



Heritage Hubs – towards multicultural and transnational heritage education

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“It felt like our project.” - participating pupil

1. Introduction

Heritage Hubs is a two-year project related to the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, co-funded by the Creative Europe programme of the European Union. *Heritage Hubs* brought together 10–16-year-old children and young people from Finland, Serbia and Spain to share examples of their cultural heritage via digital platforms and to interpret the cultural heritage of others in face-to-face interaction at home and abroad. The project’s purpose was to support and make possible transnational learning from and about cultural heritage; to allow children and young people to define and voice what *they* regard as important cultural heritage; to enhance the role of cultural heritage in the everyday lives of young people; and to increase respect for the cultural heritage of others. The approach of the project emphasised the diversity and richness of the cultural heritage and its phenomena opening up it as a resource for individual and societal well-being. It also stressed the understanding of cultural heritage as the personal and communal *relationship* towards it and encouraged the transnational sharing what is valuable in heritage. This approach provided the pupils with an opportunity to discover cultural similarities and common values at European level, and to recognize other uniting factors in their daily lives. The project was coordinated by the [Association of Cultural Heritage Education in Finland](#) (AHEF) in partnership with [La Fundación San Millán de la Cogolla](#) (FSMC) in Spain, the [Centre for Urban Development](#) (CUD) in Serbia, and [VITECO E-learning solutions](#) (VITECO) in Italy.



2. Setting up the school pilots' network

Heritage Hubs school pilots were organised at 11 schools in Finland, Serbia and Spain during the 2018–2019 academic year. Partners in charge of the school pilots were AHEF, FSMC and UDC, whereas VITECO was responsible for technical support for the pilots. AHEF, FSMF and UDC have wide existing networks of schools they have previously collaborated with. These existing networks were utilised when searching participating schools for *Heritage Hubs* school pilots. The project was also advertised in different social media channels to approach new schools as potential participants. The project team decided to include both primary and secondary schools with the pupils ages ranging from c. 10 to 16.

The project aroused a lot of interest and the final selection of schools was based on several factors. These included, for example, the schools' genuine interest in cultural heritage education, their capacity to carry out project implementation activities related to the school pilots, and earlier successful collaboration. While all partners sought to engage schools from different parts of their respective countries, logistical and financial reasons needed to be kept in mind when making the final selection. The school pilots included teacher training, heritage workshops with pupils and analytics. Therefore, it was important that the project staff could easily travel to the participating schools, or that the teachers and pupils could easily travel to where the pedagogical partners were based. Because Finland is officially a bilingual country, it was also decided that both Finnish and Swedish speaking schools will be included. In Spain two public schools were included, one of them a rural school, one *concertada* and one private school with the aim of having pilots from the different educational systems that exist in the country. Three participating schools in Serbia also reflect the intention to involve urban and rural communities in the project, but also to provide for a geographical and cultural spread.

Eventually, a total of 11 schools were selected to take part in the project: four in Finland (from Lohja, Lammi, Riihimäki and Kirkkonummi), four in Spain (Madrid, Nájera and San Millán de la Cogolla) and three in Serbia (Belgrade, Grocka and Zaječar). The schools were all given a school pair, the idea being that the schools familiarize themselves with each other's heritage and visit each other in the spring term 2019. To enable the pairing system, two groups from IES Esteban Villegas in Nájera took part in the project making the total number of *Heritage Hubs* groups 12. Although a maximum of 10 participants (inc. teachers and pupils) from each school



could travel abroad for the school visits, the schools were encouraged to engage as many pupils as possible in sharing and interpreting heritage. The schools themselves chose the participating pupils. The project teams did not set any rules for this selection, rather mere requests that nobody is excluded for example because of learning difficulties, low English skills or inability to accommodate visiting pupils. Overall, 617 pupils and 66 teachers took direct part in *Heritage Hubs* project activities. Depending on the school, project activities were organised as a part of formal education or as extracurricular activities.

3. School pilot phases

The school pilots took place during two, slightly overlapping phases: 1) *exploring and sharing own cultural heritage phase* (August 2018 – January 2019), and 2) *practising the cultural heritage of others and school visits phase* (January 2019 – June 2019). These phases were followed by a post-pilot phase for *analyzing collected data and developing heritage education materials* (July 2019 – January 2020).

At the start of the first phase, the project teams in the school pilot countries organised teacher training and heritage workshops with the participating pupils. Training workshops ranged from including just the participating teachers to organising national teacher training events in Spain. A *Heritage Hubs* didactic package was also created at the start of the project to support the participating teachers through the different phases of the project implementation in schools. The project teams also visited most schools regularly to support further workshops with pupils, whether this was providing support for heritage education or making heritage videos with pupils. In this phase, pupils produced digital presentations of their chosen heritage, which were shared on the project's [Sharing Heritage platform](#) and on [Heritage Hubs YouTube channel](#). Their videos show, for example, traditional foods; exploring the history of the Spanish language in Suso monastery; the tranquil nature of a Finnish bog; the Roman ruins of Felix Romuliana; preparations for slava and sauna; traditional dances in La Rioja; and playing mölkky and floorball. Their choices illustrate the versatile and changing nature of cultural heritage, and the types of cultural heritage that young Europeans regard as important to them.



The second phase started with the schools familiarising themselves with the cultural heritage of their school pair and preparations for interpretation. The school visits started at the end of March and continued until mid-June. During the visits, the hosting pupils presented their interpretation of the heritage of the visiting school pair. The visits were also an opportunity for the hosting pupils to share and present their own heritage to the visiting pupils (visits to heritage sites, museums, local cultural experiences, experiencing food culture etc.) and for the visiting pupils to experience the heritage of others in person and to experience the cultural habits, traditions and daily life of their peers in person.

4. Methodology

One of the main objectives of the project, providing long-term effects, was to propose a heritage education methodology based on the experiences of the project implementation in schools and on a theoretical model that the school program implementation was based upon. The theoretical model starts from the benefits of storytelling and multimediality in learning on one hand, and storytelling character and multimediality of heritage itself, on the other. This is why the starting didactic package approach was based on transmedia storytelling concept, which refers to “...telling a story through multiple platforms, and doing it in a way that the whole experience is greater than the sum of the parts” (Robert Pratten, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yIj74jPHaf>).

This initial didactic package was created as orientation material, a collection of instruments or tools to propose a general structure of the program to be implemented in schools, to give teachers general principles, ideas and directions for the program implementation, to explain instrumental terms and phenomena, provide teachers and pupils with a pool of digital tools to employ in the program implementation, with starting information and instructions on how to look for and select the elements of the heritage to share and introduce the participants in the concept of transmedia storytelling as a heritage learning and sharing approach. The package contained a set of three booklets (Teachers’ Handbook, School Theme Guide and Digital Tools Guide) and three exemplary video explainers illustrating a variety of heritage and available digital tools to share it. Because the school year



in Finland starts in mid August, the *Heritage Hubs* didactic guide was ready too late for the Finnish schools. Instead, the project team organised teacher training for cultural heritage education at each school (at three schools, the whole staff took part in teacher training) and cultural heritage workshops for the pupils. The didactic package and video explainers were, however, utilised at the start of phase two, although no school followed the session plan of the package directly.

Teachers' Handbook set the basic structure of the school program, introducing the topics to be addressed within two main program phases coinciding with the two semesters of the school year. Initial theoretical model of heritage education is already visible in the proposed program structure - the topics are related to three dimensions of learning from heritage, and these are *learning about heritage*, *sharing heritage* and *interpreting heritage*. This handbook relies heavily on teachers' own experience and individual approach, and instead of setting the learning modalities and rigid framework, simply offers a set of questions to inspire discussions and spark the creativity. The School Theme Guide was conceived as a non-exhaustive list of examples of heritage. As definitions of heritage differ in various contexts, particularly taking into account the legislation and difference between cultural property recognized and protected by the law and the heritage that is not legally recognized, no distinction is made between movable and immovable, or tangible and intangible heritage, except, indirectly, when it comes to using different senses to explore it. Digital Tools Guide consists of a selection of digital formats or media, generally used for learning purposes and applicable for sharing heritage. Ten formats are suggested, primarily based on usability for the age group involved in the project. The Guide contains links to the free-of-charge and easy-to-use applications available online for the production of each format, as well as a brief explanation of transmedia storytelling concept and principles. Three video explainers produced within the initial package are full-colour animation, whiteboard animation and cutouts & footage animation, telling stories based on heritage in Serbia. The whole didactic package was produced in English, but it was also translated and synchronized in Finnish and Spanish.

In order to capture as much as possible of the participants' experience and to be able to evaluate the applicability of suggested didactic approach, multiple data-collecting formats were employed, adjusted to each implementation context and available resources. Apart from collecting photos and video footage, a schools'

program log in Serbia and written teachers' reports in Spain, the crucial source of data were two survey cycles. First questionnaire was created towards the end of the Phase 1. The second set of questionnaires was handed out throughout the Phase 2 of the implementation period, coinciding with the moments of the period of face-to-face exchange between the participating schools, that is: before the visit, after the visit, hosting and the final questionnaire. A separate online survey for participating teachers was organized after the school implementation period was ended. All questionnaires were combination of open-ended and close-ended questions tailored to capture pupils' experience for each critical element of the learning process and overall participation in the project. In order to capture more personal impressions of the participants, interviews were employed with both pupils and teachers towards the end of the implementation period, with comparable questions between three countries.

The analysis of the survey data allowed for assessment of the overall experience of the pupils and teachers and specifically to understand their social and cultural habits, behaviour related to learning and their understanding of heritage. The school log and teachers' reports were useful for comparison of performed dynamics and differences in approach between the countries and schools.

5. Implementation of the school pilots and project activities

The selection of heritage at the schools: How and Why?

The starting point of *Heritage Hubs* was to actively engage children and young people in defining cultural heritage that is meaningful to themselves, and to strengthen their role in the discourse around cultural heritage. In Finland the teachers gave their pupils full freedom to choose any cultural heritage phenomena that they, as a group, felt was important to themselves. At each school, the pupils brainstormed possible topics (something important and something typically Finnish) and finally narrowed down their choices to one or two possibilities. Some groups also wanted to choose a topic, which would be easy to interpret abroad, thereby excluding some of their initial topics. The Swedish speaking school also wanted to choose a topic, which reflected Finnish-Swedish cultural heritage specifically. One Finnish group also contemplated choosing the Finnish-Swedish



Lucia tradition as their heritage, given that the school has a tradition of organising a big annual Lucia celebration. The pupils, however, disregarded this heritage choice regarding it as too “Swedish”. The pupils’ final selections well reflect their daily lives. The Lammi group chose floorball, which is a locally important heritage passed on from parents and older siblings to the younger generation. The Lohja group chose mölkky as a social game central to the Finnish cottage culture and cinnamon buns as a typical Finnish delicacy, which most learn to bake at home, school or both. The Kirkkonummi group chose Stafettkarnevalen relay race, as something they regard as the highlight of the school year for the Swedish speaking schools in Finland. The Riihimäki group chose sauna as something inherently Finnish and the local bog as a local natural heritage site, where all the participating pupils often go to walk their dogs etc.

Similarly, teachers in Spain gave the pupils full freedom in selection and handling of the topic. To support them in their choices, a workshop focused on cultural heritage concepts and its values was organized in each school. After that, the pupils of the rural school chose their nearest heritage, the one they recognize as an element of their small town identity: the first texts written in the Spanish language, the dances of the Anguiano stilts and the tree dance. The students of the Colegio Estudio, Madrid took this opportunity to implement a project on Spanish Baroque women writers that they had started in 2018, and the Colegio Amorós, celebrating its 75th anniversary, wanted to share the history of their historical 18th-century school building.

The process of selecting a heritage topic was somewhat different in Serbia. The teachers needed support in guiding the pupils in what heritage essentially is and can be. This is why it was felt that the School Theme Guide was needed as a part of the initial didactic package. The examples of heritage items given in the Guide were taken by the teachers and pupils as illustrations of various types of heritage typical for their local surroundings. Also, the project team suggested that the general heritage areas for each participating school is in accordance with participating teachers’ subjects, which was music in the case of one school, and history in the case of the two others. The school in Belgrade ended up picking the creative context of the Serbian composer Stevan Stojanović Mokranjac, the pupils from Zaječar school have chosen the everyday life in the Roman Empire, inspired by the nearby Roman palace of Felix Romuliana, while the pupils in Grocka went for a folk tradition of *slava* and preparation of *slavski kolač*.



Exploring chosen heritage and preparing digital presentations

Because the Finnish groups chose heritage phenomena present in their daily lives, they had a lot of prior knowledge about their topics. In addition, they also made further online research into their topic, namely its history, and visited sites relevant to the chosen heritage and interviewed their peers, teachers, parents and grandparents about the topic. All groups made video presentations of their chosen heritage. In addition, they shared further information in Word documents (e.g. history of Stafettkarnevalen and rules of floorball).

In Spain, the project coordinator and teachers used the previous didactic package as a reference point to guide her students in the process, encouraging personal research and teamwork. They combined book reading, the consultation of original documents, the visit of heritage makers to the schools, visits to museums, monuments and theaters with the search for information on digital platforms with quality content such as Europeana, World Heritage Center and official museum pages. From all the information collected, students created Power Point presentations, videos, photo albums, books etc.

The exploration of the chosen topics in Serbian schools were mostly based on classroom discussions, online research and visits to the heritage site and/or places or events related to the topic, such as actual family celebration of *slava* at one of the pupil's home. A particular set of sessions was needed to explore the potential formats of presentation in order to share the story of chosen heritage topic in a clear, interesting and appealing way.

The support provided by the project team

The project team visited all schools at regular basis (2–10 visits to each school before the school visits) to help with project implementation and to collect data. The minimum intervention was to organise a heritage workshop and teacher training at the start of Phase 1, and a mid-pilot workshop to sum up Phase 1 and to orientate towards the activities of phase 2. At two schools in Finland more regular support was required, including supporting teachers in heritage education, organising practical workshops to support the sharing of one's own heritage and



to plan the interpretation of the heritage of others; and video making and editing. A joint networking and sharing heritage event for all the schools was also organised in December 2018 for the Finnish participants.

In some cases, additional help was needed in introducing the available digital formats for heritage presentations in more detail. In Serbia this was offered as a classroom session led by the project team. At the beginning of the Phase 2, the project team offered another session, as an introduction to sharing heritage and to the concepts of local, regional, national and universal heritage.

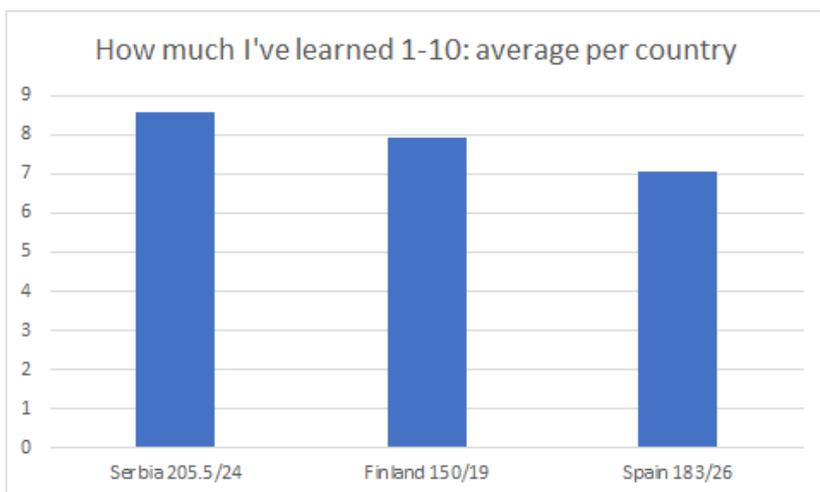
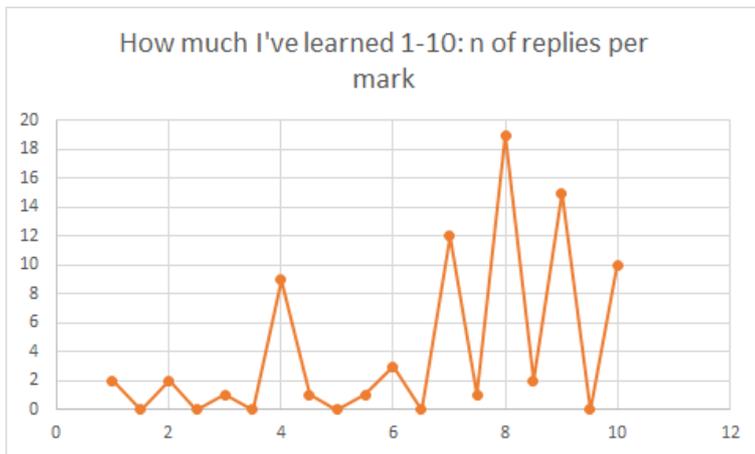
Interpretation of heritage

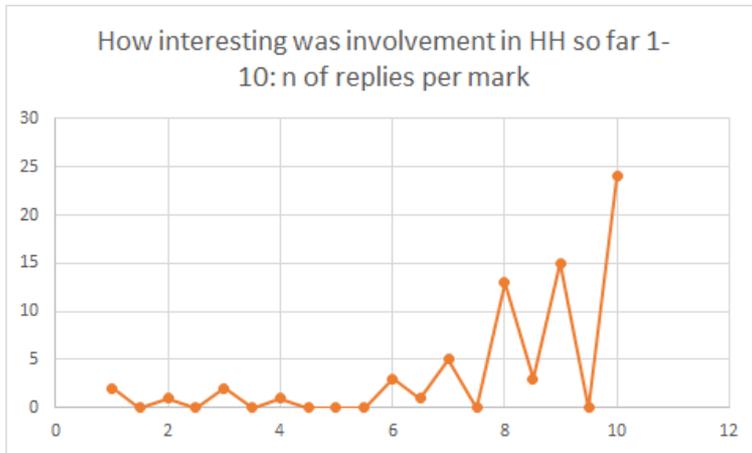
The project teams in all countries were actively engaged with the schools in co-planning the heritage activities during school visits and the taking care of the logistics of the visits (airport transfers, accommodation etc.), whilst the schools mostly independently organised the interpretation events. In all three countries, the heritage interpretation events varied from very small scale to bigger events. Depending on the heritage topic, some groups found interpretation more difficult than others. While one group's interpretation of its school pair's heritage was pretty much its identical repetition, other groups tried to add their own twists to the interpretation or to interpret the heritage by making comparisons to their own heritage. This included, for example, using national dresses, adding music, bringing in own traditions such as saints, visiting comparable sites etc. One interpretation event was attended only by the hosting and visiting school groups whereas the rest were attended also by the families of the hosting pupils.

Apart from the digital presentations and videos prepared by the participants and uploaded on the online platform, each group used other sources to explore and learn about the chosen heritage of their school pairs in order to be able to develop interpretations. The focus of the interpretation tasks was more on the tangible modalities of presentation and a variety of creative formats was used for this, from the visually supported lectures, through mini-plays with heritage food-tasting, to the actual sports events.

6. Result analysis

Apart from the general learning preferences and habits, the analysis of the survey results brought considerable insight into the overall project experience. This experience is mostly evident in the results of the final survey, as well as in the pre-visit and post-visit survey and hosting survey. It is interesting also to observe a shift that happened between the Phase 1 survey and the Final survey in terms of the overall experience. In the Phase 1 survey this is contained in the questions “How much do you think you learned about heritage within the HH program so far” and “Overall, how interesting was the involvement in the Heritage Hubs so far”.





Both were the rating scale type questions, with the scale from 1 to 10. In the Final survey, the overall experience is measured through the question “How much did you enjoy the HH project”, where the replies are given as descriptors attached to the values from 1 to 4, going from “I did not enjoy it” to “It was amazing”.

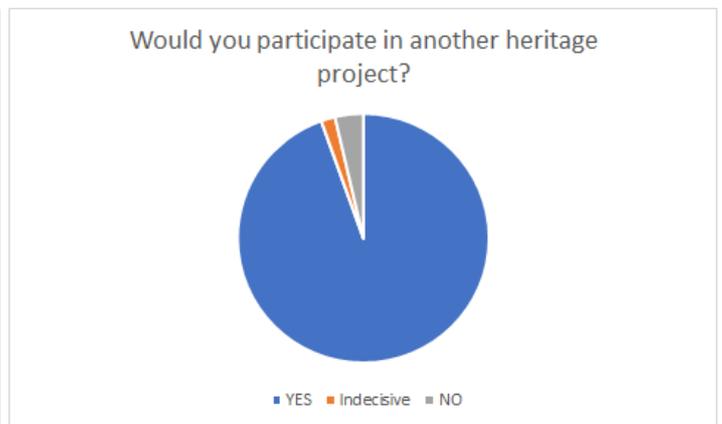
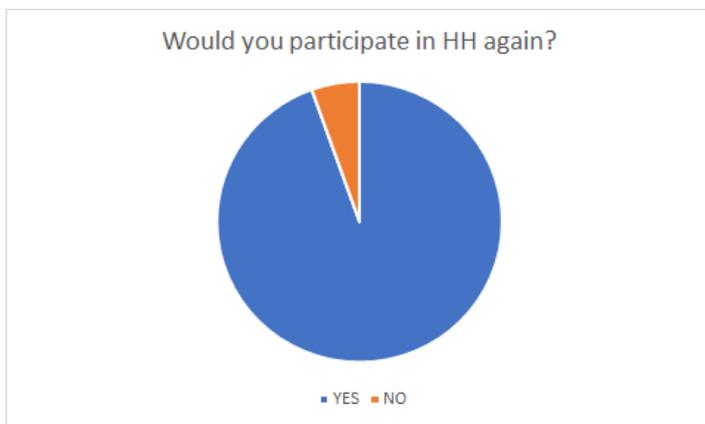


What we observe is the considerable spread of the marks on the scale when pupils evaluated their learning experience at the end of the Phase 1, but more tendency to give higher marks when asked how interesting this experience was. This could be partly explained by traditional understanding of the learning process as formal and institutionalized, excluding social learning of any type and scope. In the Final survey, although the question

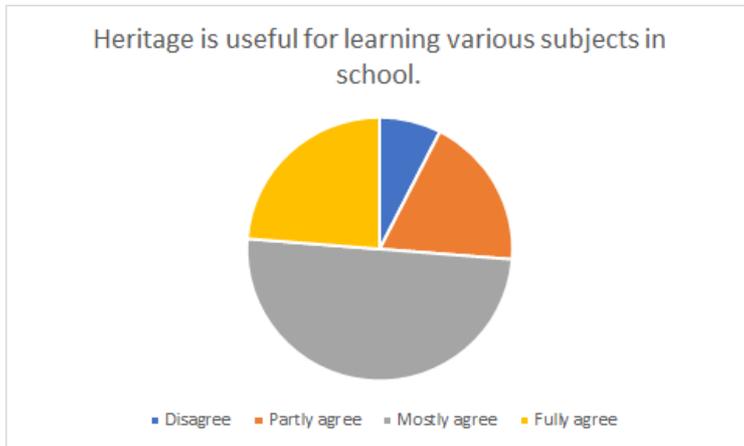
is slightly different, we find over 75% respondents evaluating the experience as being “amazing”. While language is largely regarded as being an obstacle sometimes,



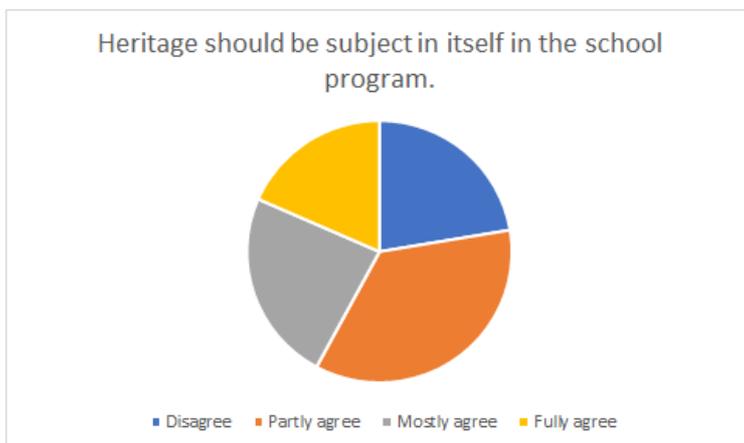
Most of the participants opt for another participation in Heritage Hubs or a similar project.



There is an evident acknowledgment by the participating pupils that heritage can be useful resource for learning various subjects in school.



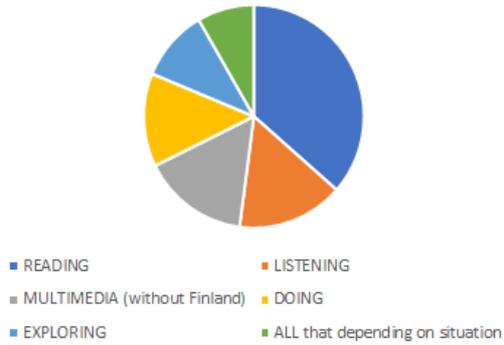
But there is less inclination to having heritage introduced as a school subject on its own.



Another aspect possibly related to an overall traditional view of the learning process among pupils is opting for reading as a preferred learning modality. It should be noted, however, that the option “All that depending on situation” was introduced only in the Finnish schools, and there is a strong possibility that there would be more opting for this response, should it be available in Spain and Serbia too.

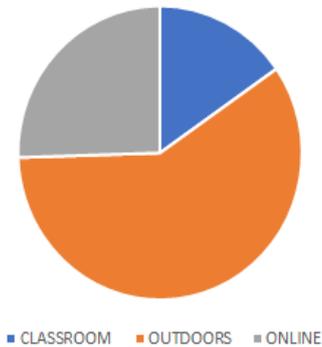


PREFERRED LEARNING MODALITIES



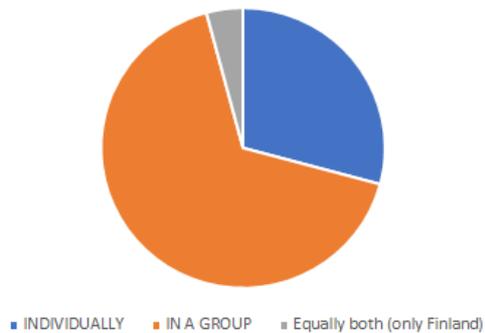
Apart from this, we learned that pupils prefer learning outdoors to learning in the classroom or online,

PREFERRED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

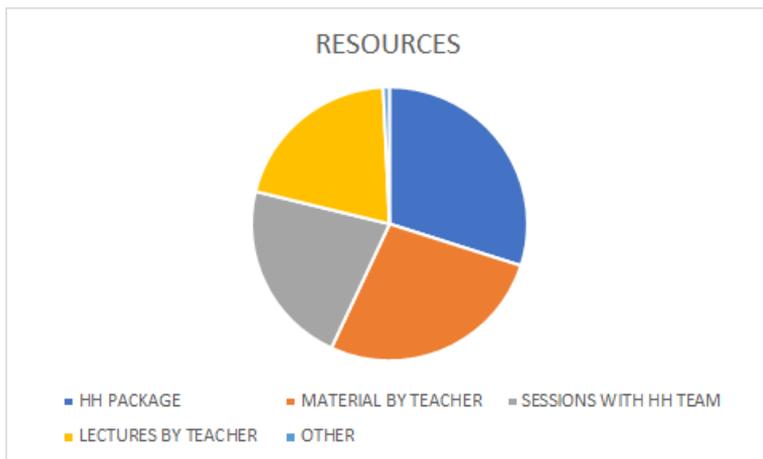


and would rather learn in groups than individually.

INDIVIDUAL vs GROUP



The pupils equally appreciated various learning materials and other resources, available in the implementation period.

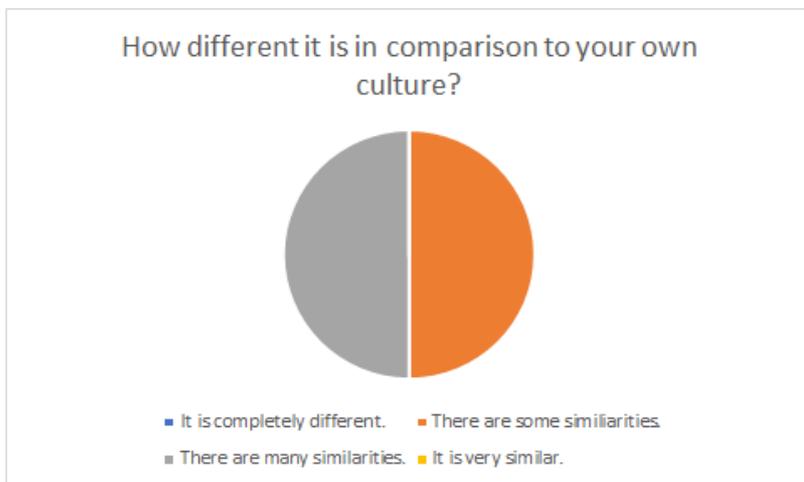


However, it is important to keep in mind that the Phase 1 survey was carried out in January 2019, after the end of the First school semester and before the beginning of the school exchange. There was a significant difference in the program dynamics and learning experience between the two phases. This is also clearly visible in the survey results. The results are pointing to another important conclusion, which goes hand in hand with opting for learning outdoors and in a group: more valuable learning experiences happen in direct social interactions, in tangible environments and involves physical practice.

This is strongly supported by the pre- and post-visit survey results, and even more by the responses captured in the interviews in all three countries. Even though some differences between the countries are observed in terms of the direction of the change, all participants report that there was a change in understanding the differences and similarities in culture after the visits to their school pair.

One of the original project hypotheses was that when children and young people learn about each other's cultural heritage, they will discover cultural similarities at European level and cultural openness and respect for other cultures and their heritage increases. The project indeed reached this result, but the route there was not as direct or straightforward. In fact, when the pupils got a chance to immerse themselves in the daily lives of their peers abroad and to experience their cultural traditions, habits and heritage first hand, they paid more attention to

differences than similarities. However, these differences largely came down to small and mundane differences in ordinary lives. The pupils noticed differences in types of breakfasts and eating habits, lunchtimes and bedtimes, architecture and infrastructure, home decors and school buildings, etc. When asking the Finnish pupils before the school visit abroad “How different do you think the culture of this country is in comparison to your own?”, the large majority responded “There are many similarities” or “There are some similarities”. After the visit, in responses to the same question there was a clear shift towards “There are some similarities” and “They are completely different”. There were, nevertheless, those who felt the opposite, which was the original hypothesis of the project. This is also visible in the Spanish pupils responses, where the shift was from mostly “There are some similarities” to opting equally for “some” and “many” similarities observed and experienced in the visit abroad.



Some pupils stated after the visit that although there are differences, the differences are rather minor (e.g. just Cyrillic alphabets). However, pretty much exclusively, the realisation of differences came with a recognition of the importance of the plurality of cultural expressions and high respect for these cultural differences. As one pupil stated, “We are actually quite different but that is in fact what is so great about it!”

How interesting the visit was in comparison to what was expected



■ Less interesting than expected ■ About what I expected
■ More interesting than I expected

In Finland the pupils seemed to have a much wider understanding of cultural heritage to begin with. Although not all Finnish pupils realised that cultural heritage can also consist of fairly recent phenomena, they were open to new readings of their pre-established ideas of cultural heritage. However, based on pupils' feedback, Serbian and Spanish pupils were more inclined to relate cultural heritage with something old and grand, and, in some cases, something to support the national narrative with. For example, Stafettkarnevalen is an extremely popular annual relay race amongst the Swedish speaking schools in Finland since 1961. However, some Serbian pupils would not have regarded it as cultural heritage because it is too new and it is sports. This can be understood as partly related to the national legislations and generally prevailing notion of heritage in the local communities, but also to the strong presence of many historical layers of tangible heritage in the Balkans. Very similar reactions have been observed among Spanish pupils. It is worth noting that both exploring heritage shared by the peers abroad and direct engagement with their own and others' cultural heritage during the school visits challenged the participants' fixed ideas about heritage. Rather than perceiving cultural heritage as merely something old, grand and static, with limited relevance to their everyday lives, the pupils realised its living, versatile, fluid and constantly evolving nature. Importantly, they noticed the presence of cultural heritage in their daily lives and ordinary activities.

Based on data analysis, participating pupils and teachers in all three countries appreciated in particular experiencing the culture and daily life of others first hand, exploring heritage together presenting their own culture to their foreign friends during the school visits and having fun with heritage. New friendships were born out of the project. They were also excited to observe how their peers from other countries reacted to their own culture.



Many of the Finnish and Spanish teachers had previously been involved with Erasmus+ projects. Compared to many Erasmus+ projects, *Heritage Hubs* was small in scale. Based on teachers' feedback, this smaller scale was conducive to close relationships between teachers and pupils, and to the project's strong communal aspect, which both teachers and pupils regarded particularly important and memorable. The teachers reported that the whole process of getting to know, interpreting and sharing heritage was a massive learning curve during which the pupils – and teachers – learnt a lot about themselves and their own cultural identities through learning about cultural heritage and practices in other countries. Both teachers and parents also noted the emotional growth of the young participants during the project. There were many achievements and successes to celebrate and many pupils exceeded their own expectations. According to the teachers, the pupils mostly remained fully motivated during the project. In Finland and Serbia all schools organised project implementation activities as extra-curricular activities and the challenge was to find time that suited all participants.

Heritage Hubs pupils reported that making their own videos was particularly exciting, fun and motivating. Through the videos, they could express their own voices and ideas of cultural heritage, and highlight the liveliness, diversity, and regeneration of heritage. The production process (choosing the topic, storyboarding and writing the script, shooting and editing the video, etc.) was a collaborative process that requires teamwork and offers all participants opportunities to actively engage and participate in the process. Video production also made it necessary to think and make decisions about how to express what heritage is, what is important, and why.

In Finland, the implementation of *Heritage Hubs* activities and pilots could perhaps have been better suited to the structure of the primary school system. This is also evident in Spain, where the project was implemented both in primary and secondary schools. It has been noticed that class teachers in charge or their own class have much more time, freedom and flexibility to work with interdisciplinary topics and to combine cross-curricular subjects. In the secondary school, creating a group consisting of pupils from different grades and classes was the only possibility. However, it was challenging to fit pupils' timetables together and the project as extra-curricular activity could be tiring for the pupils. In Spain, since both primary and secondary schools were involved, it became evident that the results can be obtained on both levels, although, as already mentioned, the



dynamics could be slightly better adapted to primary school. It is quite obvious that the quality of the results depend much more on the interest and involvement of teachers and on the support they receive from the school administrations, than on the educational level.

Manual for Cultural Heritage Education

Collected data, project implementation experiences and overall exchange between involved heritage education professionals resulted in creating the Manual for Cultural Heritage Education. As it is mentioned in its Introduction, “The Manual supports the practical application of the proposed heritage methodology...” and “...is designed as a flexible tool for independent use by teachers and heritage educators.” The methodology presented draws from the initial theoretical model and didactic approach introduced in the starting package, but is filtered by the feedback and experience of the project implementation in schools. It introduces the Learning from heritage as a cross-cutting theme and consists of Learning about, Interpreting and Sharing heritage sections. This model relies on the idea that heritage is an important subject in itself, but also a valuable learning resource, and that learning happens through different forms and directions of communicating heritage. On a meta-learning level, it also becomes a social communication resource, where learning about other cultures through heritage becomes the process of understanding the common cultural roots, as well as background and evolution of cultural differences and similarities. Heritage Hubs methodology presented in the Manual is firmly rooted in blended learning, which is evident in combining virtual and real-life experiences and interpretation of heritage, and in using various digital, classroom and outdoors learning options. It also supports the use of transmedia storytelling as a concept highly applicable in heritage education. The methodology consists of a number of proposed activities on learning about, interpreting and sharing heritage, mostly conceived as group activities relying on proportional use of digital and face-to-face learning. It also contains Recommendations on various aspects of heritage education, based on the collective experience and observations of the heritage specialists and teachers involved in the project, as well as the participants’ feedback and data collected.



Challenges faced on the way

Multiple challenges were encountered throughout the duration of the project implementation, some of them anticipated and carefully prepared for, but others less expected and some even surprising. From more to less expected, there were differences in approaches to teaching to take into account, cultural assumptions to address – especially in view of the face-to-face visits, pairing up and particularly the age difference between the pairs – in fitting the project into regular school program schedule and in digital literacy. One of the critical questions, not only in Heritage Hubs, but also in many other comparable projects involving e-learning in any form and scope is the usefulness and usability of online learning platforms. It is an experience of Heritage Hubs team that the online platforms are still a slippery ground in education in terms of the user-friendliness and dynamics of attendance. There are still needs and ways to adapt the platforms to better suit both schooling and learning processes, while the separate challenge lies in adapting the online learning to heritage education, with its many particularities.

7. Conclusions

It has already been stated that Heritage Hubs was a powerful and deeply emotional experience. Sharing and interpreting cultural heritage entailed stepping out of one's own comfort zone and into somebody else's shoes and this sort of experience tends to introduce meaningful changes in individuals and communities.

As the Spanish coordinator, Mariola Andonegui Navarro, reports, this has been one of the most exciting and rewarding experiences of her professional career. On the one hand, working with the consortium team has been a new experience and she has learned a lot about how to work on an international project and how to work online. On the other hand, the process of working with Spanish students and teachers and the experience of visits to Finland and Serbia have given her very important tools to better understand how to create connections between the schools and cultural institutions. Both from a personal and professional point of view, Heritage Hubs leaves a lasting mark.



One of the most remarked experiences of *Heritage Hubs* amongst the participants was the communal and social aspects of cultural heritage. This communal aspect added a further layer to participants' personal experiences of cultural heritage and made the learning experience particularly meaningful and memorable. Cultural heritage became a new link between individuals, groups and communities locally and beyond. Socializing with different nationalities and experiencing diverse cultural heritage was a powerful experience.

In addition to the valuable personal experiences, *Heritage Hubs* is also producing numerous lasting tangible outputs. This particularly refers to the Manual for Cultural Heritage Education and the Recommendations for Heritage Education produced in five languages. While the Manual offers a heritage education methodology rich with activities and practical tips to address and use heritage in education in a blend of formats and modalities, the Recommendations will hopefully give education and heritage professionals ideas about how to integrate cultural heritage and intercultural dialogue into their daily work in the best way possible, how to make cultural heritage accessible and inclusive, and how to promote the agency of young people in cultural heritage processes.

On one hand, the results encourage to develop and to practise cultural heritage education that elaborates on cultural heritage as a common resource – enabling shared meaning and uniting young people across national and other borders. On the other hand, it encourages to widen the understanding of cultural heritage as a diverse, multivocal and living resource that is enabling creativity, promoting well-being and sustainable development in the society. With their choices and actions, the young generation living and growing in Europe today decide what significance cultural heritage has in their lives, what stories and traditions they want to carry forward, what heritage they want to renew, and what kind of new cultural heritage they will create for future Europe. Their active participation in and opinions about cultural heritage are necessary to secure the plurality and diversity of identities and cultural expressions at local, national and European levels, as well as to construct a more sustainable present and future for Europe and beyond.