

Summary of Study Visit in Zgierz/Łódź, Poland

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The report aims to present the knowledge, skills, methods, tools, and insights gained from Estonia, Türkiye, Poland and Italy during the Study Visit in Zgierz/Łódź, organized by Stowarzyszenie Miłośników Kultury Ludowej FOLKIER, Poland, from June 26 to July 3, 2024. The study visit had four main objectives:

- **Exchange of experiences:** To share experiences, stories, and ideas among participants to learn from each other.
- **Knowledge creation:** To create a set of knowledge that would be useful in the remaining stages of the project and in further work.
- **Visit local institutions:** To visit local cultural and youth institutions to see and learn about innovative solutions and tools.
- **Meet experts:** To meet with experts, educators, youth and culture workers, and authors of applied local solutions related to the project's themes

In order to improve participants' comprehension of youth work and cultural heritage, the study visit included a number of essential elements, such as seminars, participatory activities, field trips to nearby cultural institutions, team-building activities, cultural exchanges and reflection sessions.

These methods enhanced participants' understanding of cultural heritage, particularly from Poland's perspectives, providing them with a wide range of study approaches.



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Preparation and key topics

Before their study visit to Zgierz/Łódź, participants from each country took steps to prepare and ensure a productive and enriching experience. After the study visit, they mapped out their learning points and key topics that arose during the study visit.

Soro Tori, Italy

In preparation for the study visit to Zgierz/Łódź, the Italian participants met online to discuss the project in detail. As all participants were already familiar with the project and had taken part in previous international activities related to it, they were well-prepared for the experience.

Following the visit, the Italian team emphasized the unique value each study visit brings, particularly in fostering direct engagement with local culture without prior assumptions. They highlighted the importance of experiential learning, capturing the essence of "learning by doing" as a key takeaway from their time in Poland.

Rõuge Noorsootöö Keskus, Estonia

Estonian participants engaged in individual conversations to ensure everyone was aligned with the objectives of the visit. In addition, a Facebook chat group was created, where they discussed details of the study visit and shared relevant information.

Following the visit, the Estonian team acquired valuable insights into incorporating traditional crafts, such as weaving, into cultural heritage education for youth. They also observed effective community engagement strategies and gained new tools for experiential learning and creative expression through their involvement in theater and culinary workshops.



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Istanbul Kultur ve Spor Dernegi, Türkiye

The Turkish team faced significant challenges in preparing for the study visit to Zgierz/Łódź due to unexpected visa issues, which led to last-minute participant changes. Despite these setbacks, a final team of 5 participants was assembled. A pre-departure briefing ensured all members were informed about the visit's objectives and the cultural context of Poland.

During the visit, the team learned how to incorporate traditional crafts like weaving into youth cultural heritage education and observed successful community engagement strategies at the scout association. Theater and culinary workshops at the cultural center also provided new tools for experiential learning, which will influence future educational initiatives and the development of their COOLTOUR Guide.

Knowledge transfer

The study visit provided a platform for participants from Italy, Estonia, and Türkiye to gain and expand a wide range of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Based on these acquired traits, participants are given a chance to improve their work with young people in cultural heritage by trying to integrate those new insights and approaches. Following gives a summary of each country's gained insights and how they decide to implement them.

Soro Tori, Italy

Italy gained valuable insights into cultural heritage through immersive experiences, enhancing their skills in community engagement, creative education, and traditional crafts. Conclusive key topics are as follows:

- **Cultural heritage and history:** Visits to museums deepened their understanding of cultural preservation, industrial heritage, and local history, highlighting the importance of community engagement and historical relevance



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- **Youth support and media engagement:** Observing a center for at-risk children and meeting with youth editors at a local cultural center provided valuable insights into supporting vulnerable youth and promoting critical thinking, creativity, and communication skills through educational media and community initiatives.
- **Experiential learning through arts and crafts:** Participating in theater and weaving workshops enhanced competencies in developing emotional intelligence, teamwork, and creativity among young people. These activities highlighted the role of arts and crafts in youth development and cultural heritage preservation.
- **Culinary and folk traditions:** Culinary workshops and activities promoted cultural exchange, teaching practical skills in traditional cooking and providing a deeper understanding of Polish folk culture and rituals.
- **Craftsmanship and sustainability:** Learning traditional woodworking techniques at a specialized center reinforced the importance of craftsmanship and heritage conservation, which can inspire hands-on educational projects for young people.
- **Religious and artistic significance:** Exploring a historic church and visiting certain landmarks revealed the deep connection between cultural, religious, and artistic expression in the community, offering ideas for integrating arts and education in youth programs.
- **Adapting cultural insights:** The opportunity to observe and adapt cultural practices provided enriching perspectives to apply within their own cultural context.

At this stage, they are still evaluating how best to apply the new insights and knowledge acquired. They plan to gather feedback from the young people involved in the project to better understand their needs and interests.



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Rõuge Noorsootöö Keskus, Estonia

Estonia gained a deeper understanding of community engagement, cultural traditions, and youth empowerment through hands-on experiences in renovation, media initiatives, and interactive activities. The primary points of focus are as follows:

- **Community renovation and skills development:** Gained insights into how local facade renovation projects enhance living environments and provide new skills to residents, boosting community engagement and tourism.
- **Local history and youth education:** Deepened understanding of regional history through interactions with a young, inspiring guide, which highlighted innovative ways to engage youth in historical education.
- **Youth support systems and media initiatives:** Observed effective youth support systems and learned about empowering young people to create and manage their own magazine, fostering creativity and leadership.
- **Culinary traditions and folk culture:** Engaged in local food preparation and explored folk costumes, gaining practical knowledge and a deeper appreciation for regional culture and traditions.
- **Comfort zone challenges and interactive learning:** Embraced new methods for engaging young people, including non-verbal activities and movement-based games, which encouraged stepping out of comfort zones.
- **Craftsmanship and restoration skills:** Participated in craftsmanship activities such as applying gold leaf and making folk costume belts, learning about the significance of craftsmanship and the importance of sharing these skills with young people.
- **Scouting practices and cultural insights:** Explored scouting practices and outdoor activities, gaining ideas for adapting similar initiatives in Estonia, and enjoyed reflective city exploration and community stories that enriched their cultural perspective.



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Regarding how Estonian participants will apply the new insights in their everyday work, they plan to apply new concepts by merging social projects with physical cultural heritage, creating hands-on activities that integrate local traditions with interactive learning. They want to organize museum events where young people can gain and share knowledge, and establish spaces for cultural exchange. Activities will likely include DIY cooking projects, blending modern and traditional music, and simplified workshops on folk costumes to deepen cultural understanding.

Additionally, participants want to enhance engagement by encouraging local youth to produce their own news, including exciting movement games and musical activities. Reflective practices, guided tours, and expert insights will be used to provide a more complete learning experience, fostering meaningful connections to local heritage and promoting active participation in cultural preservation.

Istanbul Kultur ve Spor Derneği, Türkiye

Türkiye gained insights into historical and cultural practices, developed new skills in interactive workshops and media, and enhanced their understanding of community dynamics and teamwork through diverse activities. Important points to note are:

- **Map reading and historical knowledge:** Enhanced map reading skills and gained a deeper understanding of Polish history, enriching one's historical knowledge base.
- **Interactive workshops for youth:** Observed the effectiveness of interactive and supportive workshops for children and early teenagers, highlighting the benefits of engaging activities.
- **Cultural engagement and attitudes:** Noted the positive attitudes of young people in taking ownership of their creations and the impact of live music on dance compared to recorded music.



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- **Culinary skills and workshop settings:** Learned to prepare three Polish dishes and recognized how workshop settings influence participant performance and teamwork, enhancing problem-solving abilities.
- **Cultural and artistic techniques:** Acquired new techniques in art-based learning methodologies and explored Polish cultural items focusing on fine motor skills and creativity.
- **Media and broadcasting:** Gained experience in radio broadcasting, news presentation, and the impact of media, finding inspiration in board games and recording booth activities.
- **City dynamics and cultural insights:** Expanded knowledge of stayed cities dynamics and cultural elements, including comics culture, and appreciated how music connects with the community.

Türkiye participants plan to apply their new insights by adapting orienteering activities to suit various target groups and educational settings, enhancing engagement through hands-on experiences. They will incorporate visits to similar museums (as experienced in Poland) in smaller cities to help participants understand the historical development of their local areas. Inspired by the sense of ownership observed in Poland, they aim to motivate youth by creating activities that foster connection to their culture, such as dance and cooking workshops that reflect cultural heritage.

Participants are also inspired to develop adventure-based activities in natural settings to promote teamwork and problem-solving among youth. They will consider incorporating local handicrafts into workshops to preserve and pass on cultural traditions. Additionally, they plan to implement radio broadcasting activities, including podcasts, to improve communication skills and raise awareness about cultural heritage. Creative drama techniques and music-related workshops will be designed to deepen the understanding of cultural concepts, while city tours and innovative uses of comics in youth work will further enrich cultural engagement.



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This report has been created as a result of WP 2 of the project "COOLTOUR-Cultural heritage as a source of development of future competencies in youth" nr 2022-1-EE01-KA220-YOU-000089197. The project is co-funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.



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