



Young nature investigators

KURESSAARE HIGH SCHOOLS

Kuressaare Gümnaasium

Kuressaare Gümnaasium is the biggest educational establishment in Saaremaa county. The speciality of our study system is period study: the study year is divided into 5 periods, in every period each student has only 5-6 subjects. All subjects have been divided into 35-lesson courses. As students have less subjects in one period, it makes the study process more intensive. The school offers optional subjects set, which together with obligatory subjects make up one study line (program). The school offers 6 study lines. The programme "AXEL" is used to organise the schoolwork. AXEL forms schedule for each student contains database of our school and quite soon it will give us the review of students grades.

Schooling centre "Osilia" is a unit of Kuressaare Gümnaasium. Its general costs are covered by the city, but other expenses must be covered from own resources. The main goal of Osilia is teachers' advanced training. The centre can also arrange lectures, courses and conferences, distant education or communication with the

Internet. Kuressaare Gümnaasium has rather good computer equipment and also two computer classes with a connection to the local network and to the Internet. Courses in environmental protection, mathematics for secondary school graduates, English, training of headmasters, SME training, anti-AIDS programmes and for example economical geography have also been arranged.

Saaremaa Uhisgümnaasium

Saaremaa Uhisgümnaasium is the oldest Estonian upper secondary school on Saaremaa Island. The school has the right to compose all study curriculum itself. The aim of the school is to give traditional high level secondary education and prepare students for universities.

Six years ago special nature classes were established behind the foreign language, physics-math, and state defence options. In the nature classes more biology, geography, chemistry and physics are taught. The curriculum of the science direction also contains several special subjects like oceanography or native fauna

and flora. Every year practice camps and study trips are organised for students.

Different activities are used to vary environmental education. One important part of the teaching/study process is the creation, presentation and defence, by students, of their individual research projects. That field of activity has allowed connecting every-day schoolwork with the cooperation of other schools. Such students' work needs some output, which gives the students further motivation to work on this field. The experience of the school shows that a very good output for students is an annual international student conference.

The first international conference "Environment & Home" was organised by Saaremaa Uhisgümnaasium in 1992. This conference exceeded all expectations and became very popular both in Estonia and Scandinavia. So far, 5 international conferences have taken place. Students have held visitor presentations from Estonian, Latvian, Finnish, Swedish, Danish, and Russian schools. The organisers of the conference have planned to enlarge the circle of participants up to all Baltic Sea countries.

Five years long experience has shown that international student conference gives the following benefits: improvement of environmental education in schools, stimulation of students to work on environmental problems, output for students' research work and environmental activity or to make public the local environmental problems discovered by students. This is also possibility to find new friends, to exchange of experiences and ideas and to begin cooperation between schools.

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