



## Press release

### **busuu.com wins the European Language Label for innovative projects in language teaching and learning**

***“Web 2.0 language learning” has now been awarded – the leading language learning community busuu.com (<http://www.busuu.com>) receives the European Language Label award***

**Madrid, September 30<sup>th</sup> 2009** – Every year, each member state of the European Union awards under the “European Language Label” innovative projects in language teaching and learning. This year, the leading online community for learning languages, busuu.com, has received this prestigious prize from the Spanish Ministry of Education for their innovative online learning platform.

The award recognizes “new initiatives in the field of teaching and learning languages, rewarding new techniques in language teaching, spreading the knowledge of their existence and thereby promoting good practice”.

busuu.com (<http://www.busuu.com>) is a free online community for learning languages. Users have free access to audio-visual online courses in currently five languages (Spanish, German, Italian, French and English). The courses are based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) covering the levels A1, A2, B1 and B2. Besides the individual courses, users can directly improve their language skills directly with other native speakers from the community. Users connect via an integrated video-chat with other native speakers from around the world to practice their conversational skills. Each user is not only “student” of a foreign language but also a “tutor” of his/her own mother tongue.

After 16 months of existence, the community currently has more than 170,000 users from over 200 different countries. In the year 2008, busuu.com already has been an official project of the UNESCO during the international year of languages.

“We are very pleased to receive this prestigious award from the European Union” says Adrian Hilti, one of the Co-founders of the company. “It shows that the European Union is open to new language learning activities which perfectly fit the needs of the modern language learner”.

The prize is remunerated with 1,500 EUR. busuu.com has decided to donate this amount to the NGO Cameroon Association for the Protection and Education of the Child (CAPEC) in Cameroon. The money will be used to construct a children school within an underprivileged region of the Centre Province of Cameroon. busuu.com has chosen Cameroon as destination for its donation as the name of the community comes from the language Busuu in Cameroon, which is spoken by only 8 people.

“It is great to know that busuu.com not only helps people around the world with their language learning, but also can make a small contribution to educational development in the poor parts of our world” says Bernhard Niesner, the second Co-Founder of busuu.com.



### **About busuu.com**

busuu.com (<http://www.busuu.com>) is a free online community for learning languages. Users have access to audio-visual learning material covering more than 150 different day-to-day topics. Additionally, language skills can be directly improved together with native speakers from around the world. Users connect via an integrated video-chat with other native speakers of the community to practice their conversational skills. Each user is not only “student” of a foreign language but also a “teacher” of his own mother tongue.

The start-up was founded in Madrid at the beginning of 2008 and has currently more than 170,000 users from over 200 different countries.

In the year 2008, busuu.com was accepted as a project for the UNESCO’s International Year of Languages. As part of this commitment, busuu.com launched a campaign to rescue the nearly extinct whistled language Silbo Gomero (<http://www.busuu.com/silbo>).

The name of the site comes from the Busuu language of Cameroon, which according to an ethnological study from the 80s is only spoken by 8 people.

### **About the founders**

**Bernhard Niesner (30)**, born in Austria, is responsible for Marketing & Sales at busuu.com. Before founding the company he worked for the international strategy consulting firm Roland Berger Strategy Consultants. During his international MBA at the prestigious ‘Instituto de Empresa’ in Madrid, he met his current business partner Adrian Hilti. Bernhard speaks his mother tongue German, fluent English and Spanish and is currently improving his Brazilian Portuguese.

**Adrian Hilti (35)**, from Liechtenstein, a small country in the heart of Europe, is responsible for IT & Operations within busuu.com. He worked for the strategy consulting firm Arthur D. Little before founding busuu.com. Additionally, he gained experience in the Swiss High-Tech company Shockfish. Adrian also completed an international MBA at the ‘Instituto de Empresa’ where the initial idea for busuu.com was developed. Adrian speaks fluent German, French and English and is currently improving his Spanish.

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Photos & more press material: <http://www.busuu.com/press>