



gaia  
YES!

APPLICATION IN  
FORMAL EDUCATION

*Gaia Kool - a school  
inspired by Gaia Education*

*Gaia YES!*

## *Application in Formal Education*

Gaia Kool - a school inspired by Gaia Education

The inspiration and impulse for starting Gaia Kool (Gaia School) arrived during Gaia Education's first EDE course in Estonia in 2011. Two mothers of young children - Marit Otsing-Saar and Kaja Karu- Espenberg - were attending the EDE course and it had such an impact on them, that they decided to establish a new school for their children based on Gaia Education's values and content. They invited two other Gaia Education activists - Ele Koppel and Toomas Trapido - and started the journey towards opening a formal private school. Gaia Kool opened its doors in the fall of 2014 with 5 kids.



*Students of Gaia Kool gathering mushrooms*

Gaia Kool follows the principles of Gaia Education, it promotes holistic worldview and sustainable lifestyle, caring about the Earth and wellbeing of humans. Gaia Kool is a community school, our parents, children and teachers form a community where everybody has a role of the teacher and a student, we learn from each other. We believe that the school cannot exist apart from everyday life and is not a separate institution but it needs to be a comfortable environment for both teachers and students in order to learn together through experience and shared knowledge. There are class teachers for every class and subject teachers for foreign languages such as English and Russian, Handicraft and Technologies, Art, also Physical education and Music. We offer different kinds of experimental subjects for kids such as Self-expression, Drama and acting, and Yoga. One week of the seven week learning period is so called project week during which the children either visit some places connected to their current study topic or stay at home and get involved with their own personal project. Usually it takes about the month to finish the project, after that the students will present it to others and then choose another topic and start with a new project.



*Lesson of making fire*

There are circa 130 students present at school every day. Gaia Kool also has the unique position in the Estonian educational field as we offer home schooling and distance schooling. These are the possibilities used by those parents whose children either cannot come to school every day for some reasons or they deliberately would like to teach their kids at home and just occasionally come and meet the teacher at school. There are currently ca 50 students in the home schooling program. All those children are getting personal attention and have their own specific learning program.



*Traditional first schoolday ceremony in Kadrioru park near the schoolhouse*

Our main goal is to help children and families to understand that each individual has its unique place here on Earth. And through understanding of who we are we can start learning and understanding how to live in symbiosis with our planet and nature. Our students are gaining their knowledge through different kind of study – our teachers are creating the environment which is based on creativity, freedom of expression, and eagerness towards learning. We cherish and creatively use our national traditions.



Gaia Kool participated in Gaia YES! project and developed the first version of the curriculum for Gaia Gymnasium. It draws from the four dimensions of Gaia YES! curriculum for gymnasiums and also creatively integrates several subjects into projects and theme periods, for example 'creating the best village in the world', 'ancient Greek festive dinner' etc. There is special emphasis on places and traditional (indigenous) knowledge and worldview. Gaia Kool plans to open its Gaia Gymnasium in the autumn of 2023.