



Nordplus



TELL ME CULTURE

(Project number: NPHZ-2024-10158)

**BUILDING INTEREST IN LEARNING
LOCAL LANGUAGES THROUGH
INTERACTIVE CULTURE ACQUISITION**

REPORT





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Introduction

“Tell Me Culture” is a Nordplus Horizontal project (NPHZ-2024/10158).

The project aims to **improve local language skills** combining the learning process with local tourism and **cultural heritage acquisition and storytelling**, at the same time **enhancing interest in their own region's and countries history**, thus paying more attention to less known places and regions in the partner countries.

The partners are from four countries:

- SIA Valodu Mape from Latvia,
- B-Creative Association from Sweden,
- Learning for Integration ry from Finland and
- EE-MTÜ Selts Raeküla from Estonia.

With this survey the partnership intends to discover the main obstacles of disinterest in local language and heritage and possible solutions based on the answers from all involved target groups: youth, adults and seniors.



Research results in partner countries (I)

Latvia

Demographic data

In Latvia 16 answers were collected during the survey. Half of the respondents were students up to the age of 17 years. The rest were adults of which quarter were at the age group 55+.

Self-assessment

The majority (13 out of 16) assess their knowledge of local history and cultural heritage as 3 or 4 points out of 5, while 2 respondents evaluate their knowledge at the highest level.

Activities that impact interest in local languages and culture

Only 1 respondent disagrees that local tours would improve interest about local cultural heritage and language acquisition. 68,8% of the respondents consider existing learning materials as partly promoting youth's interest in local languages.

As the **main obstacles** were mentioned:

- The high impact of English in daily activities (75%),
- Understanding the importance of local language conservation preservation (50%).



Information accessibility

- 87,5% are aware of local tours and 15 out of 16 respondents consider the accessibility of local tourism information are very good or excellent.
- 37,5% are looking for tourism information in social media, local info center or its website, suggestions from others.

Learning preferences

When asked about interactive and storytelling activities as assistive elements to improve intergenerational dialogue, the answers divide in half:

- 43,8% say “rather yes”, while
- 56,3% agree completely.

As we can see all respondents consider these elements as beneficial in communication.

As the most valuable **local language and culture learning methods** respondents consider the following (several answers were possible):

- Local tours (50%),
- Storytelling activities with locals (18.8%)
- Short tourism videos (12.5%) and Educational materials (12.5%)
- Podcasts and audio materials (6,3%)



To summarize, this survey shows that the respondents agree that the **information flow about local tourism activities is widely accessible** in different platforms and that **knowledge about cultural heritage may positively impact cross-generational dialogue** as well as interest in learning local languages.

To improve the situation there are two aspects that must be improved: **diminishing impact of English language in daily activities by introducing** more engaging activities in local languages, such as **local tours, communicative storytelling activities and educational materials**, while audio materials are not viewed as promising in boosting interest in local treasures.

These activities according to our respondents might also **improve the understanding of the importance of local heritage and language preservice. Engaging and interactive content** might be the key to preserve small languages and promote them among our own people.



Research results in partner countries (II)

Sweden

Demographic data

In Sweden 22 people took part in the Tell me culture survey – all were Swedish.

31.8% represent the age group 55+, another 31,8% are youth up to 17 years old, the rest of the participants fit in the adult range between 24-54 years.

Self-assessment

7 of the respondents assessed their local cultural knowledge as less than average, meanwhile 10 participants rated it as average and 5 people as very good or excellent.

Activities that impact interest in local languages and culture

- 40,9% of the surveyed people consider that engaging cultural activities would improve interest in local languages very much,
- while 59,1 % believe that it would somewhat improve the interest.

As the **main obstacles** were mentioned:

- 40,9 % impact of English language in daily activities
- 54,5 % lack of understanding of the importance of preserving local languages

Sweden



Information accessibility

- 40,9% are not aware of local tour offer in the region
- while 36,4% confirm the availability of local tours
 - 27,2% believe that the **accessibility and availability** of local tourism information is not well developed,
 - meanwhile 45.5% consider it fairly accessible and
 - another 27,2% rate it as very good or excellent.

The **most used sources** when in need of local tourism information, people use the following:

- 40,9 % Local tourism website
- 22,7 % Suggestions from others
- 18,2 % Tourism center
- 18,2 % Social media

Learning preferences

When asked how much **local tours** would **improve interest of local cultural heritage and acquisition of native language**

- 40,9% responded that it would help very much
- 59,1 % - "somewhat"

As the **most engaging learning methods** were mentioned :

- 40,9 % Storytelling activities
- 27,3 % Short tourism videos
- 13,6 % Local tours
-

In regards to **storytelling** as a significant component the all respondents believe that it would have a **positive impact**:

- 54,5 % Probably
- 40,9 % Yes



To conclude these results, the surveyed Swedish people do believe in storytelling as an engaging and generation-bonding activity.

This also would strengthen the local community as the impact of English language has been detected as the main obstacle in local culture and language acquisition.

More interactive, engaging, communicative activities would improve the interest and awareness of local heritage quite significantly.

The learning and information search methods preferred by the respondents discover the need for events that involve community and communication, instead of the habitual learning methods.



Research results in partner countries (III)

Finland

Demographic data

In Finland 10 people took part in the Tell me culture survey. All the respondents were mainly school teachers from Finland, except one respondent was from Estonia.

The largest age group was 55+ (40%), the next largest groups were 45-54 (30%) and 24-34 (30%).

In terms of the languages the respondents knew, all of them spoke Finnish and English (100%) and 90% spoke also Swedish. Other mentioned languages: mainly French and Russian, a few also knew Estonian, Italian and Spanish.

Self-assessment

The majority of the respondents (60%) estimated that they know the local history and cultural heritage very well, and 30 % estimated they know it quite well.

Activities that impact interest in local languages and culture

- 40% answered that they are supported, 30% thought that they are not supported and 30% were not sure.

As the **main obstacles** were mentioned:

- The majority said the influence of the English language in daily activities (60%),
- 40% the learning content is old fashioned and not appealing
- 40% lack of understanding on how to preserve local languages.

Finland



Information accessibility

- Responding about **possibilities to participate in a local tours** in your town or area, the vast majority (80%) answered yes, and only 10% answered no and 10% answered they did not know.
- 50% estimated the rate of the **availability and accessibility of local tourism** offers and information as good, 30% as average and 20% as fairly poor. None of the respondents estimated it as very good.
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- The **most used sources** when in need of local tourism information, people use the following:
 - 40% books and publications,
 - 40% local travel and tourism websites online,
 - 10% from travel centres and
 - 10% from social media.

Learning preferences

When asked how much **local tours** would **improve interest of local cultural heritage and acquisition of native language**

- the majority (80%) answered that it would improve it greatly,
- 20% estimated that it would improve somewhat.



In regards to **storytelling interactive activities and storytelling improve dialogue between generations**,

- the vast majority (80%) answered yes and
- 20% answered likely.

As the **most engaging learning methods** were mentioned:

- 30% storytelling with locals,
- 30% local tours,
- 20% interactive games.
- Some also mentioned education materials and all of the above.

In summary, there was disparity among the respondents whether the local language were supported enough in the education system. When asked whether it was possible to attend local tours in the area, the majority (80%) said yes, however when asked about the rate of the availability and **accessibility of local tourism offers and information**, only **half** of the respondents **thought it was good**, 30% thought it was average. Thinking of the **local tour impact on the interest in local cultural heritage and acquisition of the mother tongue**, the vast majority (80%) answered that it would improve it greatly. When asked whether **interactive activities and storytelling improve dialogue between generations**, the vast majority (80%) answered yes. The activities that were of most interest in getting to know local culture were storytelling activities with locals, local sightseeing tours and interactive games.

Finland



Research results in partner countries (IV)

Estonia

Demographic data

34 responses were collected in Estonia. Young people up to 23 years old accounted for 20.6% of respondents. The same percentage was also in the age group 24-44 years old. The age group 45-54 and 55+ accounted for 29.4% of respondents in each group.

Self-assessment

14 people (41.2%) out of 34 rate their knowledge of local history and cultural heritage at 4 points out of 5. 12 people (35.3%) rate their knowledge at 3 points. Only 1 person rates their knowledge at the highest level, 5 points.

Activities that impact interest in local languages and culture

- 41.2% of respondents thought that local tours would greatly improve interest in culture and cultural heritage. 58.8% somewhat agreed with this. 52.9% of respondents believe that existing educational materials support young people's interest in local languages.

As the **main obstacles** were mentioned:

- The influence of English in everyday activities (82.4%)
- The learning content is outdated (41.2%)
- Understanding the importance of preserving the local language (29.4%)



Accessibility of information

79.4% of respondents are aware of the availability of local tours. Only 1 respondent thinks that the availability of local tours is excellent. 5.9% of respondents think that the availability is very poor. 32.4% and 26.5% of respondents' opinions are in between, 3 and 4 points.

88.2% of respondents search for information about local tours on social media, 61.8% on local tourism websites and 47.1% listen to recommendations from other people.

Learning preferences

When asked about interactive and storytelling activities as elements that improve intergenerational dialogue, the answers are divided: 50% very likely, 41.2% and 8.8% thought that rather not.

As we can see respondents consider these elements useful for communication.

The preferred local language and culture **learning methods** were:

- local tours (73.5%),
- storytelling activities with locals (64.7%)
- educational materials (52.9%)
- interactive games (50%)
- short tourism videos (47.1%)
- podcasts and audio materials (38.2%)



This study shows that **information about local tourism activities is widely available** on various platforms. **Knowledge of cultural heritage can positively influence intergenerational dialogue and interest in learning local languages.**

To improve the situation, two aspects should be improved:

- reducing the influence of English in daily activities by introducing more engaging activities in local languages, such as local tours,
- communicative storytelling activities and educational materials, while audio materials are not seen as promising.



Summary

While it was expected to reach 40 respondents in total, the partners have exceeded these expectations quite significantly by questioning in total **82 people from Sweden, Finland, Estonia and Latvia**.

Also the data covers all involved age groups - **youth, adults and seniors**.

The results of the "Tell me culture" survey discover the main existing **obstacles that delay the interest and learning of local cultural heritage and languages**:

- Number one threat in all surveys was mentioned the **impact of English language**
- which was followed by the **lack of understanding the importance of cultural heritage preservation**.

As **possible solutions** the results suggest:

- introducing **up-to-date** learning materials;
- activities that promote **building the strength of the community** such as:
 - Storytelling activities with locals
 - Local tours
 - Spread more information about local events
 - involve in these activities participants of all ages.

"Tell me culture" team strongly believes in **culture as one of the key elements to build our future**, while acknowledging local treasures, and thus **improving tolerance and communication** between generations and nations by **bringing them together** in cultural context-based activities.