



# A dream of multicultural school in Estonia

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- Facts. Today: too segregated ways of studying
- Wishes. Preferences for school and kindergarten languages and models
- Why differences? What is the problem?
- Dream for future

# Today

## 1) In kindergarten:

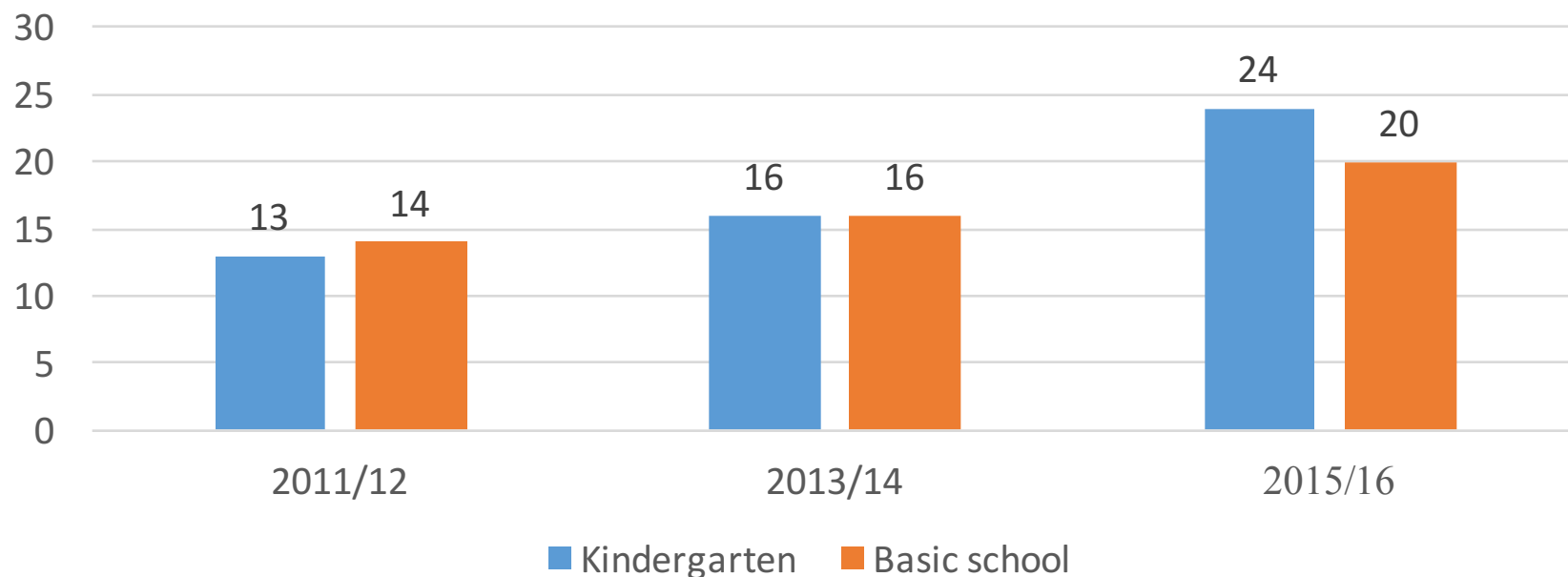
- Ca 55% in Russian language institutions
- Ca 20% at Estonian language institutions
- Ca 25% in language immersion programmes

## 2) In basic school

- Ca 70-72% Russian language schools
- Ca 8-9% study at Estonian school,
- Ca 20% in language immersion classes

# Language immersion becomes more popular

% of children with non-Estonian as home language going to language immersion programme



Participation in language immersion classes has been doubled during last 10 years

But not studying at Estonian-language schools?

Participation in Estonian language kindergarten and school has been stable over last 5 years

- Ca 20% children whose mother tongue is not Estonian go to Estonian language kindergarten
- Ca 8% to Estonian language basic schools

# Why?

## What parents would like?

According to Integration Monitoring 2015:

- 32% of Russian language parents prefer Basic education in Estonian and
- 17% in language immersion
- Only 5% of parents do not want multicultural and – lingual education
- 66% of Estonian parents and 77% of parents from other nations think that Estonian-language studies could start in kindergarten (LM2015)

# What students would like?

Russian language upper-secondary school graduates:  
*„There should be more lessons in Estonian language and these could start before gymnasium, both for developing Estonian language skills as well as promoting communication with each other and creating stronger common ground.“*

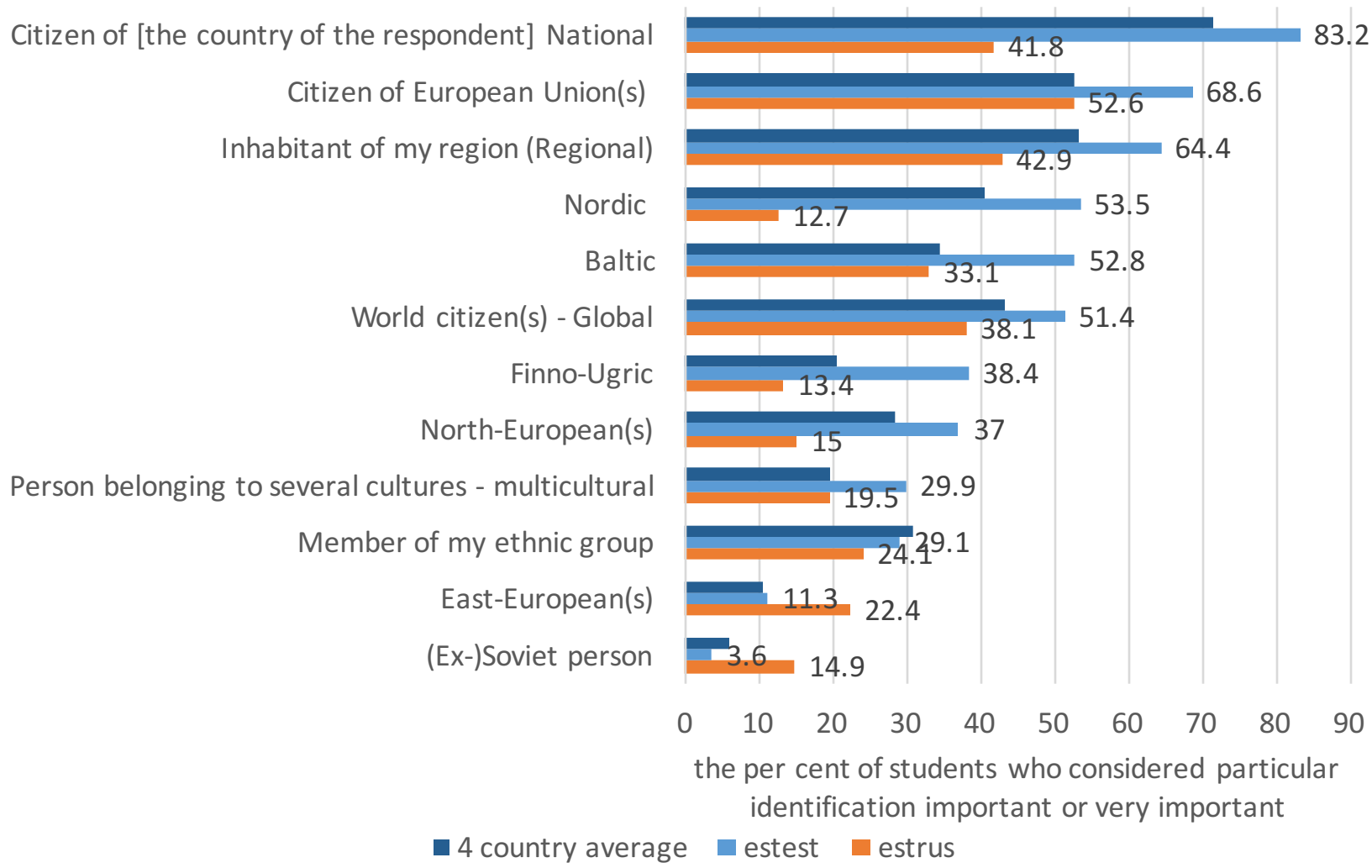
*„ühiseid eestikeelseid ainetunde võiks olla rohkem ning need võiksid alata juba enne gümnaasiumiastet, seda nii eesti keele oskuse arendamise, omavahelise suhtluse tihendamise kui ka tugevama ühtsustunde tekitamiseks“ (LM 2015 intervjuud)*



# WHY problem? Connection to Estonia

- 50-75% of Russian young people connect their future with Estonia (Idnurm jt 2011; Mägi, Nestor 2012; Metslang jt 2013)
- Uppers secondary gradutes who intend to move abroad:
  - 7% of Estonian speakers
  - 31% of Russian speakers (Mägi, Nestor 2012).
- Only 42% of Russian speaking upper secondary students value Estonian citizenship as relevant identity (Valk jt 2013)

# Different identities among youth from 4 countries (Valk jt 2013)



# WHY problem? Language skills

Language learning starts too late and is not related to real-life communication

- Minimal required Estonian language level (B1) is acquired by 2/3 of Russian speaking Basic school graduates
- Only 20% Russian youth uses Estonian language on everyday bases
- Language skills related to academic performance:  $r=0,75$

(Connection between IQ and language skills weaker before age 10-12)

# DREAM of multicultural school

- At the level of basic school (currently Estonian-language subjects mainly in gymnasium)
- Proactive strategy of schools
  - Preparing parents
  - Creating positive image: „Open start“
- Clear strategy for recruiting students
- Main language is Estonia, if needed additional classes in Estonian
- High level mother tongue and culture learning, some subjects in English/Russian

# DREAM

- Some subjects, hobby classes in another language (English, Russian, ..) also for Estonian children
- International approach and European identity
- Supporting multicultural identity: creating meaning (what does it mean to be Russian-Estonian, Syrian-Estonian) and positive image. Making multicultural identity an easy choice
- Cross-cultural interaction games in smaller classes, later lessons for cross-cultural communication

# DREAM

- Multiperspective text-books in
  - Citizenship education: pluses and minuses of multiculturalism
  - History: the role of different ethnicities in Estonian history, Estonian history centered on land rather than ethnicity
  - Literature: Russian-Estonian authors; emigration, multicultural issues in literature
- Open teachers, when needed bilingual teachers

# NOT JUST DREAM

- In 2015 Ministry started to create the concept of multicultural school
- Reality in today's schools with mixed student body: more oriented to assimilation. No high level teaching of mother tongue. Little attention to relations.
- 2016 started 4 pilot schools and 1 kindergarten: Kohtla-Järve Järve G; Kunda ÜG; Kiltsi PK, Kohila Lasteaed; Juhan Liivi nim. Alatskivi KK
- Plan to work out policy based on their experiences  
poliitika



**Thank you!**

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# Presentation given at International conference **Integration Challenges in a Radicalising World**

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