

busuu.com launches campaign to save nearly extinct language

Busuu, a Cameroonian language with just 8 remaining speakers, is the focus of a rescue campaign by largest European web 2.0 community for learning languages

Madrid, 12th of January 2011 – busuu.com, Europe's largest online language-learning community with more than 1 million users, has launched a campaign to save Busuu, a Cameroonian language with only 8 remaining speakers and on the UNESCO's list of 'critically endangered' languages.

To raise awareness of Busuu and prevent its extinction, busuu.com has created a music video in Busuu with the last speakers and collaborated with experts to produce an audiovisual learning unit to teach the language. Together, these are the first pieces of evidence of the Busuu language available online, which users around the world can access for free.

In summer 2010, busuu.com (which takes its name from the language) sent a film crew to the remote village of Weh in north-west Cameroon to produce a music video sung by the Busuu community. The video is available on both YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLQK0lebu5A>) and a dedicated website (<http://www.savebusuu.com>), through which visitors can create their own song in Busuu to share with their friends. The web 2.0 start-up also created a Facebook fan page (<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-Busuu/101146786623844>), which already has thousands of supporters around the world.

In addition, busuu.com developed an audiovisual learning unit (<http://www.busuu.com/savebusuu>) to teach Busuu by drawing upon its experience as a provider of interactive language courses and with the help of international ethnological linguists, who also formed part of the expedition to Cameroon.

“We already teach English, Spanish and other languages on busuu.com, so why not a nearly extinct language like Busuu as well? It's an innovative campaign that could influence the way other endangered languages are promoted in the future”, says Bernhard Niesner, co-founder and CEO of start-up busuu.com.

“The Busuu community was very happy to support our initiative and its speakers want to save the language, so we hope that we can revitalise it with the help of our enthusiastic worldwide community”, added Adrian Hilti, co-founder of busuu.com.

According to the UNESCO, nearly half of the existing 6500 languages in the world are on the verge of extinction. Since 1950, 230 languages have become extinct and with them, the cultural identity of their speakers.

busuu.com offers free and paid-for interactive language courses that integrate a chat application between students and native speakers from its worldwide community. Founded in Madrid in 2008, the start-up has already received several prestigious awards such as the European Language Label from the European Commission and the Innovation Award of the CeBIT.

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Useful links

- Dedicated Busuu campaign website: <http://www.savebusuu.com>
- Busuu music video on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mLQK0lebu5A>
- Learning unit in Busuu: <http://www.busuu.com/savebusuu>
- Busuu Facebook fan page: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Save-Busuu/101146786623844>
- busuu.com main page: <http://www.busuu.com>

About busuu.com

busuu.com (<http://www.busuu.com>) is Europe's largest online community for learning languages with more than 1 million users from all over the world. Users have free access to audio-visual online courses for learning Spanish, German, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and English.

Users' language skills can also be improved through direct interaction with other native speakers via an integrated video-chat application and peer-to-peer text corrections. Each busuu.com user is therefore a 'tutor' of their own mother tongue as well as a 'student' of a foreign language.

The start-up was founded in Madrid in early 2008. It was a UNESCO partner project during the International Year of Languages in 2008 and received several prestigious awards such as the European Language Label of the European Commission and the Innovation Award of the CeBIT. busuu.com recently made the second place within the European TechCrunch Awards in the "Best Learning Start-Up" Category.

For more information about busuu.com, visit: www.busuu.com/press