organised a workshop in which Sámi experts and activists working on language revival among Sámi children and youth shared their experiences and advised educators and activists currently working with Maronite children and youth. The workshop provided an overview of the Sámi situation with a focus on Várdobáiki (a Sámi multipurpose centre with similar objectives to those of the House of Sanna) and discussed the psychology of language revival, with reference to working with Sámi children and youth. It also examined issues such as campaigns for language consciousness within and across the community and the creation of minority language presence through the use of games, place names and minority cultural dissemination (see chapter 4 in this booklet). The Sanna Project has therefore also developed useful contacts between the Sámi and the Cypriot Maronite communities that should prove useful in future revival efforts.

In sum, we believe that the Sanna Project, in particular, and the protection and revival of CMA, in general, will have an impact on the overall social health and welfare of Maronite children and youth as well as on the broader community, enhancing the cultural richness of Cyprus, not only bicommunally but multicommunally. In what follows, we have included contributions that chart and reflect on: (1) the current linguistic and social status of CMA; (2) the rights, obligations and opportunities that follow the 2008 recognition of CMA as a minority language under the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages; (3) suggested programs and activities for CMA protection and revival; (4) Sámi experiences with cultural and language revival in the context of current Maronite efforts; (5) research on the perceptions and aspirations of Maronite youth concerning Maronite culture and language use; and (6) recommendations for next steps in the process of language and cultural renewal.
Chapter I*

THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE CYPRIOT MARONITE COMMUNITY AND OF CYPRIOT ARABIC SPEAKERS
Marilena Karyolemou

The history of the Cypriot Maronite community dates back to medieval times when fluidity and demographic mutation as a result of economic activity, warfare, poverty, famine or displacement were constant characteristics of the Mediterranean world. Cypriot Maronites are in fact medieval immigrants who came to Cyprus from Syria, Lebanon and the Holy Land in successive migratory movements that started seemingly as early as the 8th and went on until late in the 13th century (Hourani 1998, 2009); they populated several villages scattered around the island, which had become, since the end of the 12th century, a Frankish kingdom.

Cypriot Maronites themselves consider as their imaginative place of origin North Lebanon and, more precisely, the areas of Tripoli, Shamat, Qanoubine and Kour (Tsoutsouki 2009). They substantiate this belief in a popular etymology they assert for Kormakitis village, the only village where Sanna is still spoken today, which they believe to be an abbreviation of the sentence nahni jina, Kur majiti, “we came, Kour didn’t,” a remembrance of the historical episode of separation, Kour being a location on the western side of Mount Lebanon. They also alternatively propose a Phoenician origin in another popular, unconfirmed etymology of Kormakitis, namely Kermia jtte, “the new Kermia,” Kermia being a Phoenician town that allegedly existed near to where Kormakitis was established. These myths of origin seem to be corroborated by the initial evaluation of Fouad Efrem Boustani, the first to have studied the community and its language, that Cypriot Maronites spoke a “Lebanese dialect.” However, according to Alexander Borg (1985, 2004) their language also shows affinities with some Mesopotamian Arabic varieties, especially those spoken in Baghdad, a fact that probably indicates some kind of affiliation between what has come to be considered as two different groups of Arabic varieties, the Middle Eastern varieties, on the one hand, the Mesopotamian Arabic varieties, on the other hand. Although the presence of the community

* The following chapter is a slightly modified extract of a longer contribution by M. Karyolemou on “Aspects of identity in the Arab community of Cyprus” to be published in Joan Argenter (ed.) 2010. Identity, Europe, Mediterranean: Dynamics of identity in Mediterranean countries, Barcelona: Catedra UNESCO de Llengües i Educació & Institut d’Estudis Catalans.

1 I would like to thank Giorgos Skordis for providing me the information for these two popular etymologies.
The Sanna Project was unveiled relatively recently – in the middle of the 20th century by the orientalist Fouad Efrem Boustaní – the Cypriot Medieval Chronicles of Leontios Machairas (~1360–1450) and George Voustronios (1430–1501) bear witness to the presence and to the importance and prosperity of the Cypriot Maronite community by reporting that during the late 12th and early 13th centuries, the Cypriot Maronites constituted the third largest community after the Greeks and the Franks in the multicultural Frankish kingdom of Cyprus (Hourani 1998). Many among the most educated Maronites were acquainted with the Lusignan Royal House (1192–1489) and later with the Venetian nobility, who granted them important privileges. Some of them served as scribes and interpreters, and later under the Ottomans as dragomans, while during the 16th and 17th centuries several successful Maronite merchants were residing in the capital Nicosia (Grivaud 2000: 56-57; Hourani 2009: 134). However, the great majority of the Maronite population remained, throughout the years, a basically rural population.

The gradual reduction of the size of the community can be traced from the 14th to the 20th century. Historical sources (mid-14th century) report a total of 60 Maronite villages in 1224 and during the reign of Henri I de Lusignan (1218–1253), rapidly decreasing to 33 at the beginning of the Ottoman conquest (1571/2), then further down to 19 at the end of the 16th century and to ten in 1661. The reduction of Maronite villages went, of course, together with a decline in prosperity and influence so that, by 1596, the Reverend Jérôme Dandini, an envoy of Pope Clement VII who visited the island and reported on the situation of the 19 remaining Maronite villages, found the community in a piteous situation (Dandini 1656: 23 cited in Hourani 1998): persecution, exile and conversion to Islam as well as hellenization were the main causes of community decline and cultural attrition. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the parishioners were abandoned by the Maronite clergy—who flew away for long periods of time. They were likely discouraged by the conditions on the island and the submission to the Orthodox clergy and hierarchy, who was constantly seeking and often succeeded to put all Christians under its control. The lack of Maronite clergy did not help the community prosper and expand. In a letter sent to the bishop of Cyprus in 1776, Bartelmaous Iskandar al Ahabri estimated the number of Maronites living in 11 villages, mostly situated on the northern coasts of the island, at 550 (cited in Hourani 2009: 127). Despite harsh living conditions, conversion and persecution, the Maronite community grew: the 1841 Census of Population reported that there were 1200–1300 Maronites living on the island.

Regarding the language spoken by the community, we lack basic information, both synchronically and diachronically, about the kind of Arabic spoken by the Maronites of Cyprus. Nonetheless, Etienne de Lusignan (1537–1590), in a famous passage from his Description de toute l’île de Chypre where he comments on the plurality of languages spoken on the island, quotes Maronite separately from other varieties of either Aramaic or Arabic, such as Syrian or

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2 The historical sources for the number of villages given can be found in Grivaud, 2000: 57.

3 Most of the 19 Maronite villages reported by Dandini have been identified by Varnava 2000.
Egyptiac (probably the Arabic variety of Egypt). It is therefore reasonable to assume that by the mid-15th century the prolonged contact with Greek Cypriot had already impacted on the Arabic variety spoken by the Maronites, conferring on it some of its distinctive characteristics.

When the British arrived on the island in 1878, there remained only five Maronite villages, namely Agia Marina, Kambili, Asomatos, Karpasha and Kormakitis. Demographic decline went in pair with geographic concentration, since the remaining settlements are now situated in a contiguous area in the Northwestern coast of the island, in the Kerynia region, thus forming a linguistic enclave within a surrounding former Greek-speaking and now Turkish-speaking area. Ever since the war in 1974, the great majority of Maronites have been refugees, their villages being occupied by the Turkish army. All the inhabitants of Agia Marina, almost all of the inhabitants of Asomatos and Karpasha and most of the inhabitants of Kormakitis—with the exception of 130 persons who have chosen to remain under Turkish administration—have moved to urban settings in the south of the island. Of those, approximately 3530 persons are now living in the capital Lefkosia, 600 in Lemesos and small numbers of 100, 50 and 20 in Larnaca, Paphos and Ammohostos, respectively; another approximately 600 have emigrated abroad. To these we have to add another 200 Lebanese Maronites permanently living in Cyprus. In summary, the history of demography shows that the community has suffered shrinkage and reduction during medieval times, geographic concentration, dispersion and reduction during modern times. As a rule, demographic reduction and geographic dispersion work against language stability and can bring about or intensify language change and shift. This is exactly what happened to Cypriot Arabic, whose already precarious situation was aggravated by the dispersion of the community after 1974.

In the 2001 Census of Population conducted by the Cyprus government, a low 0.6% of the total population, i.e., approximately 3,658 persons, were reported to be Maronite Arabs, a number that, according to the editors, might not be representative of the actual size of the community, as minority status is often concealed and as result figures do not accurately reflect minority group membership (Census 2001: 33). The 2007 Demographic Report, on the other hand, counts 4,800 Cypriot Maronites, a number that represents 0.5% of the total population. This is also the number given by the representatives of the Maronite community. Hence, both in absolute numbers and in percentage, the Maronites represent an exceptionally small minority community.

The size of the community does not, however, tell us anything about the number of speakers actively using the language. Not only are there fewer occasions for using the
language as the community drifts apart, but in addition, the younger generations of Maronites do not learn the language through the natural path of a frequent, *in vivo*, intra-family intercourse. A high rate of language loss is, therefore, to be expected. As early as 1975, Arlette Roth, the first researcher after Boustani to have conducted linguistic and ethnographic work on the Cypriot Arab community, reported that one of the main problems in describing the language at the time of her fieldwork related to the reduction of the community and the decrease in number of native speakers. She also noted that semi-fluent speakers avoid using the language out of fear of mockery, thus further contributing to destabilization of Sanna. Some ten years later, in his 1985 account of Cypriot Arabic, Borg underlined, in his turn, that with the exception of children of preschool age, all other speakers are natively fluent in Cypriot Greek, whatever their level of instruction may be: the trend towards linguistic assimilation is thus confirmed. His observations confirm the rise in the degree of bilingualism and the subsequent reversal of bilingual competence from an initial Cypriot Arabic L1-Standard Greek/Greek Cypriot L2 to Standard Greek-Greek Cypriot L1/Cypriot Arabic L2, both in endogamic and in mixed couples.

Despite the fact that we have a highly accurate account of the number of members of the community, we do not yet have any comprehensive sociolinguistic survey that could inform us about the degree of language competence and about *when, why and with whom* the language is used. The 15th edition of the *Ethnologue* estimates that Sanna is spoken by approximately 1300 speakers, whereas the *Euromosaic* III study reporting on the regional and minority languages of the ten states that joined the European Union in 2004 reports that there are 1000 speakers actively using the language.

### Table 1. Age Analysis of CMA speakers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Total number of persons originating from Kormakitis by age group</th>
<th>Number of very good or excellent speakers</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-25</td>
<td>542</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-35</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>228</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>271</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56-65</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66-75</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1808</td>
<td>902</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

The trend towards language loss has been dramatically confirmed by data provided by George Skordis of the Maronite Cultural Association Xki Fi Sanna in 2007 (Table 1). First and foremost, this data confirms that language loss is indeed complete for all Cypriot Maronites other than those originating from the village of Kormakitis. When and how this loss has occurred, and why the Maronites of Kormakitis continued to resist linguistic assimilation is not yet clear to us. In fact, according to reports, the loss of the language in Agia Marina, Asomatos and Karpasia villages preceded the displacement of the population that followed the Turkish invasion in 1974 and probably even predates the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus in 1960. This trend also confirms the position of Kormakitis as the berceau of Cypriot Arabic, a fact which should be kept in mind if a revitalisation were to be undertaken, both for the advantages and for the disadvantages it represents. Second, the data sets the number of “good” or “excellent speakers” of the language at a low 900, all of them born in Kormakitis or with parents born in Kormakitis, which is nearly half of Kormakitis’ population (see Table 1). However, as there have been no clear language criteria used to measure competence, it is likely that many among these speakers are actually semi-fluent speakers, or persons with only passive knowledge of the language. The number of those who still speak the language fluently should, therefore, be revised downwards. In addition, these figures do not say anything about actual language use, i.e., how often Sanna is being used. Given that the Kormakitis population is no longer demographically compact, there are likely few occasions to use the language unless there are strong family networks that would encourage daily and regular usage.

Population projection -
Speakers with very good or excellent knowledge of Cypriot Arabic

Figure 1. Predicted number of CMA speakers based on population mortality rates.

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9 The data were presented by George Skordis at the Conference Cypriot Maronite Arabic in a New Era organised by the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of the Interior, and the University of Cyprus in November 2007. They were kindly made available to me for the purposes of my participation in the Round Table Identity, Europe, Mediterranean: Dynamics of Identity.
This does not seem to be the case, however, as the same data show, thirdly, that there are almost no speakers of the language below the age of 25. Sanna speakers’ range of age confirms that natural intergenerational intra-family language transmission no longer occurs. Even in families where both parents are from Kormakitis and even when Sanna is used as their common language in everyday interaction, this is not usually the family language. Moreover, it is estimated that the next generation of speakers will have no relation to Sanna whatsoever, since their parents (people aged 25 or younger today) will no longer be able to speak the language. Intra-family transmission is the most important factor in determining language vitality according to the UNESCO 2003 “Language vitality and endangerment scale” (2003).\textsuperscript{10} It is also the third most important factor that needs to be restored in cases of language revitalisation according to Joshua Fishman (1991). A projection of estimated speakers (illustrated in Figure 1) confirms that they will be constantly declining in the next 50 years. Clearly, by the year 2074 the language will be obsolete, having only a terminal speaker left.

References


\textsuperscript{10} Details about the Language vitality and endangerment scale can be found at http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/doc/src/00120-EN.pdf.

Chapter 2

THE PROTECTION AND REVIVAL
OF CYPRIOIT MARONITE ARABIC
Costas M. Constantinou

Introduction
In November 2008, the Republic of Cyprus formally declared to the Council of Europe that it recognizes Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA), known as Sanna by its speakers, as a Minority Language within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (see http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/education/minlang for the text of the Charter, State Declarations, State Reports and Council of Europe Evaluation Reports and Recommendations in relation to Cyprus). Though belated, this recognition is very welcome. It signifies, on the part of the government, a reversal of the discriminatory policy exercised thus far and the fulfillment of a pre-election promise to the Maronite community by President Christofias. Suffice to recall that the preceding government first denied the existence of a separate language and then—after the Council of Europe Committee of Experts strongly and urgently recommended recognition—rather than recognize the language, suggested incorrectly in its 2nd Periodic Report (17 January 2008) that CMA 'is only spoken by elderly Maronites, who live in the village of Kormakitis,' a village in the north of the island and beyond government control, seeking thus to limit the number of speakers and governmental responsibility as to its protection.

The current declaration has lifted a flagrant injustice against the Cypriot Maronite community. Yet the recognition of CMA does not equal protection nor does it justify complacency. Recognition is only the beginning of a long and arduous process for the revival of this historic and seriously endangered Cypriot language (a rare mixture of Arabic and Aramaic). For such an effort to be successful it is important that the Declaration is combined with practical and effective measures targeting speakers and their descendants.

The government has announced its intention to do so. Its efforts should enjoy the assistance of all stakeholders, including community representatives and relevant NGOs as well as independent bodies with interest in cultural heritage protection, diversity promotion and human rights. Such assistance should be combined with ongoing monitoring by local and international bodies and organizations of the process of the implementation of policies aiming to protect and revive CMA. It is therefore imperative that a public debate now start about the way forward and the responsibilities of the different stakeholders.
Government Policy
In fulfilling its obligations and applying Part II of the Charter as it has declared, the government of the Republic of Cyprus must follow the principles and objectives stated in Article 7 of the Charter. Specifically, it should
(1) recognise the language as an expression of cultural wealth;
(2) respect the geographical area of the language;
(3) take resolute action to promote the language in order to safeguard it;
(4) facilitate and/or encourage the use of the language in speech and writing, in public and private life;
(5) maintain and develop links and cultural relations with different language groups in the State;
(6) provide for appropriate forms and means for the teaching and study of the language at all appropriate stages;
(7) provide for facilities enabling non-speakers of the language living in the area where it is used to learn it if they so desire;
(8) promote the study and research of the language at universities or equivalent institutions;
(9) promote appropriate types of transnational exchanges where the language is used in identical or similar form in two or more States.

To that extent, the government and particularly the Ministry of Education and Culture, must seek to develop in collaboration with the Maronite community a structural policy to protect and promote CMA. This should include, though not be limited to:

- The strengthening of CMA teaching at the primary school of St Maron (the only Maronite school on the island) by making the language available during the morning sessions and not just as an extra-curricular option in the afternoon as is currently the case.
- The launching of a feasibility study to ascertain if there is a need for more Maronite schools. In any case, however, the government must ensure the provision of language support for primary-level students who cannot attend St Maron school yet wish to learn CMA, as well as for students at secondary level.
- The development of teaching manuals and general readings and literature in CMA and the provision of the required special training of teachers on language revival techniques.
- The promotion of language immersion camps for the intensive learning of CMA, and the establishment of Maronite cultural centres where CMA can be spoken, studied, and put to literary and artistic use.

The government must also launch a vigorous CMA awareness campaign. Most Cypriots do not know that such a language exists and feel strange or even shocked when they hear CMA put to use by their colleagues or neighbours. To that end, the campaign should not simply frame CMA as a cultural curiosity in Cyprus, but instead highlight the linguistic polymorphy of Cypriotness, which has never been simply Greek or Turkish. The campaign must also target Maronites, so that they can regain pride in a language that many (especially the
younger generation) have felt embarrassed to use in public, given that it singles them out as ‘Arabs,’ ‘non-Europeans,’ ‘peasants’ or halahoulides (barbaric or incomprehensible speakers).

The government should work closely with community representatives and NGOs to make the option of learning and using the language meaningful. This can include making CMA an advantage for public employment in specific posts, funding CMA-teaching institutions (including nurseries); funding CMA-promoting activities (publications, films, documentaries, etc); facilitating educational links and cultural exchanges with Lebanon; undertaking research on CMA and its status; facilitating links with similar minority groups elsewhere, such as the Sámi and Hawaiian communities, where language revival projects have been successful.

Actions across the Divide
Cooperation for the protection and revival of CMA must take place across the Cyprus divide. The Cyprus problem should not be allowed to become, yet again, an alibi for postponement or inaction— that is, adhering to the dominant rationale that there are greater or more urgent violations of human rights that need to be redressed first. The critical stage the language is in does not afford one the comfort of waiting for the settlement of the Cyprus problem. CMA is not—and should not become—a contentious issue between the Greek- and Turkish-Cypriot communities. The Turkish-Cypriot authorities and the Republic of Turkey currently have de facto control over the four Maronite villages in the northern part of the island (two of the villages, Asomatos and Ayia Marina, have been turned into military camps; in the other two, Kormakitis and Karpasha, a limited number of Maronites remained or recently returned). Turkey and the Turkish-Cypriot authorities bear responsibility for, at least, not impeding language revival efforts with respect to Maronites living in or visiting the north.

The village of Kormakitis is unique in that CMA has been spoken for centuries and is currently being used by the locals on a frequent daily basis. This village is an important natural site for the revival of the language and all Cypriot political sides and stakeholders must fully and unreservedly acknowledge the uniqueness of the place. To that end,

■ Kormakitis must be designated a protected Cultural Heritage Area. This is a crucial step to safeguard endangered cultural sites, as well as to prioritize initiatives of revival. Cultural Heritage Zones, such as those associated with the revival of Mayan languages in Mexico and Guatemala within native habitats, can provide useful precedents and examples of how to restore dignity and do justice to historical communities. There are already discussions under way for Kormakitis to become an EU NATURA 2000 site, and the two efforts can be combined. Specifically, care must be taken so that Kormakitis is also transformed into a sustainable cultural area and not just a sustainable ecological park that may potentially—i.e., if done in isolation to cultural protection—undermine efforts that support communal return, revival and development.

■ The village should be twinned to Kour in Lebanon (viewed by many Maronites in Lebanon and Cyprus to be the ancestral village of Kormakitians) as well as with Aramaic-speaking
villages, like Maalula in Syria, where efforts for language revival are currently in place, such as the creation of a Language Institute, and with which exchanges can be established.

- Displaying CMA on street signs and in shops in the village should be allowed and encouraged. Restoring the original toponyms in the wider Kormakitis area, and doing so in CMA, will show a mark of respect for the endangered local culture.

Generally there should be no restrictions to any kind of innovative uses of the language, which might include restaurant menus, performances, summer school curricula or in establishing CMA-exclusive zones.

CMA visibility will not only endow the locals with a sense of pride, but it will also pique the interest of the visitor, regarding the linguistic and cultural uniqueness of Kormakitis. More importantly, it will revive an interest in their ancestral language among the Maronite children and youth when they visit their village for holidays or immersion camps. The village can thus become a CMA ‘nest,’ or virtual classroom, where Maronite children and youth coming to the village not only hear but are actually encouraged to read and use CMA.

A Technical Committee under the auspices of the United Nations should be established to undertake and supervise such a project in cooperation with the Maronite community. This should alleviate any fears of the Republic of Cyprus in terms of violation of article 5 of the European Charter as stated in the recent Declaration of CMA recognition, which was combined with a statement that language revival efforts cannot negate “obligations under international law, including the principle of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States.” There have been a number of examples of successful collaboration to protect or restore cultural heritage sites across the Buffer Zone (the most notable of which is the Nicosia Master Plan) and it is now important to move to protect not just tangible but also intangible Cypriot heritage as well as extend protection beyond ‘Greek’ and ‘Turkish’ sites and interests.

**Cypriot Maronite Community**

The Cypriot Maronite community itself bears a heavy responsibility. The non-governmental organizations Xki Fi Sanna (Speak our Language) and Kermia Jtite, the Maronite Parliamentary Representative and a number of individuals within the Maronite community have already displayed extraordinary zeal and energy, by campaigning, lobbying and organizing immersion camps. But their efforts will have limited or no impact, unless existing speakers get organized and work actively to revive the language. Of course, it is important that individual Maronites should not be morally ‘coerced’ into language revival. But for those convinced of the significance of CMA protection and revival, the realization that active community involvement at all levels is necessary is paramount. To that end,

- Maronite speakers should systematically work within their family space to pass the language to their children. Experts point out that even limited exposure at an early age—when full exposure is not feasible—can considerably assist the learning of the language at primary or high school level.
Revival efforts will be much enhanced if parents offer support for communal nurseries and playgrounds where children can be immersed in CMA early on. These nurseries and playgrounds could be run with the help of elders, who can use CMA in collaboration with professional nursery and support staff.

Many Maronites increasingly realize that the demise of CMA will progressively bring about the demise of their community as an ethno-cultural group, and avoiding this can be an added incentive. Indeed, the existence of CMA provides the ‘hard fact’ that Cypriot Maronites are a national minority with a distinct ethnic identity, not merely a ‘religious group’ that is compelled to affiliate with either the Greek- or Turkish-Cypriot community as provided by Article 2 of the 1960 Cypriot Constitution. Note that this compulsory regulation for the Cypriot minorities to ethnically affiliate violates the provisions of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and as recently pointed out in the Resolution on Cyprus of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, this “remain[s] problematic” and an “issue of concern… notwithstanding the complex constitutional situation and current political context in Cyprus” (Resolution CM/ResCMN(2008)5, adopted 9 July 2008).

**Conclusion**

The recognition of CMA by the Republic of Cyprus has brought about renewed interest and hope for protecting this unique Cypriot and European language. The efforts of the community and committed officials in Cyprus and abroad should not be underestimated. But much remains to be done for these efforts to bear fruit. Time is certainly not on the side of the Cypriot Maronite community and its endangered language, and that is why measures need to be appropriate, precise and effectively implemented. Above all, the CMA question should not become a party political issue nor a bone of contention, including quarrels that those who promote its public use are displaying a lesser degree of national allegiance than those who do not. In short, all interested parties must build on this renewed interest and hope so as to make CMA revival possible, the Cypriot Maronite community viable, and the island of Cyprus culturally richer.
While language renewal is indeed most successful when it is a community-wide activity, the process itself also requires the focused efforts and leadership of key people affiliated with a dedicated CMA Language Centre. The main personnel proposed to facilitate the process of CMA renewal are 1) a Language Programs Coordinator, 2) a Recreational Programs Coordinator, and 3) a Consultant(s). In general, these people facilitate the process by organizing courses, programs and events, training participants, and generally promoting language renewal. Some of the specific duties suggested for each of these proposed personnel are described below.

(1) **Language Programs Coordinator** Oversee all aspects of language program organization including the summer immersion camp, year-long language activities, school programs, youth and adult language classes, etc. This person will be responsible for coordinating all aspects of language programs including teacher recruitment, language curricula and materials development, scheduling, organizing seminars, and promoting language renewal throughout the community and beyond.

(2) **Recreational Programs Coordinator** Oversee organization of afternoon recreational activities for summer immersion camp. In addition promotes the establishment of community centres and year-round activities for youth and adults. Will lead the efforts to establish youth centres designed to serve the Maronite community.

(3) **Consultant(s)** Responsible for conducting teacher training; providing guidance for program and curriculum development; facilitating and providing support for summer immersion camps; conducting community seminars/trainings.

**CMA Language Survey**

It is also recommended that a thorough language status survey be conducted in order to establish baseline data for the CMA language community. This survey would consist of two components: 1) a general questionnaire to be distributed to all Maronite households; and 2)
language interviews among a random sample of the Kormakitis-originated population to
gather more specific information with regards to language proficiency levels and attitudes
toward CMA and its revitalization. The general survey would gather demographic data,
assess language attitudes and attitudes toward language revitalization, identify potential
contributors to language renewal efforts, identify currently occurring efforts, and determine
language knowledge and use through self-reporting. Focused interviews should be
conducted among the population that reports knowledge of CMA and interest in promoting
the revitalization of the language, with a recommendation that between 300 and 500
interviews be conducted. Interviews, conducted in CMA, would be used to assess fluency
more directly.

CMA Language Renewal Programs
Language renewal can occur in a number of different settings, and should occur in as many
settings as possible. An interconnected set of programs aimed at promoting renewal of the
use of CMA in public and private life has been identified. These programs can be separated
into three main components: 1) community based programs, 2) home based programs, and
3) school based programs. Funding should be sought for connected efforts across each of
these areas. Brief descriptions of the above programs are provided below.

Community based programs
Summer immersion camp Summer immersion camps are designed to promote the acquisition
of language that can be used in everyday life. In such camps language teaching is conducted

Figure 1. Kormakitis youth using CMA to invite elders to attend the culminating performance of the 2009 Summer Immersion camp. PHOTO B. BIELENBERG
Teaching and learning CMA: Potential Programs and Activities

by adult speakers, many of whom are also learners of the language. There are pre-planned, language-teaching activities, traditional crafts, and cultural and recreational activities. The methods used include interactive instructional strategies to introduce vocabulary and basic phrases. The instructors use questions and commands to encourage listening, observing, and acting, all within the context of everyday tasks and routines. Sims (1998) reports that such camps enable children to learn the community language quickly and to continue using it outside of the camps. The main costs include teacher training, materials development and meals.

The preparation/training of speakers and the planning of activities to be implemented during each day of the program are of utmost importance, and ample time to prepare must be allotted. Gathering resource materials from the community or having families engage in creating these for use during the summer program is a good way to get other speakers involved prior to the program; even if they are not the people who will be teaching or working with the youth directly it’s good to spread the work (and hopefully the interest in helping). Activities that can be hands-on, fun, engaging and motivational for the learners are best. The description of the Sámi language revitalization in Chapter 4 of this report highlights additional activities that can meet the needs of youth, including the establishment of a youth club and summer festival.

Adult language classes/community centre development In addition to providing CMA learning activities for young people, the Maronite community should also seek to promote adult CMA acquisition. To accomplish this weekly classes are suggested. The main expense will be for materials development and a teacher stipend. Eventually, this may grow into a more formal program, including the establishment of CMA-medium community centres and adult immersion camps. Valuable knowledge of such programs can be gained by looking at the experiences of the Sámi (see Chapter 4) and the work of the Maori people in New Zealand, which is discussed below.

The Maori language project is an example of a language renewal program that has been successful in reviving the language among adults. One method, called the aatarangi, teaches those who are already Maori speakers (mostly grandparents) to become language teachers (Fishman 1991). Interacting with the aatarangi movement is the Family Development Program (Tu Tangata Whanau). This program establishes urban neighbourhood centres where Maori is spoken. Their goal is to re-establish Maori cultural norms of hospitality, caring, spirituality and sharing, behavioural norms for which the spoken Maori language is considered essential (Fishman 1991).

Adult immersion programs take place on marae, which are like recreational and cultural centres in Maori communities, and usually last approximately one week. Before entering the course, the adults are asked to prepare some survival phrases in Maori because, during the course, the use of English is completely banned. The students survive with the help of their dictionaries and with pantomime. There are usually 30-35 students in each course, which is divided into three groups at three different levels. The groups join for some activities and
separate for others. Activities include everything from lectures, to sweeping the floor, to giving a speech (Nicholson 1989). The immersion courses also emphasize physical activities in Maori. Students begin the day with exercises, move from class to class, wait on tables, clean the marae, sing vigorous waiata-a-ringa ‘modern action’ songs, and play sports (Nicholson 1989). Music features prominently in the adult immersion program with a celebratory concert serving as a grand finale for the week. Nicholson writes, “Music and songs are a great way to promote Maori among the young. The concerts have proven to be a good training ground for composers and musicians” (1989: 116). The success of the adult immersion programs has spilled over into the children’s immersion experience as well by providing opportunities for inter-generational communication in Maori. A similar set of adult courses and activities is described in the Sámi chapter of this report. The ‘language baths’ of the Sámi are quite similar to the Maori programs described above. The village of Kormakitis provides an ideal setting for similar activities among Maronite adults.

Master/apprentice programs One of the most ambitious programs aimed at language renewal among young adults is the Master-Apprentice Program (Hinton 1998). This is a program in which older, fluent speakers of CMA would be matched with younger members of the community who desire to learn the language. It entails a great deal of time commitment on the part of both the learner and the target language speaker (Sims [1998] reports that approximately 20 hours per week are dedicated to language learning for Karuk pairs, an endangered language spoken in Northern California, in the USA). Master/Apprentice pairs are often supported with stipends given to masters and apprentices who demonstrate commitment to the program and adequate language progress. The pairs receive further support through two weekend workshops per year. These workshops focus on language teaching/learning strategies and techniques, discussion of challenges faced and successes, and idea sharing.

In this program both the speaker and learner are taught a unique system of common-sense, immersion style language teaching and learning strategies. Both the learner and speaker are taught to be active in their role, not to use Greek/English, and to use gestures, context and objects to aid understanding. The speakers are also taught to rephrase utterances the learner doesn’t understand and to recast what the learner says. Recasts are defined as “utterances that rephrase a[n] ... utterance by changing one or more sentence components... while still referring to its central meaning” (Long 1996: 434). The learners are encouraged to not be afraid of making mistakes, to be willing to play with language and to understand that “understanding precedes speaking.” Both the learner and the speaker are encouraged to be patient. The major focus of this program is to develop communicative competency; thus, learning is embedded in real-life contexts. Another important component is that learners and speakers are both encouraged to create new contexts for the use of the language. The Language Coach system used by the Sámi and described in Chapter 4 is a less intense version of the Master/Apprentice program.

After-school language classes for young people Approximately 15-20 students attend
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regular after school language classes at St Maron School. These courses provide an informal setting for language learning through the use of CMA in drama and other activities. As other components of language renewal progress, connections should be strengthened between the content of these classes and the summer immersion camps.

Home based programs – Family based language efforts
A core group of families interested in raising their children bilingually from birth with Greek/Cypriot and CMA should be identified. It is proposed that bi-monthly meetings be held with participating families to discuss successes, challenges and solutions of raising children with CMA in the home. Monthly observations of language interactions should also take place to help document the process. In addition, each participating family would be asked to maintain a language input journal. The findings of the process would be shared through community gatherings, journal publications and conference presentations.

Efforts should also be made to connect up with similar programs in other parts of the world, such as the work of Finlay McCloud, who has been developing Family Language programs for Gaelic, and Daryl Baldwin, who has made Miami (a language whose last native speaker died in 1962) the language of his home. The efforts of these and others are described in Leanne Hinton’s forthcoming edited volume Language Revitalization in the Home.

School based programs
Greek-medium schooling and the lack of a Maronite school prior to 2002 are probably two of the strongest reasons for the language shift among young Maronites. However, school is also a centralized place where young people spend a substantial portion of the day, five days a week. As such, the school can be one locus for language renewal. School based programs often increase the prestige of the language and give children a more positive view of the language and culture. There are a number of different types of programs available.

Language nests/preschool For the Maori in New Zealand, the key to reviving their language was to use elders to teach the young children Maori before they began attending English-medium schools. A meeting of Maori leaders in 1981, sponsored by the Department of Maori Affairs, formalized the establishment of all-Maori-language preschool groups in which fluent Maoris, mostly volunteers, would conduct the programs, transmitting the language to the children and grandchildren. This was deemed necessary as the majority of Maori parents could no longer socialize their children to the language, a situation similar to today’s Maronite community in Cyprus. These preschools were called Kōhanga Reos or ‘language nests.’ The local Maori communities were in charge of organizing and implementing the language nests, and the Department of Maori Affairs provided some encouragement and financial support. The first Kōhanga Reo was officially opened in the Wellington district in March 1982. The number of centres grew to over 500 within the first five years, and by 1994 nearly 13,000 Maori children were enrolled in 819 locally controlled and run Kōhanga Reo programs (Harrison 1998). By 1998 this number had dropped to 646 centres serving
approximately 12,000 children (King 2001). The effect of the Kōhanga Reos cannot be exaggerated. Where two decades earlier a bare handful of children arrived at primary school with any knowledge of the Maori language, now each year between 4000 and 5000 children, many of them fluent bilinguals, start school after having been exposed to daily use of the Maori language for three or more years.

Of importance is not only the length, but also the age, of their exposure to Maori. It is proposed that the current pre-school at St Maron Primary School be converted into a CMA immersion pre-school. This would expand on the CMA Language Nest that has begun at the Payt el Sanna as part of the Sanna Project. The description of the Sámi kindergarten program in the next chapter provides another look at how young children can become speakers of the language, including discussion of a number of practical ideas for working with young children in the context of language revival.

**In-school language lesson periods** As an initial effort to move the CMA language into the regular primary school day, it is proposed that CMA language classes be taught in the school. At least one hour a day, five days a week would be ideal. Three hours a week would be acceptable, but anything less that that would result in very little progress. The most effective teaching approach for these classes is an oral, conversational approach. Classes should focus on oral skills such as greetings, politeness, conversation about daily activities, and drama and storytelling. Given that writing is not part of CMA tradition, it makes sense that writing not be a major part of learning to speak the language, at least initially. A key aspect of the oral approach is that little or no Greek be used in the language classroom. Rather, the teacher makes himself or herself understood through gestures and context. It is suggested that release time be given to one staff member at St Maron school to develop and teach these lessons at each grade level. This staff member would also be expected to do some reading on language teaching theory and methodology and attend trainings.

An alternative option would be to begin to incorporate CMA into the regular school day through a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach. The ideal subjects for beginning this infusion into regular classes are Physical Education and Art. The Sámi report in the next section describes some of their efforts and activities with regard to teaching through the endangered language.

**Bilingual/Immersion schools** At present there is no consensus as to whether or not the Maronite community would like to establish more formal schooling in the CMA language. It is therefore suggested that it would be best to first carefully research various program models, both through literature review and through model school visitations. Funding should be sought to facilitate this planning and research period, the result of which will be a review document and formal presentation of potential models to school and community members. It is believed that this process would best enable the community to choose the program that would help the community to meet its language goals. In summary, this component would enable the community to identify various program types, prepare a report with pros and cons of each, and present a series of recommendations to the school, community, and government.
The aim would be to obtain community consensus on the type of school based program to be promoted and worked toward. Concurrent with these efforts should be efforts to obtain the right to teach CMA within the regular school day at St Maron School.

**Program Evaluation**

In order to identify the aspects of language renewal that should be continued and those that require refinement, it is necessary to conduct both formative and summative assessment of all components of the language renewal program. To do this it is proposed that a combination of qualitative and quantitative data be utilized. The data should be gathered through a combination of program observations, interviews, questionnaires and surveys administered periodically. Evaluation should be linked to both the overall long-term goals and the more specific short -term goals and expected outcomes outlined in a Language Renewal Action Plan. A majority of these goals and outcomes have been set with reference to successful language revitalization programs around the world. In the next chapter, the experiences of one such program, Sámi language revitalization, are shared in detail.

**References**


Chapter 4

RENEWING LANGUAGE AND CULTURE: THE SÁMI EXPERIENCE
Tone Elvebakk, Beatrice Fløystad, Magne Huva and Marit Myrvoll

Background: A Short Journey through Sámi History and Society
The Sámi are one of many indigenous peoples of Europe, constituting an ethnic minority in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia. The exact number of Sámi is not known, but there are estimated to be approximately 75,000 Sámi spread across the four countries, with the majority living in Norway. In the Sámi origin myths there is no story that says that the Sámi have come from somewhere else on the globe. People have been living in this four-country area for the last 11,000 years, and Sámi culture, livelihoods, resource management and society have developed as a result of relations between people and nature.

The Sámi homeland, Sápmi, reaches from south and central Norway and Sweden through the northernmost part of Finland and into the Kola Peninsula in Russia (see Figure 1). Due to the long-term geographical isolation of various Sámi groups, the diversity within the Sámi in terms of cultural practices is as pronounced as that across the whole of Norway. Overall, one can say that the Sámi people have their own history, language, culture, traditional livelihoods, and settlements areas. The Sámi language also varies between the different Sámi regions, each having its own cultural expressions in, for instance, costumes and handicrafts, music, worldview and story traditions. The traditional handicrafts have in the most recent decades experienced a renaissance and have become a source of inspiration for present-day handicrafters and artists. The traditional cultural manifestations have also led to new cultural developments, especially in Sámi music, literature and fine arts – including film and theatre. Sámi festivals have become an important meeting place for young people (and those not so young). All this is important for the strengthening and maintenance of a modern Sámi identity. Today, however, the Sámi are a minority even in their own traditional settlement areas, meaning that the maintenance and continued development of Sámi traditions, language and culture has to be done as a minority group living in the majority society.
From the earliest times the Sámi have been a society of hunters and gatherers, and these industries remain important today. Sámi are also engaged in all sectors of modern society. Even so, the traditional activities continue to constitute the basic material preconditions for the settlements in Sámi areas. The most typical traditional economic activities and ways of life are a fundamental part of the Sámi identity. Even though not all Sámi are engaged in traditional activities of farming, reindeer herding, fishing in fjords and inland waters, hunting, handicrafts or a combination of these, these activities will remain important into the future, just as the language will remain vital.

The maintenance of Sámi language is considered to be of great importance, not just because it serves as a tool for communication, but also because it conveys elements of philosophy, beliefs, social organization and notions of the surrounding world. As with many languages, the Sámi language reflects the natural and climatic conditions in which the Sámi live. The Sámi language is very different from Norwegian, belonging instead to the Finno-Ugric linguistic group, which includes, among others, Finnish, Estonian and Hungarian, indicating the eastward connections. Today, the Sámi language is one of the official languages of Norway, and in many places the road signs and signs on public buildings are in both Norwegian and Sámi.
Development of Sámi Cultural and Language Rights in Norway

As stated above, the Sámi people are spread across four nations and have always had a diverse culture and differing ways of life. However, they have also experienced one commonality: All Sámi people have been subjected to harsh assimilation policies. In Norway the assimilation period lasted from the mid-1800s until after just after World War II. Unfortunately, by that time many Sámi had either stopped using the Sámi language or grown without ever learning their mother-tongue. More tragically, many Sámi no longer looked upon themselves as Sámi, choosing to hide their cultural and linguistic identity.

Today, the Sámi people are recognized as an indigenous people in Norway and are entitled to special protection rights according to both national and international law. The foundations of the current Norwegian policy towards the Sámi is that Norway, as a national state, was established on the territories of two peoples, Norwegians and Sámi, and that both peoples have an equal right to develop their culture and language.

The most relevant international instruments (conventions and declarations) ratified by Norway are:

- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
- The Council of Europe Charter for Regional and Minority Languages (1992)
- The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007)

Article 27 of The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966), in particular, has played a central role in Sámi culture and language renewal. It states: “In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities, shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or use their own language.” The rights of indigenous peoples such as the Sámi were further strengthened with the ratification of the ILO Convention No. 169, which was ratified by Norway in 1990. This convention states in several articles (part II) that rights for the indigenous peoples to land and natural resources are recognized as central to their material and cultural survival. Both in the Preamble and in Article 7 it is stated that indigenous peoples should be entitled to exercise control over and manage their own institutions, ways of life and economic development in order to maintain and develop their identities, languages and religions within the framework of the States in which they live. Education and means of communication are also part of the convention where the importance of the indigenous language as well as education on an equal footing with the majority population is stated. Since 2005 there has been an ongoing process of ratifying a Nordic Sámi Convention by Norway, Sweden and Finland.
The most relevant national laws protecting Sámi cultural and linguistic rights in Norway are:

- The Sámi Act (1987)
- Article 110a of the Norwegian Constitution (1988)
- The Reindeer Herding Act (2007)

The Sámi Act was adopted in 1987 by the Norwegian Parliament and it states that “...the Sámi shall have their own national Sámi Parliament (Sámediggi) elected by and amongst the Sámi.” The Sámi Act also contains decisions concerning the Sámediggi’s authority, areas of activity and election rules – for example that the Sámi shall themselves determine the Sámi Parliament’s (Sámediggi) area of activity. As put forth in the Sámi Act, the Sámi Parliament (Sámediggi) makes a report every fourth year to the Norwegian government concerning the situation of Sámi language in Norway.

Article 110a of the Constitution further strengthens the Sámi Act: “It is the responsibility of the authorities of the State to create conditions enabling the Sámi people to preserve and develop their language, culture and way of life.” The constitutional amendment implies a legal, political and moral obligation for Norwegian authorities to create an environment conducive to the Sámi themselves influencing the development of the Sámi community. Article 110a of the Constitution is a constitutional guarantee for the Sámi as an indigenous people, a legal and political guarantee for the protection of the Sámi language, culture and society.

Sámi linguistic rights and education

In 1991 Sámi linguistic rights were added to the Sámi Act and it was determined that the Sámi and Norwegian languages should have equal standing in Norway. The provisions of the act provide details concerning the use of Sámi language in school (translation), services in courts, hospitals and churches and as an administrative language. At present, eight municipalities have Norwegian and Sámi as equal languages in their administration.

The Education Act (1969/1998/2009) in Norway further reinforces Sámi linguistic rights by stating that every Sámi child from the age of 6 to 18 has an individual right to schooling in the Sámi language – either as first or second language. Sámi pupils in elementary schools were first granted the right and opportunity to learn the Sámi language in 1967, with a local school in Karasjok, an inland community in Finnmark County, being the first to offer classes in Sámi. Over the past 40 years the legislation has expanded in the area of educational rights, for instance, now calling for the establishment of Sámi language classes in Norwegian elementary schools all over the country. Even if there are not enough pupils for a whole class, every Sámi pupil has the right to learn the Sámi language wherever s/he attends school in Norway. In 1997 a national Sámi educational curriculum for Sámi schools was developed, and this curriculum applies to municipalities where the Sámi and Norwegian languages have equal standing, as well as to Sámi language classes in Norwegian schools.

The most recent two decades have seen the establishment of a number of Sámi kindergartens, so that today, from a very early age, Sámi children can hear and learn the Sámi
language and culture within institutional frameworks. These kindergartens and their workings will be described in detail below. In addition, non-Sámi children are also learning about the Sámi. The Norwegian national school curriculum includes content on Sámi history, culture and society with the aim that every pupil in Norway shall have knowledge about the Sámi people. From a Sámi perspective it is important that the majority population in Norway has accurate knowledge about the Sámi as a people, as this helps to reduce stereotypes and provide better understanding, with an overall positive influence on attitudes.

The development of Sámi teachers for these education initiatives has been supported through a number of means. In 1989 the Sámi University College was established to meet the needs of a Sámi language teacher training. Teachers are eligible for paid leave to study the Sámi language at university level, with the college also serving as a Sámi research institute. It is now possible to earn a PhD in Sámi language and other Sámi subjects, particularly at the University of Tromso. The trained teachers play an important role in all of the components of Sámi language and cultural revival efforts, from the Sámi Centre to school-based programs to the reminiscence groups set up for Sámi elders.

Language Revival: The Várdobáiki Sámi Centre - Várdobáiki Sámi Guovddáš The Sámi word Várdobáiki refers to a hilltop or mountain where you have an excellent view in all directions. The logo for the centre is a drawing of a traditional Sámi transportable home called the lavvo (you have your home with you wherever you travel!). The centre is housed in the building shown in Figure 2. Várdobáiki is located in the coastal region in the middle of the traditional Sámi area – the location marked with a red star in Figure 1. Várdobáiki was established in 1999, and the centre’s main objective is to strengthen Sámi language, culture and society through dialogue and understanding with both the local Sámi communities and the Norwegian majority society.
The Sámi region in which this centre is located suffered through a harsh assimilation period, and the Sámi language as well as other cultural expressions is today often invisible to both the surrounding Norwegian society and Sámi from other regions. Sámi institutions like Várdobáiki help to make Sámi culture more visible, and are an important part of a Sámi cultural infrastructure. Várdobáiki and similar centres also increase the prestige of the Sámi culture and strengthen Sámi identity by initiating and managing relevant activities. This is important because language and culture cannot be revitalized by private initiative alone. The Várdobáiki Sámi Centre has thus become a central and important institution first and foremost for the local Sámi communities in the region, but also as an important dialogue partner for the municipality leadership in Sámi matters. In carrying out its work, Várdobáiki also cooperates with the Sámi Parliament, county administrations, other Sámi organizations, several colleges and universities and other Sámi centres. The Sámi Parliament and the University of Tromsø are renting office space in the main building of Várdobáiki, thereby providing excellent opportunities for collaboration.

Figure 3. Activities of Várdobáiki Sámi
Guovddáš
Activities of Várdobáiki Sámi Guovddáš

Várdobáiki is organized as a wheel with a hub and several spokes (see Figure 3). This model applies to both the sponsored activities and the locations where the activities take place. Most of the activities are not located in Várdobáiki’s building, but rather in the local Sámi communities in the region.

As illustrated in Figure 3, the kindergarten, the youth club, the health project and the museum buildings are all at different locations. Várdobáiki became responsible for the Sámi kindergarten in 2003. The youth club was established in 2002, and the health project, which focuses on elderly persons, began operating in 2003. The main building of the Centre is open to the public during daytime hours. The staff offers the local Sámi population help with applications and project ideas. The Centre also houses a small library of Sámi publications and newspapers that are available for those who drop by. As a cultural centre, Várdobáiki serves as a gallery, regularly exhibiting Sámi art for the public.

Documentation centre and museum The Sámi Parliament has given Várdobáiki responsibility for the establishment and administration of Sámi museums in the region. A documentation centre was established at Várdobáiki in 2004 and a museum was formally established in 2007. These are two important successes. Topics that have been documented include: traditional food making, use of herbs, old buildings, how to collect winter fodder for house stock, and how to construct a traditional transportable Sámi house (lavvo). In addition, the Centre has undertaken the collection of old photos and the documentation of both farming and reindeer husbandry. The preservation of non-tangible cultural heritage is also important—this includes, for example, Sámi mythology and Sami stories relating how supernatural phenomena influence everyday life. The timely collection of traditional knowledge is vital as the primary source—the elders—are continuously aging.

Figure 4. Traditional Sámi activities: constructing a lavvo (left) and gathering winter fodder (right). PHOTO: VÁRDOBÁIKI SÁMI CENTRE
Maintaining and revitalizing the language are closely connected to these cultural expressions. The basic thinking is that language is often embedded in traditional knowledge, and thus it is important to document this knowledge. To maintain traditional knowledge it is necessary to pass it on – and an effective way to do this is through participation in activities. If the natural environment for doing certain activities no longer exists, Várdobáiki arranges courses where competent, often elderly, persons are invited to share traditional knowledge and skills. These resource people are very important in the revitalization process.

An old traditional farm constitutes the outdoor museum in the region. Located high up in the hills it had a central location before the road was built further down in the valley. At the museum it is possible to see and learn how traditional everyday life progressed. At this site the main building, the barn and several storehouses and other buildings such as a traditional Sámi turf hut, are preserved. During the summer there are hosts/hostesses at the farm who tell visitors about the farm’s history and show how life and work was in the past.

![Figure 5. The Gállogieddi outdoor museum. PHOTO: VÁRDOBÁIKI SÁMI CENTRE](image)

**Passing on the Language and Culture**

When revitalization of the Sámi language started there were very few teachers, proven methodologies, textbooks or other teaching aids. The pioneers of this work had to start nearly from scratch, making their own teaching materials and lessons. The teachers had to be inventive. Over the years Várdobáiki and other Sámi language centers have developed useful teaching aid kits. These kits include such items as language posters, different types
of word games, playing cards, etc. In order to aid beginning language learners, who have limited knowledge of the language, conversation sheets were made. These sheets contain simple sentences, words and phrases written to help the students begin conversing. It is important that a new beginner start using the new words as soon as possible in order to get over the barriers of speaking a new language. Samples of these teaching materials were shared with participants from the Cypriot Maronite community during the workshop. Our experience is that simple aids often are the most useful. One of our best tools is the copy machine. When one teacher has made something new, others can copy it. Today internet-based teaching aid kits are being developed as well. An example of materials developed by the Swedish side of Sápmi is available at www.gulahalan.se.

Preschool and Kindergarten children
In a region where we strive for revitalization of the Sámi language, it is very important to have institutions where the language can be heard from an early age. It is also very important to introduce children to several aspects of the Sámi culture, and thus give them positive confirmation about their own culture and identity. At the same time the children will learn about cultural similarities and differences, and about tolerance and respect for other cultural expressions.

Figure 6. Márkománák Sámi kindergarten. PHOTO: VÁRDOBÁIKI SÁMI CENTRE
Márkománák Sámi kindergarten is located near the local elementary school in the center of a core Sámi region. Várdobáiki has managed the kindergarten since 2003. The single kindergarten consists of 21 children between the ages of 1 and 6 years old and is open from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. (9 hours per day, 5 days per week). The staff consists of the following:

- 1 manager (100%)
- 1 educator (50%) – responsible for designing classroom activities
- 1 assistant with Sámi language as second language (100%)
- 2 assistants who have grown up in the Sámi village (100% and 30%)
- 1 language staff with Sámi as a native language (60%)

The parents play a very positive role in the Sámi kindergarten. Several of the parents chose our kindergarten especially because of the fact that they are not able to teach their child the Sámi language at home. This year (2009-10) there are no children who speak Sámi as a native language enrolled in the kindergarten. Instead, we actually have several children who have never even heard the language spoken before.

Figure 7. Outdoor lessons and cultural activities of the Sámi Kindergarten. PHOTO: VÁRDOBÁIKI SÁMI CENTRE
The staff is not necessarily able to teach the Sámi language to the children all by themselves. Therefore it is important to identify resource people from the local community. Many of the elderly people speak the Sámi language as a first language – therefore we invite them to come to our kindergarten to provide Sámi linguistic support and establish language arenas. Activities such as baking cookies together, working or walking in nature, and storytelling provide natural opportunities for language use. One day when we were walking in the woods we found a hole in the ground – it turned out to be a little cave. The children were curious about this cave. We talked about what it could be. A lot of good suggestions came up, and suddenly we found out that “Of course – this is a typical dwelling-place for the Stallu.” A Stallu is a mythological figure from Sámi legends; he is big, has a lot of hair and lives in the woods. This cave gave us the opportunity to introduce Stallu to the children. There are a lot of stories about him in Sámi oral literature. This cave became a new linguistic arena where we could introduce and use a lot of Sámi words and phrases. The children did not have any former experiences with, or knowledge of, Stallu and the cave, and did not even know the terms and expressions related to the stories in Norwegian. Their first-hand experience was in Sámi, and this will stay with them throughout their lives.

Utilizing the surrounding Sámi environment provides an opportunity to infuse culture and language as a natural part of the kindergartener’s everyday life and routine. The Sámi culture is closely tied to nature, and it is natural to establish new language arenas in outdoor situations. We often visit nearby farms, which provide an excellent opportunity to learn about animals and introduce the Sámi terms and phrases related to farming and farm animals. One time, a nearby farmer let the children dig their own potatoes. The children brought the potatoes back to the kindergarten where we used the potatoes to make traditional food. This is an excellent way to teach the children about traditional Sámi life while also learning the language along with important life and social skills. The kindergarten also visits the Sámi outdoor museum on an annual basis. At the museum the children learn about old tools and try to use them. They also listen to old stories about earlier times. This is another way to teach the children about the Sámi culture.

Routine situations offer great opportunities to teach the children some phrases in Sámi. We introduce a number of such situations, which commonly use fixed phrases and dialogues. For example, after breakfast we always have a gathering. During the gathering we say hello, talk about the weather, ask about the days (Makkar beaivi odne lea?/Which day is it today?) and sing songs. We use the Sámi language as much as possible. Our Sámi hand doll, Alit, shown in Figure 8 often visits us at these gatherings. Alit always wears the Sámi folk costume. She does not understand Norwegian, nor English, just Sámi. Buorre idit! She says, Good morning! Galle mana leat manaidgarddis odne? She is asking how many children there are present. The children count how many children are in class, and then tell Alit. Alit talks to the children in Sámi, and she also sings with the children.
Another common activity in the kindergarten is the acting out of Sámi legends and fairytales, in Sámi. For instance we have a book about Cuoppumaddu (the mother of the frogs). She is a mythological figure who lives in the water and rivers. After reading this book we pretend that we are going fishing. While fishing the children make a lot of noise down by the river. Cuoppumaddu gets angry and rises up from the water, with her big yellow eyes and green head. The children jump up on my back pretending to be Cuoppumaddu. We all scream: Veahkkehit mu! Veahkkehit mu! (Help me! Help me!) Mana eret! Mana eret! (Go away!) During such role playing the children use the Sámi language without even thinking about it because they are in a middle of an exciting drama sequence.

All of the children’s toys used in the kindergarten, especially the dolls, are inspired by the Sámi culture, with the dolls wearing the Sámi folk costume. For the staff and the parents we have several Sámi posters in the kindergarten, and these help them remember words and sentences. This is especially important for the staff who do not have Sámi as native language or as a strong second language.

Teaching the Sámi language and culture to preschool children is all about being creative. There are so many golden opportunities where you can use the language: drama, games, songs, routine situations (repeat, repeat and repeat!), toys inspired by Sámi culture, posters, and books—all can help create new arenas for language learning and teaching. We really feel that the best age for children to learn a language is: Anytime and always! From the time when the small children start to point at things you can start to use Sámi words.

Language/training/courses for kindergarten staff One of the biggest challenges we face for the language situation in our kindergarten is that most of the staff are not native Sámi language speakers. It has been impossible to use only Sámi speaking employees. To meet the need for language competence, we initiated training courses. The courses are designed for learning the daily routines in the kindergarten, focusing on relevant language concepts related to, for instance, the interior of the kindergarten (wall, door, and toilet) and situations such as dressing, meals, and indoor and outdoor play. We try to make these courses as practical as possible so the employees learn words and phrases that they will need in the
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everyday classroom situation with the children. They learn the same basic concepts that the
children learn. To ensure that the language is being used, we make small posters to put up
on the walls close to the places where the daily activities are carried out. These posters help
the staff when there is a word they do not remember, and they have the added benefit of
providing early literacy exposure for the children. All kindergarten employees also take part
in regular courses for adults that are held at the language centre, as do teachers in the
elementary and secondary schools.

School-age children and youth

Every Sámi pupil in Norway has the right to education in the Sámi language if the parents
so choose, either as a first, second or third language. This schooling is offered to pupils from
6 to 18 years of age. In our region there is no separate Sámi school, and all the Sámi children
attend the ordinary national Norwegian elementary school. When I (Beatrice) began school
at the age of 6 we were about 30 pupils all together. There were not many at my school who
wanted to learn the Sámi language, and I was the only one in my class who had Sámi
education at school. Today the situation is quite different. Nearly everyone at this school
learns the Sámi language. In fact, the number of students has increased dramatically in
recent years. Examples of the increases are provided below. Just five years ago there were
no pupils at the three schools shown below. Today there are nearly 50, a promising trend.

- Harstad: 0 pupils → 8 pupils today
- Kongsvik: 0 pupils → 9 pupils → 16 pupils today
- Boltás: Almost everyone is a Sámi pupil and learns Sámi language, and there are about
  35-40 pupils.

What we are experiencing is like an explosion. As can be seen, the number of pupils who
choose Sámi remains small, but we must be pleased about those who do choose to study
the Sámi language at school and recognize that the numbers are increasing. It is better to
have a few pupils rather than none! Some students have their Sámi language lessons while
the other pupils are having Norwegian lessons. Some have to exchange other subjects in
favor of Sámi. Many parents are choosing to exchange Physical Education with Sámi
lessons. It is the parents’ (and students’) choice.

We need to support those children who choose to learn the Sámi language at school,
and this also includes working to ensure that Sámi youth are accepted by the other pupils.
It is important to educate the other pupils about the Sámi language and culture. One way we
do this, which also helps to raise the status of the Sámi students, is to invite all the children
to experience a ‘school day’ at our outdoor museum (an old traditional farm). They are exposed
to Sámi culture through practical ‘lessons,’ such as making traditional Sámi handicrafts,
learning Sámi songs and joik – the traditional way of singing, making some traditional Sámi
food for lunch, learning how to throw a lasso, traditionally used to catch a running reindeer,
and different activities related to outdoor life and primary industries.
We divide the pupils into groups, and let them participate in various activities. We integrate language learning into each activity, so that throughout the day they are all introduced to the Sámi alphabet, they know how to greet each other, they have become familiar with the names of the colors, and they have learned to count from one to ten in Sámi. In this way we manage to create tolerance and respect. As we continue to overcome the challenges, we might soon find that we have filled the classrooms with pupils learning Sámi. For now, we have to be content that there actually are Sámi pupils who are attending the Sámi language classes.

Although the number of pupils choosing Sámi is increasing, and we have the legal right to learn Sámi at school, there remain some major challenges. Foremost is what can be done to ensure that we have enough teachers. One solution is that the government has decided to give scholarships to all Sámi Teacher Academy students who choose to specialize in Sámi language, with the hope that this will increase the number of Sámi teachers.

Organizations and institutions such as Várdobaiki, the kindergarten, the school and the Sámi handicraft house are all important arenas for the Sámi population in the community. However, young people often have special needs and interests, and it is also very important to have special meeting places and arrangements for the youth, especially when the youth become involved in creating these spaces. The Sámi youth wanted to create their own arenas for language use and cultural practice, and their own expressions of Sámi identity and belonging – so they established the Nuoraid Siida (the Sámi Youth Club) and an annual music and cultural festival, which is called Markomeannu.

Nuoraid Siida (the youth club) The Nuoraid Siida is managed by Várdobáiki, which is also responsible for applying for funding for the various activities at the club. Two youths are employed and are responsible for running the club. The club is located in the middle of one of the Sámi villages. The club itself is open twice a week. It is a meeting place where young Sámi listen to music, read Sámi newspapers and magazines, discuss relevant issues and take relevant action (according to their own views). This year Nuoraid Siida is giving courses in traditional handicrafts and during the spring they will organize caving and rock-climbing excursions.

Annual music and cultural festival - Markomeannu – originally a Sámi youth festival now attracting several generations – is organized annually on the grounds of the Sámi outdoor museum. In the beginning this festival consisted of around 10 Sámi youth who gathered and wanted to do something just to show the community that Sámi people really do exist in our region, and to share local culture with Sámi from other regions.

The festival has a clear Sámi profile, aiming to promote the culture of the local Sámi villages, but at the same time also incorporates culture from all the Sámi areas. Markomeannu seeks to support the Sámi identity of people of all ages, though it continues to primarily address young people. Financing the first year of the festival was difficult, and Markomeannu had to hold a lottery afterwards to pay all the costs.

In subsequent years the festival has grown to be an important symbolic event for young, local Sámi, showing that their Sámi culture can be valuable. The first time Markomeannu
was held there were about 100 visitors. Ten years later, in 2009, it had nearly 3000 visitors. The festival lasts for five days, and offers exhibitions, seminars, a historical walk, a story night, workshops for both children and adults, a special performance, games and competitions from the Sámi villages, a market, children’s theatre, book launchings and concerts. Markomeannu offers something for all generations and is an excellent place to share knowledge. The youth learn something from the elders, and the older people get to know the youth. In 2007, there was a brand-new concert stage, and for the first time there were outdoor concerts two days in a row. Markomeannu would like to become known as a concert venue where both professional musicians and young, lesser known artists are invited to perform. This festival and others like it have become an important meeting place for young Sámi people, with the youth travelling all over northern Norway to attend Sámi festivals. As an added benefit, the Sámi festivals have created jobs for young people. For instance the Markomeannu festival requires a full-time producer employed by Várdobáiki. During the summer months, the festival also needs a lot of voluntary workers.

Card courses To further support language learning at the Markomeannu festival, Várdobáiki has developed a type of short course which we call ‘card courses.’ These courses are designed by young people and contain words and phrases used by the younger generation. At the festival there are visitors from all over the Sámi area. Some speak the language fluently, while others know only a few words. At the festival there is a stand where people can stop by and learn a few words and phrases which will enable them to interact with others in Sámi, even if only with simple phrases. These words and sentences are printed on laminated
cards that fit in the pocket – that is why we have called them card courses. The young people find them very useful, especially when a girl wants to ask a boy for a dance… or a hug!

The festival has helped the youth to bring generations of Sámi together to strengthen their Sámi identity and provide a sense of belongingness. It has also led more adults to want to learn the Sámi language.

The Parent generation

From a language renewal perspective, we need all generations to care for the language, including children, youth, and adults. In this section we discuss the support provided to the ‘parent generation,’ by which we mean all adults, whether or not they have children. In the Várdobáiki region, a whole generation of Sámi people did not learn or use the language at home, and now need to reclaim the language through their own efforts. Today few arenas exist where people can hear and speak the Sámi language daily, and our main goal is to provide structured places, formal and informal, where adults can become immersed in the language. For more than ten years Várdobáiki has offered language courses and activities for this generation at a variety of levels. These can be summarized as:

1. Courses for new beginners (those who do not speak or understand the language at all)
2. Courses for persons who understand, but do not speak Sámi
3. Courses for persons who speak the language, but do not yet write the language
   a. Sámi literacy courses
   b. Formal Sámi grammar courses; and
4. High school diploma courses in Sámi

These courses use a variety of methods. We run at least one or two classroom-based courses every year. These are held once a week from autumn to spring. The courses are held in the afternoons, because most participants work during the day. It is a challenge for many people to follow a course that occupies their evenings once a week for many months. The ultimate goal would be to arrange courses during normal working hours, but this would require the support of employers. We are hopeful that this will be possible in the future. The Sámi parliament has identified certain municipalities to be part of a special program that allows the employees in official jobs such as administrators and teachers to receive Sámi language training during their working hours. This is a much better situation than offering the course in the afternoons. This is not yet possible in the municipalities where we work, but discussions are taking place.

The policy for Várdobáiki is to arrange courses and activities for which there is a demand or request. For example, this year some people wanted to learn our local Sámi dialect, which is the variety spoken most widely by the elderly people. In response, we will arrange courses based on the local dialect. In this way we adapt our courses for our target group. Formal classroom learning is supported through a number of focused activities. For example, we arrange ‘language baths’ where participants are gathered for several days and engage in a
variety of activities while fully immersed in the Sámi language. We have also arranged sessions to motivate adults to activate their language through cultural activities, such as constructing a traditional Sámi dwelling, preparing Sámi food, making traditional handicrafts, and participating in outdoor activities like making bird snares and other traditional outdoor work. Below we describe in more detail each of the courses and activities provided for the Sámi parent generation.

Courses for new beginners The most popular courses have been those designed for those who do not speak or understand the Sámi language. Over the past ten years quite a number of people have participated in these courses. For most, it is the first step in the process of reclaiming their language. When we started the process of revitalizing Sámi, we chose to prioritize those who had not been exposed to the language at home, and courses were initially developed to meet the language needs of daily routines. The courses begin from the basics, learning how to say hello in Sámi, learning the numbers, and learning short phrases that can be used often. They learn how to introduce themselves and participate in simple conversations.

For these courses we have tried out several methods. Our experiences have led us to the conclusion that beginner courses should be primarily oral based, with very little grammar and writing. We do, however, introduce the Sámi alphabet, which has some letters that are different from the Norwegian. Participants also receive a brief introduction to the grammar that covers aspects that help them to understand how the language is constructed.

One of the primary challenges faced by adults beginning to learn the language has to do with finding arenas outside of the classroom where they can hear and speak the Sámi language. Without such opportunities to practice using the language in real interactions,
many of the learners face problems in using and continuing to develop the language after the course. Initially, self-confidence in speaking may be low, and as a result we find that some repeat the new/beginner course several times. It is a real challenge to motivate the participants to move on and take courses at higher levels.

Courses for passive speakers In addition to the new/beginners described above, Sámi who have had little exposure to the Sámi language prior to taking the beginner courses, there is another group of adults who have what is called passive knowledge of the language. These are people who understand much of the language, but have little or no speaking command of Sámi language. For these people we arrange what we call ‘language baths.’ The idea is that the participants are placed in a totally Sámi-speaking environment for a number of days, with no influence from or use of the Norwegian language. These ‘baths’ take place in the countryside, as far away from other people as possible, and may take place on a weekend or over a period of several days during holiday periods. The participants are involved in everyday activities— such as cooking together— with speakers of Sámi.

We also create activities that require participants to be social, thus requiring them to speak the language. This can, for example, be working together on a traditional handicraft, going fishing, working with wood, playing word games, and/or singing Sámi songs. There are also regular classroom sessions that include some grammar training, translation of simple texts, and a focus on learning new phrases that can be used during the ‘bath.’
In all areas where activities are carried out, support for language use is provided visually through posters on which the participants can see relevant words and phrases that they might not know or have forgotten. This makes it easier to maintain conversations. For example in the kitchen there are posters with words and phrases they need when preparing food together (see Figure 12). In the room where we eat, there are posters with words and phrases adapted to the situation at the table. The main goal of all of the support is to help the participants to climb over the mental wall that stands between them and the spoken language.

*Cultural activities for adult language learning* Courses based on activities are a new way of teaching that we have initiated this year. In these courses we combine our experiences from ordinary courses held in classrooms with those of the language baths. We expect the participants in these courses to have some knowledge of the language — such as greetings, the alphabet, numbers, etc. These activity-based courses focus on learning through practical work, with relevant words and phrases presented, modeled and used throughout the activity. The pictures in Figure 13 illustrate one of these activities, constructing a *lavvo* (traditional Sámi tent, a dwelling that can be used throughout the year, even in winter).
Another common activity is the making traditional Sámi handicraft (see Figure 14). During this activity participants learn Sámi words and phrases related to the items, and have to use them by describing what they are doing while they work together with a speaker. The proud girl in the right-hand picture has just finished her new *luhkka*, the Sámi poncho. The benefits of this approach to language learning are that we are able to combine language training with cultural practice.

*Language coaches* When we start any new language course, we offer the participants language coaches, or mentors. These coaches are Sámi speakers who are willing to be personal mentors for one of the participants. We write up a contract that formalizes the relationship and clarifies the roles and responsibilities of both the speaker and the learner. Both parties sign the contract, agreeing to call each other or meet at least once a week to speak entirely in Sámi. We have found this to be very useful for new/beginning Sámi learners as well as those with passive knowledge of the language (See the description of the Master/Apprentice program in Chapter 3).

*Courses for Sámi Speakers* The courses and activities described above are designed for adults who are in the process of learning to speak the Sámi language. The language coaches are people who already speak Sámi. Other speakers serve as teachers in the kindergartens, elementary and high schools. While the approach to beginning learners focuses on developing oral communication skills, courses for Sámi speakers focus more on Sámi literacy and Sámi grammar. These types of courses are described below.

Like the majority of languages around the world, Sámi is traditionally an oral language. Sámi speakers are unlikely to have ever learned to read and write their language, despite the fact that it was used on a daily basis. Instead, during the assimilation periods, they were taught how to read and write in Norwegian at school. During that time, use of the Sámi language was often done in secret, only spoken at home when Norwegians were not listening. During those periods some Sámi did learn our language at home, but they never took their own language into the public arena, and the written language was definitely not visible.
Today we primarily use Sámi literacy to support language learning, raise awareness of the language, and document Sámi culture and history. Much of the process of writing the language has been simplified through the use of a fully phonetic alphabet, which means that, without exception, each sound has only one symbol. This makes life easier for those who want to learn to write this language, which only recently has developed a written form.

*Grammar courses* These courses are designed for people who already speak Sámi, and who need or wish to have a greater depth of knowledge of the language, often for helping learners understand why the language works the way it does. There are many differences in the structures of Sámi and Norwegian, and a teacher needs to be aware of these in order to identify language transfer and interference issues. For example, Sámi has mutation and extensive consonant graduation. It also has an intricate alteration between stem consonants. While the language has only one gender, the verbs are declined in accordance with the subject, which may be singular, dual or plural. The Sámi language has 6-9 cases – depending on the dialect. The system of word derivations in Sámi provides great possibilities for development of new words from a simple stem, which is especially important as Sámi is now used in contexts that it never was before.

*High-school diploma through Sámi* A final type of course developed for adults focuses on providing an opportunity for those who would have liked to be educated in Sámi, but did not have the opportunity in the past. Occasionally, there are people in the region who want to receive a high school diploma in the Sámi language; they are adults, with no possibility of taking the required courses during working hours. In this case we cooperate with the local high school. We offer the courses as evening classes. After one and a half years the students can graduate from Sámi-medium high school, and go on to higher education if they wish. We have had quite good results with this type of course, since the participants tend to be highly motivated.

*Certificates* A key component of all of our courses is to recognize the efforts of the learners. At the end of each course, we always give the students a certificate (see Figure 15). The participants greatly appreciate this, as it shows that they were willing and committed to learning Sámi. Even if someone has completed just an introductory course, such as those for beginners, it is a nice thing to show to a new employer.

![Figure 15. All participants who complete a course, whether a basic introduction or an advanced grammar course for speakers, are given a certificate.](image)
More and more, having knowledge of the Sámi culture and language is viewed positively by employers, not only in Sámi businesses and offices, but also throughout Norway. It is being used in many settings, and is used as an official language by the Sámi parliament and several municipalities. Today we even have daily news in Sámi on the state TV channel, something that would have been inconceivable only a few years ago. More and more, it is seen as an advantage to know even a little Sámi when one applies for work.

The grandparent generation
In the revitalization of any language, you need to make sure that you have gathered knowledge about the language and the culture you wish to revitalize. One of the best ways of gathering this knowledge is to go to those who have been speaking the language and living within the cultural setting for extended periods of time. For the Sámi, this means going to our grandparent generation. Many within this generation grew up with Sámi as their mother-tongue, or, if not, at least as a strong second language. They grew within the culture and continue to live by the cultural values. They are our cultural and linguistic resources.

While most of the Sámi elders were raised with a Sámi identity, it is an identity that was repeatedly challenged by the Norwegian society, so much so that many elders reached a point where they began to relinquish that which made them whole. Our grandparents were constantly exposed to the national assimilation policies, and often were forced to hide or even deny their Sámi identity. Along with the assimilation policies, there was a growing feeling of shame and degradation connected with Sámi culture and being Sámi. Our grandparents often sought to protect their children from negative experiences, and therefore the Sámi
cultural background and language were hidden from their children - they were supposed to be good Norwegians.

As such, the natural transfer of culture and language from one generation to the next, from parents to children, was nearly broken. However, this transfer is crucial to revitalization efforts, and today we have begun to increase awareness and prestige of Sámi cultural heritage and rejuvenate the transfer of knowledge. As the traditional means of this transfer have been interrupted, there is a need to support and supplement them. When we ask Sámi elders for their experiences and knowledge, we are giving their Sámi identity back to them, giving their knowledge positive value, status, and dignity. Most importantly, we are helping to restore value to this generation's Sámi identity, a value that assimilation policies sought to destroy. Vårdobáiki has sought to engage elders in a number of events and activities, the two most prominent of which are the elder Health Seminars and the Sámi Reminiscence Groups.

Health seminars Vårdobáiki has been working with regional health projects since 2003. One of the very first projects initiated was a set of Health Seminars, which have been running continuously since 2003. These seminars are a monthly arrangement with elderly Sámi as the target group. It is open to elderly people from all backgrounds, but the deliberate focus on Sámi language and culture makes it primarily a Sámi event. The seminars are held during working hours, between 11 am and 2 pm, which enables elders, pensioners, disability pensioners, and the unemployed to participate. The main schedule is set and is as follows:

1. Sámi language session
2. Main topic
3. Exercise
4. Traditional Dinner

The seminars take place in traditional Sámi villages, not in public community centers or the traditionally Norwegian settlements. The Sámi elders feel at home in these village locations, and, as they say, for once the Norwegians are visiting them and not the other way around. By arranging the seminars in surroundings familiar to the elders, they experience a feeling of security, control and comfort. The seminars rotate among the various traditional Sámi villages. To be sure that we reach our main target group, we send out personal invitations. Flyers are put in the mailboxes of all elders who live in a Sámi village. Posters are also made and hung up at health centers and at nursing homes. Finally, Vårdobáiki also places announcements in the local newspapers and posts information on its website.

1. We begin every health seminar with a short Sámi language session for the elders. As they are all speakers of the language, these lessons usually focus on Sámi reading and writing. Sometimes we present a short written text, preferably in the local dialect, and practice reading and translating. More often, we reverse the process and ask the elders for expressions or stories in our language, which we then turn into written words. In this way, we gather more language while indirectly teaching Sámi literacy. Our main focus is on asking the elders to
share with us their knowledge and experiences of Sámi culture and language. In so doing, we are hoping also to change the elders’ attitude toward their Sámi cultural heritage by showing them that it is a resource, something valuable. Hopefully, when they leave a seminar, they have a more positive attitude to their own language and culture. Most of the elders tell us that when they are at home after a seminar, they continue to remember Sámi expressions, words, and stories for several days. They can use the alphabet they have been exposed to in order to write some of these down. The best feature of the seminars is that they seem to wake up a sleeping language and culture.

2. Every seminar has a main topic or lecture. Generally, this is a health related topic presented by a health professional with expertise in the chosen topic. The main topics provide the elders with important health education relevant to their current situation. Examples of recent topics include angina pectoris (heart disease), strokes, dementia, and urinary incontinence. Traditional medicine is still used and common among both the elders and younger generations in the Sámi society, and has also been a topic of the seminars. The lectures are adapted to the participants’ level of knowledge, and the participants are usually very interested, listen attentively and ask questions or share similar experiences. The topics are mostly selected from suggestions submitted by the participants. In this way we ensure that the topics are interesting and ones that the participants want to learn about. Once a year, at the last seminar before summer holidays begin, we evaluate the seminars. We ask for participants’ evaluation of the arrangements as a whole, and the specific parts of the schedule. It is natural to ask for suggestions and improvements when evaluating, and which topics they would like for the next year. This sets the foundation for the coming year.

Cultural or linguistic related themes are also sometimes presented, and the elders are often the main sources of knowledge. They share their knowledge and experiences, which we document for further use by taking pictures, and collecting and writing Sámi expressions, terms or words.

Skiing is one example. In Norway skiing is a very common activity during winter months. Almost everyone skis. Nowadays the skis are made of plastic fiber, but in the old days, skilled Sámi craftsmen made them from wood (see Figure 17).

When one of the elders presented about skiing in the old days, we were able to document the traditional way of making wooden skis, terms about skiing, how to prepare the skis depending on the weather and snow conditions, the best type of tree for making skis -
what it looks like and where to find it, how to shape the front end of the ski, and what the ski pole and the pole basket are called and made of. In other words, we identified many aspects of culture and language that would likely otherwise be lost. In addition, the discussion led to a number of stories and legends about skiing, experienced by the elders themselves or passed on to them from their parents or grandparents.

Many of the elders have also been involved in farming for much of their lives. It is natural to present topics related to farming, so we have had seminars on topics such as how to harvest hay from the fields, and how to dry the grass in drying installations such as that shown in the photo in Figure 18. As seen in the picture, grass was traditionally hung on wires to dry. This was hard work as wet grass is heavy, and every hand available was needed. In modern farming there are other more mechanical ways of harvesting, and this traditional way of harvesting and drying had almost been forgotten, along with the traditional practices related to slaughtering livestock, another topic that has been presented. These farming related seminars typically occur during the fall when these activities naturally take place. The knowledge gained from the elders during these seminars feeds directly into the language and culture lessons and activities for children, youth and adults learning the language.

3. Our elders have lived a life full of hard physical work. They are tough and strong. Thus exercise is highly valued by the participants. The exercise component of the health seminars is led by a Sámi physiotherapist. There are special challenges encountered when leading the
exercise activities. For example, many of the participants are religious people. According to their religious beliefs, music and dance are sinful. Because of this, the exercises are never performed with music. Instead, when rhythm is needed, we sing religious psalms together while exercising.

One also needs to know the everyday life of the elders to be able to adapt the exercise to them. Once there was a doctor who pointed out the importance of exercise during everyday activities – and he recommended that the elders use the stairs instead of the escalator or lift. This is good advice if there are escalators and lifts available – but in our communities there are none – you need to visit the town to find them.

4. The final component of each health seminar is a traditional dinner. In the traditional way of living, everyday life is closely connected with nature and the change of seasons. This affects the menu as well, which changes according to which natural resources are available at a particular season, e.g., fresh cod in January/February, fresh vegetables in August/September, fresh meat in October, and dried fish in March/April.

The menu can also be related to the main topic of the seminar. We have a chef present who makes a traditional dinner at the seminar. The smell of the dinner tickles our noses and stimulates our appetites throughout the seminar. A nominal fee is charged for the meals. Some of the elders live alone, and their meals are not as traditional as in the past. They highly appreciate these meals, and the social aspect of sharing a meal also influences their appetite and their enjoyment.

Overall, the elders greatly enjoy and value these seminars. The participants are eager to ask questions and share experien-

**Figure 19. Sámi elders participate in group exercise as part of the senior health seminars. PHOTO: VÁRDØBÁIKI SÁMI CENTRE**

**Figure 20. Preparation of food, an important aspect of the health seminars. The menu is usually connected to the main topic of the seminar. PHOTO: VÁRDØBÁIKI SÁMI CENTRE**
ences, whether related to a health, cultural or linguistic topic. It seems like they have ownership of these seminars, which is unique. This might be due to their participation in evaluations and the fact that we adapt the seminars according to their suggestions.

Reminiscence groups The health seminars described above focus on Sámi elders who are still mobile and mostly autonomous. There are others who live in institutions and nursing homes because their physical or mental health limits their mobility, making it difficult for them to attend the health seminars. The nursing homes and other care units are all located in Norwegian administration centers, far from the Sámi villages. To meet some of the needs of these Sámi, Várdobáiki initiated a measure called Reminiscence Groups in August 2009. The target participants of these groups are the Sámi elders housed in nursing homes, though everyone in the homes is welcome, regardless of ethnic background. Currently there are groups meeting on a monthly basis in five nursing homes across three communities.

This measure is an arrangement by Sámi for Sámi, and there is a Sámi flavor to each session. Each Reminiscence Group is arranged within a specific institution, which is inevitably a predominately Norwegian environment. Normally this generation of Sámi would hide their identity among Norwegians, and in some cases we found that this is still the case. In the first sessions, we initially began by communicating partly in Sámi with the elders. When we were speaking Sámi to them, we noticed that we were making some of them
uncomfortable, part of the ongoing stigmatization of being Sámi. Because of this, we decided to alter the procedure. We still felt that it was important that the Sámi language be heard, so we decided that we would have to carry the Sámi identity, and speak the language among ourselves. The elders are invited to communicate in Sámi by hearing us speak, but the revealing of their Sámi identity and language is their choice, not ours. If they choose not to speak in Sámi, we do not attempt to engage them in Sámi dialogue.

Meals are a traditional way of expressing that a guest is welcome, and they are an important part of these sessions. In the Reminiscence Groups we welcome our participants with small meals, preferably food that is well-known. Sometimes there will be a warm meal/dinner, other times simply coffee and biscuits, depending on the time of the day that the group is meeting.

The topics that are highlighted in these groups are drawn from participants’ former everyday life, and should be well-known to them. By presenting or performing a variety of activities, we hope to catch their interest and their attention more than would occur if we only discussed the topics, but did not actively perform them. By using all five senses - vision, hearing, smell, sensory and taste - the elders are ‘caught’ by the activity and begin to remember and reminisce. This can also be referred to as sensory stimulation. Sensory stimulation can trigger the reticular substance in the brain, which increases the wakefulness of the person. Many of the chosen activities from everyday Sámi life are similar to those experienced by older Norwegians, so we have also noticed an interest among many Norwegians.

The elder Sámi have lived close to nature throughout their lives, and every day practices have been strongly influenced by this intimacy. When one lives in an institution, the awareness of the seasons is decreased because you are seldom outdoors. By choosing seasonal activities, we help to create an awareness and experience of the passing seasons.

Mid-September is the time of harvesting potatoes, and this became the focus of our first group sessions. Harvesting potatoes is very much about being outside in the potato field, digging and picking in the soil, getting dirty hands, and smelling the smell of broken potato grass and soil.

We sought to revive this experience for the participants, and were challenged to come up with a creative way in which to do it. We ended up bringing the potato field into the institution by digging potatoes, soil and grass from the fields and putting them into big plastic boxes. The boxes were placed on the table before the participants arrived. This triggered their curiosity, and many were drawn towards the boxes before the session started. The participants were invited to harvest potatoes. Once the potatoes were dug, we washed and cooked some of them. The newly harvested and cooked potatoes were delicious, and everyone got a sample to taste. The rest of the potatoes were used to make traditional potato bread. This was quite common in earlier times, when most of the people were poor and had to exploit all the food to keep starvation away. Potatoes
were a common part of most dinners along with either meat or fish, and the dinner left-overs, the potatoes, were used to bake this bread. In the end we all enjoyed freshly baked potato bread and coffee.

Fall is time for slaughtering – and the animal blood is traditionally collected and used for cooking. So, in October we had this as a topic, and brought animal blood with us to the groups and made a common Sámi dish out of it. In the end we enjoyed this meal, too. There were slightly fewer participants at this time. It might be because of the topic and the dish which we chose to make – which is a traditional Sámi dish. Many of the Norwegian participants had not eaten this particular dish before, and apparently weren’t interested in trying it at this stage in their lives.

As renewing the natural process of transmitting cultural heritage across generations is a key to language and culture revitalization, we have recently begun to promote activities that are multi-generational. Children from the nearby kindergarten are invited to join the Reminiscence Groups in some activities. Christmas cookies were made by old and young hands, and children’s laughter was heard throughout the institutions and nursing homes. We all enjoyed the products of our work with juice, coffee and homemade cookies - Sámi cultural traditions, practices, values and language are once again being passed from one generation to another.

Conclusion

Today, Sámi cultural heritage has solid legal protection in Norway. Sámi artifacts and sites older than 100 years are automatically protected by law. This also includes the non-material or intangible heritage that has oral traditions attached– often through connections to natural formations. From a Sámi perspective it is important to understand and know one’s history in order to be able to act in the present and to plan for tomorrow’s society. The acknowledgement of a history, and thus the cultural heritage of a people, gives ‘identity roots,’ a common memory of the past, and a positive identity of today. With few written sources of history, the maintenance of non-material cultural heritage is important to Sámi society – such as the continuous story telling of traditions, both of past economic adaptations and religious and mythological beliefs. Most of these myths and traditions, like traditional healing, have undergone a transmission from the long-gone Sámi religion to Christianity. All traditional Sámi healing practice is now done in the name of God. Additionally, all Sámi mythological and potential forces of chaos must abide by and obey the Christian God.

To be able to transfer the cultural and linguistic knowledge to new generations, we have to overcome the gap created by the assimilation policies. We have to overcome the destructive feeling of shame connected to belonging to a minority people. This can be accomplished by turning the knowledge and wisdom carried by our elders into pride, by creating arenas where the transfer is enabled. This is one of the main goals of the Health Seminars and the Reminiscence Groups.

Language and culture are closely linked, and revitalization must include both. The ties
are very strong, and both are needed in revitalization work. After all, language is the strongest cultural expression there is. The first step for any program should include identifying activities or areas that are important for the people, and when connected to the culture as well, this can be a starting point for language revitalization. An example described above is our language courses where we are combining language training with cultural activities such as making handicrafts, traditional work, farming, and cooking.

Our experience is that it is important to build up environments and settings around language revitalization projects. For us it was crucial that we establish a language centre, which now acts as a power centre for the whole Sámi society.

Based on our discussions in February 2010, we would recommend that the Maronites in Cyprus make their language and cultural revitalization efforts at a variety of different levels. First, it is important to establish political frameworks that protect the language and secure the Maronites’ rights to learn and use their own language. This could also contribute to making it possible to finance language programs in the future. The language should be made visible and heard in the majority society, in order to promote awareness of, and interest in, the language.

Revitalization of a language needs to be rooted in a strong wish within the people’s hearts to prevent the death and disappearance of the language. The language revitalization effort will be embedded in idealism, which is the only way to succeed. The process of revitalization also depends on every single opportunity to promote and focus on the language being used. Simple measures can be effective. The language needs to be heard and spoken everywhere and anytime possible - it needs to once again become an everyday language. This is how language arenas and a change of attitude are established. The language courses will provide children, youth and adults with basic knowledge, which is important. But it is not enough to revitalize a language. The learners need to be motivated to speak the language even if they know just a little, to be able to develop the language and their skills and overcome oral language barriers and fears.

Language revival should include all generations, from the little ones who are starting to develop an oral language, up to the elders, who are the sources of much knowledge and language. In modern urban lifestyles, there are few activities or occasions where generations are gathered together, and where cultural and linguistic transfers across generations are enabled. Festivals or religious gatherings are an opportunity that should be exploited for this transfer and development of the language. Through Várdobáiki’s work with revitalization of the Sámi language and culture, the elders are a very important source of knowledge and experience. We need their contribution to be able to revitalize. Through our measures we are creating arenas where this contribution is enabled.

Language revitalization is a process that will take time. Be patient, and do not give up even if it seems that the revival process is going slowly. Every new user of the language is a story of success!
Chapter 5

LANGUAGE AND BELONGINGNESS AMONG CYPRIOT MARONITE ADOLESCENTS
Brian Bielenberg

Introduction
The past two decades have seen tremendous growth in awareness of the precarious situation of lesser used languages around the world, with predictions that as many as 90% may be extinct by 2100. This awareness, coupled with minority peoples’ desires to maintain cultural identity and integrity and their increasing claims to the right of self-determination, have resulted in thousands of local movements to reclaim and revitalize community languages. The success of such programs is dependent on many factors including local ownership, group attitudes towards assimilation, and pedagogical approaches, but perhaps none is more important than promoting the inter-generational transmission of the language - a process deeply dependent on the language attitudes and practices of both speakers and non-speakers. Importantly, language is a key carrier of group culture and identity.

The Cypriot Maronite community has recently initiated efforts to breathe new life into their heritage language and culture, with planning being carried out by representatives of the Cypriot government, language experts and the local Maronite community. An important, though often ignored, voice to be listened to during this revitalization process is that of adolescents. The youth of any community attempting cultural and/or linguistic renewal are a necessary ingredient for success: adolescents serve as role models for younger siblings; they will soon become the parents of the next generation. Overall, it is the Cypriot Maronite youth who will be the true decision makers regarding the continuity of the Maronite language, culture and identity.

This chapter presents the results of a series of observations and interviews with Cypriot Maronite youth in which they talked about identity, belongingness and cultural continuity as viewed through the lens of language renewal. Included are the attitudes of the youth toward speaking and learning the community language, Sanna, the youths’ perspective as to the core components of a Cypriot Maronite identity, and their recommendations regarding current and proposed activities, structures and programs that they believe will help to engage more youth in the renewal of a strong Cypriot Maronite language, culture, and identity. Overall, the results of this project indicate that Cypriot Maronite youth do want to maintain their language and culture, and have solid, creative ideas as to how this can be brought about.
Listening to Adolescents: Supporting Identity and Belongingness

Despite the importance of adolescents to the process of language and cultural renewal, their ideas and needs are often the last to be taken into consideration when starting language revitalization programs. The reasons for this may be different for each community, but likely are tied to common beliefs about adolescence in Western society. Adolescence is a period of life that social scientists, psychologists, psychoanalysts, and the general public typically associate with inner turmoil, ‘storm and stress,’ of strong peer pressures, and the questioning of adult values and assumptions. It is an age of many changes and new responsibilities, especially for adolescents in minority communities who must deal with input from both their own community and that of the dominant society. Popular belief holds that teenagers cannot learn languages as easily as young children. Research, however, provides evidence that older youth and adults are actually better learners in the early stages of language learning than young children, and can thus be leaders in the process of language and cultural renewal.

Importantly, adolescence is the time of life in which issues of identity and belongingness come to the forefront, an aspect of a growing capacity for self-reflection. It is a period of life when young people are searching for and reflecting on their identities, and language choice can play an important role in this process. The way in which a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands future possibilities are all part of identity (Norton 2000). This is related to belongingness, which can be defined as the human need to be an accepted member of a group. The idea of belonging is central to understanding how people give meaning to their lives. Overall, achieving a sense of identity is one of the major developmental tasks of adolescents. Adolescence is the beginning of a period when the young person is able to think about ethnic, social and linguistic labels, what the terms mean, what stereotypes and prejudices are attached to them, and how they apply to themselves. An important concept is that an adolescent is not limited to a single identity. Instead, adolescents, and all humans, are likely to have flexible, contextual, and often contradictory identities even within the same time period. These identities may be nested within those of other members of society, or rival to them. Identity as West (1992) envisions it references many things, foremost among them desire – desire for recognition, the desire for affiliation and the desire for security and safety. It is possible for an adolescent from Cyprus to identify as Greek, Cypriot, Greek-Cypriot or Maronite in one context, but to refuse this identity in another for reasons of safety, security, and belongingness; to claim Maronite identity to show allegiance to family and community, but to switch to a Cypriot identity to affiliate with peers from outside the Maronite community. Such practices, in which a person incorporates multiple social identities, or a sense of belonging to a number of different groups and places at any one time in the course of their lives, is a common practice for most people. Speaking a different language or variety of a language also allows for the adoption of different identities.

However, for adolescents, speaking a language or language variety different from their friends separates them from their peers, which in many ways may be even more uncom-
Language and Belongingness among Cypriot Maronite Adolescents

comfortable than not fitting into the dictated norms of behavior or language use of their own ethnic community. A key stage in initiating the development of pride and positive self-esteem in adolescents is for them to become comfortable with their right and need to both speak their heritage language and practice their heritage culture while simultaneously being proficient in the ways of the broader community. To successfully engage adolescents in language and cultural renewal requires awareness of a number of special factors. First and foremost, it means being aware that adolescents, especially as speakers or potential speakers of a lesser used language or dialect, have a large investment in self image — in who they are. In general, adolescents want to avoid being seen as unskilled, they don’t want to appear different from their peers, and they have a great need to maintain a low personal profile. These are all issues that should be considered in efforts to engage youth in learning and speaking a lesser used language. In addition, it is important to remember that during adolescence Maronite youth are more openly faced with conflicting messages about who they should be. These messages come from the popular media, from peers, and from the dominant society. Most often, schools and mainstream society present them with the message that when there are differences between Maronite and Greek Orthodox value systems, or Cypriot Maronite Arabic and Greek language systems, the Greek way should be considered better. This matters because, as Weedon (1997) points out, “Language is the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (p. 18). The historic ‘need’ for Maronite adolescents to abandon/refuse their language in order ‘to succeed’ and ‘fit in’ in school and Cypriot society is one of the many false assumptions that can make adjustment difficult. This is unfortunate, as research shows that rather than its being the assimilated young people who excel, it is more often the adolescents who add to their traditions and languages, rather than abandoning them, who are most successful in education and life. Still, popular belief in the need for minorities within a society to abandon aspects of their culture and language continues, with the result that today many smaller languages such as Sanna, the language of the Cypriot Maronite community, are disappearing. Thus, language renewal programs need to provide means for positive use and practice of the community culture and language. One important way to approach this is by listening to the young people’s own perspectives on identity, belongingness and language practices.

Listening to the Youth

Youth are beyond childhood, but before adulthood, and their voices and ideas thus often remain unheard. If we want to know what the youth need, and how their sense of identity and belongingness can best be supported, we must listen to them through a participatory process. By participatory I mean working together with the youth to examine the issues identified by the youth themselves. By listening to the youth we can create intergenerational dialogue in which young people are genuine participants. To make this effective, we need to do more than just listen; we need to hear them, creating a full sharing and ownership of the process. This is achieved in this project through a combination of observations of youth
participating in formal settings for language learning and group interviews involving Maronite youth whose families originate from Kormakitis.

Five focus groups were convened for group interviews, with a total of 24 participants. The interviews were loosely structured, taking place at pre-arranged times and locations. The participants included 16 females and eight males, ranging in age from 15 - 21. Thirteen of the youth had both parents from Kormakitis, six others had two Maronite parents, with one originally from a village other than Kormakitis, three had a Greek Orthodox mother, and two had fathers from Lebanon/Syria. Twenty of the 24 fathers are reported by the youth to be speakers of Sanna along with 17 of the mothers. None of the youth consider themselves as speakers of the language, though several claim to understand some Sanna.

The interviews were conducted in groups in order to promote a more comfortable, less formal environment. The interview questions began quite generally, asking about age, schooling history, family, interests, and involvement in the Maronite community. The interviewer then guided the discussion towards the issue of Sanna language, focusing on attitudes, need for the language, language practices in the home, community, and school, language instruction, personal language experiences, and adolescent participation in language renewal efforts. Within these discussions, the participants shared how they position themselves within Cypriot society, including their perspectives on the subtle and not-so-subtle messages conveyed by the dominant ethnic groups (Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots). Finally, the youth were asked to discuss what they would like to see in terms of programs for Cypriot Maronite youth. Each taped interview was transcribed, translated and read in order to identify major themes, and then coded according to those themes. Particular focus was placed on discourse that addresses the concepts of identity and belongingness, and their connections with positive and/or negative views of the self and other. Each group interview lasted approximately one hour. The interviews are the main source of findings discussed in this paper.

Hearing Young Voices
The discussions led to a number of clear concepts related to Maronite youth identity and belongingness, and the possibility of success for language and cultural maintenance efforts for the community. The most important finding was the nearly unanimous desire of the youth to learn Sanna, a desire which contrasts with the beliefs held by many elderly speakers in the community. The youth identify the language as one of the main features that makes them Maronite, though they also clearly state that one does not need to speak it to be Maronite. The youth demonstrate a flexible sense of identity and belongingness that provides ample opportunity to renew a sense of being Maronite while simultaneously participating smoothly in the broader Cypriot society. Overall, the youth pointed to their religion, a sense of community (land and behavior), a shared history, openness and language as markers of being Maronite. The youth seek to support their identity and belongingness through a number of means, and wish to enhance these efforts through cultural and language renewal activities. The final
section of this report presents the recommendations of the Maronite youth in terms of activities, programs and structures they feel would enhance their development of a strong sense of Cypriot Maronite identity and belongingness.

Desire to learn CMA

In communities experiencing language loss throughout the world, whether immigrant, minority, or indigenous, one often encounters a cycle of internal blame regarding the current precarious situation of the language. The older generations tend to blame the young people for language loss, claiming that they appear to be ashamed of the language and have no desire to learn it. The young, non-speakers, on the other hand often place the blame on the elderly speakers, pointing out that they never seemed to make an effort to speak the language to them. The reality of the situation is that most often external forces and events are what have contributed most strongly to the loss of language. Part of the process of language renewal must involve recognition of these outside factors and events in order that the cycle of internal blame and its negative effects can be overcome, thereby allowing all community members, speakers and non-speakers alike, to begin to move forward with the process of language revitalization. For the Cypriot Maronites of Kormakitis, the focus of this project, there are at least three main factors and events that can be tied to the current linguistic situation: education, the events of 1974, and demographic changes.

The impact of education began with the opening of a Greek-medium school in the village. From that point onward, small children who had traditionally spoken only Sanna in their homes and village, were now expected to speak Greek in the village school, bringing the language of the majority much closer to home. A second event that has had much more dramatic, long-term effects on the language is the war in Cyprus in 1974. Prior to 1974 the majority of Maronites lived in four relatively isolated villages in the northern part of Cyprus – Kormakitis, Karpasia, Asomatos, and Agia Marina. Their isolation, along with their strong faith, helped to preserve their identity, and in the case of Kormakitis, also the language. Following the war, the majority of Maronites left their villages and settled in the Greek-speaking areas of Cyprus, mainly in Nicosia. However, they did not tend to settle in specific neighborhoods, instead being spread throughout the city. They soon began to attend the Greek Cypriot schools, where they were a very small minority. Their accents and language were often ridiculed, leading many Cypriot Maronite families to promote the learning of Greek in the home from a very young age. Living among the majority Greek Cypriots, Maronites were forced to struggle against what Hale describes as “The subtle and not-so-subtle propaganda of the associated economically dominate culture and society, which encourages speakers of local languages to believe that their futures depend on switching from their native languages to the dominant one” (Hale 1998: 215). Settlement in Nicosia has had an additional impact on Maronite identity and culture through a dramatic increase in inter-marriage between Maronites and Greek Orthodox Cypriots. Thus, factors that were outside the control of Maronite families – education, 1974, changing demographics - are
primarily responsible for the current endangerment of Sanna. Despite this, within the Kormakitis community it is common to hear the same types of internal blame that prevent rather than promote language renewal. The beliefs of many of the remaining speakers of Sanna are summed up in the words of one of the parents of a young interviewee, who stated, “Our youth are ashamed. They try to hide.”

But are the young people ashamed of being Maronite, of speaking the community language? If the youth of this study are any indication, then the answer is an emphatic No! The interviewed youth were unanimous in expressing a desire to speak Sanna. Not only that, but they also stated that they would like their future children to speak the language. As 17-year-old Jennifer expressed, “We are very few in numbers. We all need to learn the language so that it is not lost. We are Maronites, and we cannot lose our language.” Josephine, 15 years old, supported this view, while at the same time voicing a major concern of the youth, “We want to know our language and learn it, but where can we go to learn it?” Far from being ashamed of the language, these young Cypriot Maronites evidence a pride in the language. Antonia stated, “I like to hear them speak [our language] because I feel that they keep something important for us, they keep it alive.” For 21-year-old Anna, it is a sense of comfort and familiarity: “When I hear Arabica it is something familiar. I feel very proud because I will feel like something… I will know it’s another Maronite…it’s one of us.”

These feelings of pride and a desire to learn the language would seem to provide much hope for the future. So, with such strong feelings of pride, how do we account for the fact that there are only, at best, a handful of speakers of Sanna under the age of 25? For one, the youth recognize the role schooling continues to play in limiting their opportunities to learn and speak Sanna. As Yiannis stated, “Our parents learned to speak Arabica when they were young. We learned Greek, we went to school, and we only spoke Greek. We needed to know Greek.” As with many communities, the young people also assign some of the responsibility for their lack of speaking ability to the speakers of Sanna, their parents and grandparents. As Giorgos, 17, pointed out, “No one taught us, our parents didn’t teach us. In the school we speak Greek. Our friends are Orthodox.” Even in homes where Sanna is used, the youth have not learned. Jeannette stated, “My parents speak Arabic only with their friends and with my grandfather. Because of that I am not able to learn.” The youth noted, however, that responsibility is not only with the parents, but also with themselves: “I’m indifferent when they are talking Sanna because I know that when they want to tell me something they are going to translate it in Greek, like they do all the time.” In this way, the patterns of language use, brought on by Greek-medium schooling and the events of 1974, continue to limit, rather than promote, the learning and use of Sanna in the home. There is a need to alter these patterns, to work with speakers and non-speakers alike to develop strategies for promoting inter-generational use of the language in both the home and the community. This can happen because, as shown in the voices of the young people, there is a pride in the language and a strong desire to learn Sanna, use Sanna, and to pass the language on to the next generation, supporting the continuity not only of the language, but also of a Cypriot Maronite identity and belongingness.
What it means to be Cypriot Maronite

Ever since the events of 1974, Maronites have been blending into Greek Cypriot culture. They primarily attend Greek Cypriot schools, they work alongside Greek Cypriots, and more and more they have been inter-marrying with Greek Cypriots. In essence, they have become an invisible minority in Cypriot society, to the point that many work colleagues or fellow students are surprised to learn that a fellow worker or friend is Maronite; their minority status mostly concealed. In fact, despite existing on the island of Cyprus for over 1000 years, Cypriot Maronites and their language have never been highly visible, a situation reinforced by the fact that Cypriot society as a whole has rarely embraced minority or multicultural awareness. Does this mean that today’s Maronite youth in Cyprus have essentially adopted a (Greek) Cypriot identity? Is there anything that continues to make them unique, that distinguishes them from Greek Cypriots? Do the youth, in other words, maintain any sense of Maronite identity and belongingness? These questions are best answered by listening to the youth themselves.

Flexible identities When asked how they would identify themselves to a foreigner they had just met, the young participants across all five focus groups consistently replied that they would identify themselves as Cypriot. When asked further if they would consider themselves members of the Greek-Cypriot community, as had been determined for Maronites in 1960, the answers were mixed, with some nodding agreement and others shaking their heads. Finally, when questioned as to whether they would ever identify themselves as Maronite, the discussions became animated, with many statements of ‘no.’ It was during one of these discussions that 16-year-old George raised his voice above the others and shouted:

“But I am Maronite! First and foremost Maronite!”

When the interviewer responded with

“But would you ever say it to a stranger?”

He quickly added

“No. To a stranger? No!! They don’t care.”

Perhaps strangers don’t care, but more likely, these youth are adapting their identity to the situation for the purposes of safety and security. Among friends it is safe to acknowledge a Maronite identity. However, when among the Orthodox, there is more security in withholding this information, as non-Maronites have limited knowledge of Cypriot Maronites, and sometimes hold antagonistic views towards them. Many students shared experiences of being called idol worshippers or Turks when identified as Maronite, some even being told that “you are not acceptable.” One female interviewee recalled how, “When I was in primary school, I didn’t play. I had to sit in class by myself. They [the Orthodox children] said, ‘No, you are Maronite, you can’t play with us.’” No doubt, what these youth seek in terms of identity is a desire for recognition and affiliation, but more importantly a desire for security and safety. Yes, they are Maronite, but it is not an identity that is readily shared in public. First and foremost they identify themselves as a Cypriot, from Cyprus. Within Cyprus, they
are from Nicosia. Only among friends or familiar acquaintances are they a Maronite from Kormakitis. By having flexible identities, they are able to ensure security and safety. There is a sense of belongingness to the Maronite community, but it is a belongingness that coexists with belonging to the Greek-Cypriot or Cypriot community, depending on the circumstances. This multiple belongingness and sense of flexible identities allows Maronites to exist in an almost invisible state within Cypriot society, a situation that leaves many Cypriots knowing little about Cypriot Maronites. As Anna pointed out, “They don’t know about us. They do not know about our religion, our community, our history.” These components – religion, community, shared history – combine with language and a worldview to help define what it means for these youth to be Maronite.

Five components of a Maronite identity When asked to identify specific aspects that make up a Cypriot Maronite identity, the markers of someone who belongs to the Cypriot Maronite community, five core components stood out from the comments of these young people: religion, community/geography, a shared history, openness, and language.

Table 1. Components of Maronite Identity as Highlighted by Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community/Geography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shared History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Religion serves as the strongest marker of Maronite identity. When asked what distinguishes Maronites, Josephina responded, “The church. Panagia. We love Panagia very much, but the Orthodox, no. The liturgy. You can feel in this church.” The second component involves a sense of community that is explained both through geography – the traditional ancestral village of Kormakitis – and behavioral expectations. The ability of Maronites to continue to visit their ancestral villages in the northern part of Cyprus when other Greek-Cypriots could not is also part of this marker of being Maronite. There is a strong feeling that the village has helped to maintain the community: “Maronites, they make their houses new. If you go away, if you don’t go to your house, if you don’t ever come to your house in Kormakitis again, I think that Maronites…that would kill them if they don’t let us come to the village.” This connection to the village is more broadly related to a recognition that belonging to a small community, the Kormakitis community, also means that one is held to a different standard of expected behavior: “I think that the way we grew up is different because we are such a small community. We are…I believe our parents are more strict with us and the things we can do, because they reflect the family and community at the end of the day, what we do. And they care about these, our parents.”
Language and Belongingness among Cypriot Maronite Adolescents

Being a member of the Maronite community, particularly the village of Kormakitis, also creates a sense of a shared history that is different from that of other Cypriots. It is a history that includes connections to the village, to the way of life in the village, and even further back to a shared history as a people who came to Cyprus from Lebanon/Syria over 1000 years ago. It also means a shared history of being a minority and having shared the experiences that such a status brings about. These experiences are closely tied to the fourth aspect of being Maronite identified by these youth, a concept of being open and accepting of others. Young Antonia stated, “We are more open-minded. The Maronites - they know, and the Orthodox don’t. We can accept more things. We are more open with friends and ideas. We are more open...because we are a minority.” Such an openness and awareness of the needs of others, they argue, could help to contribute to a more inclusive peace on the island.

Finally, despite its decline in use over the past decades, the young people also identify the community language, Sanna, as a marker of their identity. However, though a marker, it is in no way necessary for one to speak the language to be Maronite. As Paulianna pointed out, “A lot of us don’t know the language. But this doesn’t mean that we don’t go to the church. We still come to the village.” In other words, the components of religion and community/geography are much more important for belongingness than the language. Even if the language were to die, many felt, the community could continue: “It is not only our language that makes us different from others, so if our language dies it is half, it is not all our religion.” Participants also indicated that loss of the language would have little impact on themselves as individuals, but that for the community as a whole, for the shared history, the loss could be great. Though it is not necessary to speak Sanna, knowledge of and an ability to use the language is seen as a means of demonstrating a stronger, deeper identity and belongingness, particularly when used within the Maronite community. Josephine shared that, “When you speak Arabica, you are a better Maronite.” Sixteen-year-old Antonia concurred with her follow-up of, “You are a sure Maronite.” It is perhaps a desire to affirm their identity and belongingness within the community, and a realization of the potential impact language loss would have on the community as a whole that leads to the unanimous expression of a desire not only to begin to learn the language, but more importantly to be able to pass it, and the culture, on to the next generation. Their ideas for how to help make this happen are presented in the next section.

Program Recommendations for Engaging Youth
Hearing the perspectives of these young Cypriot Maronites, it is evident that they have a strong desire to build on and reinforce their Maronite identity and belongingness. The participation of youth in available activities and events provides clear indication that these feelings spread beyond the youth interviewed in this study. In 2008, the first Sanna summer immersion camp was held. Initially, organizers hoped to have 20 youth participate. However, within only the first two weeks of announcing the event, over 40 young Maronites from Kormakitis had signed-up. As the week of the camp neared, the numbers continued to grow.
By the time of the first session on August 18, 2008, there were 81 youth. And the numbers held steady, so that by the final session of that first summer immersion camp, there were still 80 participants, many of them waiting outside the doors at 7:30 am for the 8:00 am start of final day activities. By the second year of the summer immersion camp the average daily attendance had nearly doubled to 151 youth. The young participants travelled to Kormakitis to stay in village homes with families or relatives, breathing new life into the village. As the elders sat in the cafés each morning, they talked about how it seemed like the old times, with all the young children going to school, the sounds of Sanna once again being heard in young voices. Back then, they went to learn Greek, now they were going to learn Sanna. At one of the afternoon activities, a football match, a young boy was heard to say to the parents, in Cypriot-accented English, “Please, the fans out of the field.” In unison, three other youth responded, “Xki fi Sanna!” The youth are obviously hungry for these types of programs. When asked to reflect on the activities of the camp they shared a desire for even more language activities: “Really, it would be better to have more hours. Perhaps a lesson in the morning and another one in the afternoon.” They also point to a need for follow up to the summer camp: “We might forget what we have learned. So we need lessons for the centre. Because it will be another year before we do the next camp. We need weekly lessons.” Beyond learning the language, the youth also suggest a need for more opportunities to interact with other Maronites, and to learn more about their culture and religion. Their recommendations for supporting Maronite identity, belongingness and language renewal are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Youth Recommendations for Language and Cultural Activities for young Maronites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/Activity</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Music and Theater in Sanna</td>
<td>Learn language through activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learn about culture and heritage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maronite Prayer and Religion Classes</td>
<td>Supplement the religion classes of school, which focus on the Greek Orthodox religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversational Sanna Classes</td>
<td>Develop an ability to use the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal Grammar-Based Sanna Lessons</td>
<td>Develop and understanding of the structure of the language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Exchanges with Lebanon</td>
<td>Learn more about shared history and culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Maronite Youth Center</td>
<td>A place to hang out and get to know other Maronite youth</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Music and theater in Sanna

During the first summer immersion camp, a number of spontaneous music sessions arose. In addition, a play was presented in Sanna. In 2009, music and dance became a more formalized component of the summer camp, something greatly appreciated by the youth.
Their enjoyment of these activities no doubt led to them making this a primary recommendation. The youth recommend that weekly theater and music activities be a part of any youth center. They further indicated a desire that these involve singing and acting in Sanna, as a means of learning the language. They suggest that plays be developed from the commonly told stories in the village, indicating that their grandparents have a number of humorous anecdotes about former (and current) village residents. The collection of these stories would provide an ideal opportunity to engage the grandparent generation, and to bring youth and elders together around a constructive project. For the music, several young people indicate a desire for informal ‘jam’ sessions that are primarily focused on music, but that could also include the learning of appropriate Sanna phrases. Youth also suggested that these types of activities be expanded to include art, dance and football. Participation in such activities is highly desired.

Maronite Prayer and Religion Classes
The focus groups led many youth to share negative experiences they have had through school religion classes, where they are required to learn about the Orthodox religion, its history and its prayers: “We have the right not to go to their church. But in primary school we are forced to go there. It was a bad feeling.” Even in St Maron school, the Maronite primary school which opened in 2002, the book used for religion lessons is the Orthodox textbook provided by the government. The students commented on how they “only learn the Orthodox ways, only the orthodox prayers.” In response, a number of youth recommend that any youth center or summer camp include the teaching/learning of Maronite prayers and religious history. The youth expressed a strong interest in learning prayers in Sanna.

Practical Conversational Sanna Classes
The summer immersion camp has made an effort to focus on the development of everyday conversational language through oral immersion techniques. Most participants indicated that they enjoy this type of lesson, and feel that it helps them to learn. Maria G shared, “They explain the words with pictures and gestures. Because they speak only Arabica, we have to
focus to learn.” The Sámi also note that their experiences have led them to the conclusion that courses for beginning learners should be primarily oral based with very little grammar or writing. The youth indicated that they would like to see more of this type of lesson, preferably on a weekly basis throughout the year. The young people also recommend that some of these lessons take place outside of a classroom setting. It was suggested that lessons take place as part of field trips to the seaside and to the mountains, arguing that learning words and phrases in such contexts would be something different and would help the students to learn better. Descriptions of successful implementation of this type of activity in the Sámi programs can be found in Chapter 4 of this report (sub-section on kindergarten children).

**Formal Grammar Based Lessons**

In addition to the conversational lessons, a number of youth indicated that they would like to see language lessons that teach about the writing system and structure of the language; in other words, courses that would help them to learn about the language. There was a feeling that this would enable them to more accurately pass on the language. As noted in the Sámi section of this report, these types of courses are best suited for those who already speak the language, and therefore may not be the most appropriate for the youth. However, they could be useful for any youth involved as teaching assistants either for the language nest taking place in the Payt el Sanna or during the summer immersion camp. Engaging the young people as assistants in these programs would be an excellent means to increase their contributions and positive self-esteem.

**Cultural Exchanges with Lebanon**

Part of the shared history is a connection to the Maronites of Lebanon, with many Cypriot Maronites believing that the place of origin of their community is a region of North Lebanon (see Chapter 1). The youth indicate a strong desire to learn more about the Maronites of this region and their culture. They suggest both visits to Lebanon and the hosting of Lebanese youth.

**A Maronite Youth Center**

All of the above should be facilitated through a dedicated Maronite youth center located in Nicosia, say the youth. This would be a place to spend time with other Maronite young people. The summer immersion camps have helped the youth to come together in the village, but at present they don’t have a common space to meet as Maronite youth in Nicosia. A center, they argue, would help to reinforce their identities and sense of belonging. Most important, it would be a place where all of the above activities could take place. A description of the Sámi Youth Centre, Nuoraid Siida, can be found on p. 36.

It is interesting to note that although the ideas presented above were generated by Maronite youth prior to the Sámi workshops, their recommendations match very closely with the youth activities described in the Sámi section of this report, demonstrating a universality of the desire for belongingness to one’s heritage community and language, as well as a
need to interact more closely with others of similar background. The recommendations also align well with a number of the Group of Experts suggestions regarding language revitalization programs (see Chapter 3 in this report). These two chapters can serve as an excellent source of practical ideas as Maronites continue to move forward with their efforts, learning from and building upon the successes of the Sámi and others.

Sanna Festival
This chapter finishes with a recommendation for one addition to the above list: an annual Sanna Festival to promote the language, culture and heritage of the community. Such an event would actively engage the youth in the language renewal efforts. They could assist in the planning and organization of the festival, and take the lead in the day-to-day activities. A similar festival is run annually by Sámi youth. It began as a gathering organized by 10 youth for approximately 100 people, and has now grown into a festival that attracts nearly 3000 people annually. Sample activities include exhibitions, seminars, a historical walk, a story night, language workshops, performances, games, concerts, and ‘card courses.’ The card courses are designed by young people working together with speakers of the language, and focus on words and phrases used by the younger generation. At the Sámi festival there is a stand where people can stop by and learn a few words and phrases which will enable them to interact with others in Sámi, even if only with simple phrases. These phrases and sentences are printed on laminated cards that fit in the pocket – that is why they are called card courses. The festival goers can then use these cards to interact with speakers in the heritage language. The situational phrases prepared as part of a multimedia Sanna dictionary and phrasebook would serve as an ideal source of ideas for these cards at the Sanna Festival. The continued use of these phrases in the home would then be supported by the distribution of the Multimedia Phrasebook and Dictionary to all Cypriot Maronite families.

As youth become involved in these types of efforts they are engaged not only as learners, but also as active contributors to various aspects of strengthening Maronite language and culture. The youth learn from the elders, and the older generation gets to know the youth. Through their experiences, the young people may eventually become involved in other components, such as serving as teaching assistants in the Language Nest, and even becoming language apprentices in a Master/Apprentice program. By actively engaging the youth in these processes, the community would be laying a solid foundation for the continuity of both the language and culture while simultaneously providing young people opportunities to be actively engaged in civil society – part of policy making.

Conclusions
First and foremost, this project is intended to give voice to the views, needs and aspirations of Maronite adolescents, a group marginalized at a number of different levels – as adolescents, as an invisible minority within Cypriot society, as (potential) speakers of an endangered language, and as social beings of cross-cultural identities. It explores their
notions of belongingness and identity, their perspectives on their endangered language, Sanna, and their group needs within the context of Sanna language revitalization. Overall the youth present an ability to be flexible in their identities, which has great potential for supporting language and cultural continuity. One of the strong markers of identity for many communities is its language, and the Maronites are no different, with the language having been preserved in Cyprus for nearly a millenium. More recently, the community has experienced a period where speakers were often ashamed of their language, but this new generation evidences a strong pride in the language and a desire to learn it. At this point, they remain uncertain as to whether and how the language can be renewed, but they are excited by the prospect and have willingly offered ideas about how it could be done. It is important that the community ensure that the views of the youth are really listened to, taken as authentic. More importantly, their concerns and ideas need to be acted upon and made a part of the language planning and revitalization processes. As active participants, the youth can create and be part of flexible, evolving strategies, developing a sense of ownership that will serve as a foundation for lifelong participation in the process. Overall such inclusion can empower Maronite young people to take a more active role not only within their own community, but also in civil society, promoting a Cypriot society that not only becomes more aware of the richness of diversity, but embraces and affirms this diversity in such a way as to enable Maronite adolescents to develop positive self-images through pride in and practice of their cultural and linguistic heritage. In so doing, the voices of Maronite adolescents can help to bring about a healthier society, one in which peacebuilding is accomplished through affirmation of diversity and the recognition of the need and right of all groups in Cyprus, and the world, to practice their heritage languages and cultures. In the words of parents and grandparents watching the young summer immersion camp participants:

«Η γλώσσα μας συνεχίζεται δυνατά!»
“Our language continues with strength!”
«Ζήτω η γλώσσα μας!!»
“Hurray for our language!!”

References
Breathing new life into an endangered language is a challenging and exciting process. An important step for any community seeking to revitalize its heritage language is to look at, and learn from, its own efforts as well as the efforts of others. In this report, the current linguistic state of Sanna and the rights and obligations following from its official recognition as a minority language have been examined. In addition, the efforts of two different language communities, the Sámi and the Cypriot Maronites, have been presented and discussed. These two communities have a number of similarities, yet like all language renewal efforts, they also face their own unique challenges. The past decades have seen the successful resurgence of a number of endangered languages, providing much hope for those interested in revitalizing Sanna. One of the key concepts that can be learned by connecting with communities such as the Sámi is that while exciting and rewarding, language renewal can also be frustrating. It must be remembered that it is a long process, a process often politicized both within and beyond the community, and that successes are likely to come in spurts. Often, those on the inside lose awareness of just how much has been accomplished. Thus, it is useful to periodically take stock of what has been achieved prior to re-asserting both short- and long-term goals.

In the final section of this report on the Sanna Project collaboration, an effort is made to assist the Maronite community of Cyprus in doing just that. First, a number of successful initiatives carried out over the past decade are described. These highlight the accomplishments and significant achievements to date. This summary of accomplishments is followed by a suggested series of next steps based on the experiences of the Sámi, the recommendations of the Group of Experts following deliberations with the Cypriot Maronite community, the suggestions of Cypriot Maronite adolescents and the literature regarding best practices in language revitalization.
Sanna Revitalization: Accomplishments to Date

Table 1 shows a timeline of important events and developments in the efforts to revitalize the language of the Cypriot Maronite community.

Table 1. Timeline of major events in the process of Sanna revitalization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Milestone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>- Publication of Father Antonis Frankiskou’s Dictionary of the Arabic Dialect of Kormakitis</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 2002 | - Establishment of St Maron Primary School  
      - Initiation of after school language classes at St Maron Primary School |
| 2004 | - Publication of Alexander Borg’s Comparative Glossary of Cypriot Maronite Arabic |
| 2006 | - NGO Xki Fi Sanna established  
      - Launching of Sanna website (www.sana.squarespace.com) |
| 2007 | - Adult Sanna classes organized by Kermia Jtite  
      - Making of documentary *The Language of the Village of Kormakitis: Point Zero*  
      - Conference on Cypriot Maronite Arabic organised by the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Ministry of Interior and the University of Cyprus  
      - Adoption of Sanna alphabet and writing system |
| 2008 | - Establishment of the CMA Group of Experts  
      - 1st Summer Immersion Camp (average daily attendance = 81)  
      - Official recognition of CMA by the Cypriot Government |
| 2009 | - 2nd Summer Immersion Camp (average daily attendance = 151)  
      - Payt el Sanna (House of Sanna) established |
| 2010 | - Language Nest established at Payt el Sanna (Sanna immersion playgroup for pre-schoolers)  
      - Revitalizing CMA Workshops: Learning from the Sámi Experience  
      - 3rd Summer Immersion Camp (average daily attendance = 105)  
      - First Sanna language CD  
      - Sanna Multimedia Phrasebook and Dictionary released |

Key events are described in more detail in the following text.

St Maron Primary School lessons (2002 onward)

Since 2002, Sanna has been taught as an *optional* afternoon lesson at St Maron Primary School in Anthoupoli, Nicosia. Regular participation of students in these after-school lessons (around 20 in 2009/10) is a clear indicator of the children’s interest in learning the language of their ancestors. These lessons have been taught without any books or special training for teachers, and though this is not atypical in the revival of seriously endangered languages, it speaks of the commitment of both teachers and students in the absence of a clear structural policy and official incorporation into the curriculum. Sanna language lessons for adults were also organized in 2007 (8 sessions with 13 registered students). Useful for teaching the language have been Borg’s academic work and Frankiskou’s dictionary.
NGO Xki Fi Sanna (2006)
The establishment of Xki Fi Sanna (meaning ‘speak our language’) has been a landmark decision for Sanna protection and revitalization efforts. It currently consists of 280 members, mostly Cypriot Maronites but also Cypriots from other communities as well as scholars from Cyprus and abroad. Xki Fi Sanna has sensitized the Cypriot Maronite community and the Cypriot government as to the endangered status of the language, lobbied for the recognition of the language and continues to run campaigns for educational support, as well as language documentation and renewal, with particular emphasis on involving youth and children of all ages. It also monitors the implementation of the provisions of the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages with regard to Sanna. In 2007, in collaboration with the Maronite cultural group Kermia Jtite, a short documentary film—‘The Language of the Village of Kormakitis: Point Zero’—was produced. This film has been screened on numerous occasions in Cyprus and abroad to publicize the pressing issue of Sanna protection and revival. Xki Fi Sanna currently coordinates efforts among teachers, scholars and the Cypriot Maronite community for Sanna revival, such as afternoon classes and summer immersion camps (see below). Together with the Maronite Representative to the Cypriot Parliament, they have become the community’s representatives over this particular issue and the main source of information concerning the condition of the language and the needs of its current and/or aspiring speakers. For more information about Xki Fi Sanna see www.sana.squarespace.com.

Development of Sanna Writing System (2007)
A writing system was adopted by the Cypriot Maronite community on December 30, 2007. This system is a modified version of the Roman alphabet with additions from the Greek alphabet to fit the specificities of Sanna. It consists of 23 consonants, five monophthongs and three diphthongs. The community recognizes that while the development of a written code may strengthen the image, raise the prestige and stabilize the structures of its language, it does not suffice to revive and revitalize the language. A set of fonts has been developed and are downloadable from Xki Fi Sanna’s website (see http://www.sana.squarespace.com). At present, it is known that the alphabet is being used to write poetry in Sanna. It is also increasingly used in Cypriot Maronite web logs, such as www.kormnakitis.net, where Sanna speakers use it interchangeably with Greek and English to communicate with other speakers, something that greatly enhances the status and visibility of Sanna.

Establishment of the Group of Experts and Sanna official recognition (2008)
During the Spring of 2008, the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture convened a Group of Experts (linguists and community experts appointed directly by the Council of Ministers) to propose a set of recommendations regarding Cypriot Maronite Arabic. These recommendations were based on the view that Cypriot Maronite Arabic is a valuable part of Cyprus’ intangible cultural heritage and as such should not only be preserved, but more importantly, be reinvigorated. In November 2008, CMA (Sanna) was recognized as a minority language by the Republic of Cyprus.
To date, three Sanna language immersion camps have been organized in the village of Kormakitis (the cradle of Sanna language). These took place during the summers of 2008, 2009 and 2010. Language learning during these camps occurs through an activity based immersion approach. These summer camps target children aged 7-16 and were attended for one week by a daily average of 81 children in 2008, 151 children in 2009 and 105 children in 2010 (the reduced numbers reflect a focus on a narrower age group). During these camps the children are supervised by volunteer teachers, teaching assistants, and recreational coordinators. Activities have included language learning, games, sports, documentary production, and singing and drama in Sanna.

The camps culminate with a show presented by the participants, with the children and young people speaking, singing, and acting in Sanna. The older youths shared the importance of Sanna through participation in a research project, and also produced a short film. The final show was attended by over 300 parents and grandparents in 2009, in a village with a permanent population of less than 130. The evening was filled with much laughter, and as the festivities ended, one elderly woman, a toothless smile on her face, exclaimed, “Our language lives!!”

Payt el Sanna (House of Sanna) (2009)
Establishment of the House of Sanna in the Kormakitis Club at Paphos Gate has been a most important recent development. Through the refurbishing of the Club into a multi-purpose language and cultural centre it has been possible to implement the Sanna Project, and specifically to create the ‘language nest’ for preschool children and the theatre and singing groups in Sanna. To that extent, the House of Sanna has improved childcare service through targeted learn-as-you-play activities and empowered young Maronites in the civil society by providing them with a space for learning, practising and socialising in their endangered language and culture. The Center encourages young Maronites to participate in the social and cultural life of their country by giving them ‘their own space’ through and within which they can produce their distinctive and unique contributions to Cypriot culture and actively share them within and beyond the Maronite community. Youth issues such as growing up as a minority person, dealing with social marginalization, youth opportunity in promoting cultural heritage, and engagement in culturally specific creativity are also directly or indirectly addressed through the existence of the House of Sanna. In short, the activities at the House of Sanna publicize Maronite youth culture and make it more prominent in the Cypriot society.

Next Steps
The descriptions above highlight the tremendous accomplishments of the Cypriot Maronite community to date. Solid foundations have been laid, and it is now time to look forward to what the next five years can bring. Table 2 below outlines a series of suggested ‘next steps’ for the revitalization efforts of the Cypriot Maronite community. These next steps are based
Conclusion and Next Steps

Table 2. Suggested Next Steps for Sanna language renewal efforts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Specific Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Framework/Status Planning</td>
<td>Make the language more visible and an</td>
<td>● Conduct community Language Survey (Chapter 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning/Prestige Planning</td>
<td>accepted part of Maronite and Cypriot society</td>
<td>● Secure right to teach Sanna within the regular curriculum of St Maron School</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>● Sanna as an optional second language at the secondary level at any school throughout Cyprus</td>
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<td>● Articles about Sanna in Cypriot newspapers</td>
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<td>● Designate Kormakitis a protected heritage zone (Chapter 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Use Sanna in street signs and shops in Kormakitis and restore original toponyms (Chapter 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Re-introduction of language for intra-</td>
<td>● Workshops for speakers on how to stay in the language with non-speakers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>communication</td>
<td>● Organize a weekly Sanna night at the Kormakitis Club (Paphos Gate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corpus Planning (Language Documentation)</td>
<td>Language Documentation</td>
<td>● Establish a team responsible for documenting the language and establishing an oral archive of the language</td>
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<td></td>
<td>● Engage youth in the collection of humorous anecdotes from Sanna speakers to be made into skits (Chapter 5)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Preschool/Kindergarten</td>
<td>● Establish Sanna immersion kindergarten at St Maron Primary School (Chapter 4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>School-age youth</td>
<td>● Sanna language Art and PE classes for grades 1 – 2 at St Maron Primary School (CLIL Approach)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>● Continue weekly Theatre and Music groups</td>
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<td>● Continue summer immersion camps</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Produce two Sanna language plays/skits per year</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>● Weekly conversational Sanna at Youth Centre</td>
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<td>● Cultural exchange to Lebanon</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>● Establish Annual Sanna Festival</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>● Establish 3 Master/Apprentice pairs (Chapters 3 and 4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Parent generation</td>
<td>● Establish Sanna nights at the Kormakitis Club</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>● Weekly conversational courses for beginners and passive speakers</td>
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<td>● Weekly Sanna writing courses for speakers, Establish a 4-day language bath in Kormakitis during harvest season (Chapters 3 and 4)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>● Establish 3 Master/Apprentice pairs (Chapters 3 and 4)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 2. Suggested Next Steps for Sanna language renewal efforts *(continued)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Specific Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language Teaching and Learning</td>
<td>Grandparent generation</td>
<td>● Engage grandparents in oral history project and humorous anecdote project</td>
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<td>● Workshop for speakers</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Establish 3 Master/Apprentice pairs (Chapters 3 and 4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Sanna nights in Kormakitis (language documentation, see Chapter 4)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide opportunities for people to be involved with language revitalization in various capacities</td>
<td>● Hold an open forum to set strategic priorities for the next five years</td>
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<td>● Create permanent staffing positions (Chapter 3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>● Create an online space for suggestions regarding language revitalization and volunteering for help</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

In the long term, while government support, both political and financial, is desired and essential, the practical aspects of all successful language revitalization programs are primarily dependent on the active participation of community members. Both Maronite and Sámi language activists have identified the need for revitalization efforts to involve an ever-expanding network of community members from all generations. The Sámi also highlighted the importance of recognizing the connections among identity, language and culture, clearly stating that for the culture to remain intact, the language must be brought back. They emphasized that the best way to do this is to bring the language back through Maronite cultural components such as traditional agricultural practices, traditional medicine and healing, foods, and sports. The Sámi re-emphasized the value in doing the small things and the support that connecting with other communities can provide. Finally, they reiterated the importance of drawing people into the process in whatever small ways they can contribute. Overall, the Sámi reminded the Maronite language activists of the need to keep each other positive. They stated that it is better to be happy about the one child who has learned a Sanna phrase than to focus on the five non-speakers. They observed that the fire of language renewal in the Maronite community has been lit, and the task now is to ‘feed the flames.’

One of the contributions of critical social theory refers to our understanding of the complexity of power. Specifically, that power is not just a repressive system of governance that compels individuals to do something irrespective of their will, which is the traditional approach to power. Rather, power can be seen as an imbalance in social and political relationships where an individual's behaviour is shaped by what s/he considers to be true knowledge about the proper, valuable, necessary, etc, and therefore s/he thinks s/he ‘freely’ opts for something, without realizing that this knowledge is ideologically biased. From this perspective, power can also be viewed in a positive sense, namely as the production of knowledge which reverses the relations of domination and encourages those individuals who find the alternatives persuasive to resist and innovate with and against the social norm.
This is what we understand by empowerment in the Sanna Project; i.e., empowerment to use language and culture in a way that transgresses the dominant Cypriot norm that has devalued CMA and minority cultures.

Cypriot Maronites should not be compelled nor morally coerced to revive or not to revive their endangered language. But they should be empowered to learn or improve, to make diverse use of and innovate with Sanna, if they so wish. Empowerment should take place at both the communal level (where disagreements and political disputes sometimes reveal a certain indeterminism as to revival) and, importantly, also at the personal level where choices are less complicated for individual Maronites, be it children, youth or adults. It is the responsibility of both the Cypriot government and the Cypriot Maronite community to allow that option to remain available and made practically meaningful for current and future generations. The Sanna Project has assisted in laying the foundations for such a possibility.

**List of Contributors**

**Brian Bielenberg** is an Assistant Professor of Educational Linguistics serving as a language teaching and learning consultant for Xki Fi Sanna.

**Costas M. Constantinou** is Professor of International Relations at the University of Nicosia.

**Tone Elvebakk** is Project Manager at the Várdobáiki Sámi Centre.

**Beatrice Fløystad** is Head of Márkománák Sámi kindergarten at Várdobáiki Sámi Centre.

**Magne Huva** is a Project worker at Várdobáiki Sámi Centre.

**Marilena Karyolemou** is Associate Professor of Linguistics at the University of Cyprus.

**Marit Myrvoll** is a Researcher at the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research.
The report can be ordered from:

PRIO Cyprus Centre
P.O.Box 25157, 1307 Nicosia, Cyprus
Tel: +357 22 456555/4
priocypruscentre@cytanet.com.cy

This report can be downloaded from: www.prio.no/cyprus
Cypriot Maronite Arabic (CMA), or Sanna to its speakers, is a ‘severely endangered language’ registered in both the UNESCO Red Book and the UNESCO Atlas of Languages in Danger. In 2008, the Republic of Cyprus recognized CMA as a minority language under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and established a Committee of Experts to make recommendations for its protection and revival. Efforts have been underway to develop a structural policy for the protection and revival of CMA; however, there remains a lack of communal facilities, relevant experience and coordinated and well targeted action. In 2009, the Sanna Project was funded jointly by the European Economic Area Grants and the Republic of Cyprus with the aim of supporting CMA revival through activities targeting Cypriot Maronite children and youth. To this end, the Sanna Project has created a novel community centre, the Payt el Sanna – House of Sanna – which functions as a cultural and language centre. This has provided opportunities for recreation that have constructively engaged Maronite children and youth in cultural activities which explicitly or implicitly immerse them in CMA. The Sanna Project has also raised awareness among Maronite youth and children, in particular, and Cypriot stakeholders working with children and youth, in general, as to the benefits of protecting and reviving CMA. Quite importantly for current efforts of revival, it has transferred knowledge and best practice from a Sámi NGO involved with revitalising the Sámi language in Norway to the Cypriot Maronite community.

This Report outlines the current efforts and recommendations for CMA revival in the light of the experiences of the Sanna Project and the Committee of Experts. It suggests ways and means that interested parties can build upon so as to make CMA revival possible and through which the members of this Cypriot minority community can be empowered to make their own distinct contributions to an island that is and should remain culturally rich and diverse.