



CULTURE UNITED

Regional Education Culture Unions Set Up Toolkit

A guide for schools to start working
with festivals, events and other
cultural organisations

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Introduction to Culture United and this toolkit

This Toolkit helps schools with developing a cultural programme for their school. It is a practical guide for setting up a cooperation with local culture organisations in your region and make a culture education plan, so your schools is equipped to start CULTURE UNITED.

The **CULTURE UNITED** project is built on cultural events and heritage festivals as a driver to embed multi-disciplinary ways of teaching in primary schools. We want to appeal to the interests and natural enthusiasm of children and to use this effectively in interactive and engaging ways of learning.

Why did we start CULTURE UNITED in the first place? To enable children to learn interdisciplinary in a fun, engaging way! We discovered that children learn better and easier when they are involved in a festival and have the opportunity to explore their talents together with other students in a creative, fun and active way.

Let's listen to what the children have to say about how they experienced the project. For this video, we asked children of the different participating schools how they felt about the project.



Positive impacts that were often mentioned were:

- Pupils paid better attention in class and were willing to learn about several topics.
- There were more learning opportunities for the children.
- The children were more confident and felt empowered. Even the more quiet children felt comfortable to perform and show their talent.
- More than 80% of children stated they felt positive about the project and said they liked participating in CULTURE UNITED.

This toolkit is based on: the Concept of Art and Culture Festival and Comprehensive School cooperation in the City of Oulu, Finland and Best practises from the schoolpartners in Oulu, Leeuwarden, Dundalk and Edinburgh.



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How CULTURE UNITED can benefit your pupils

Culture is an important component of education in all countries. Therefore, collaboration between event organisations and schools can be extremely beneficial. Initiatives between schools and organizations can help create learning opportunities for both pupils and teachers by providing access to expert knowledge and quality artistic content.

By working with event organisers and artists, schools find new ways to include themes that relate to the curriculum as well as finding innovative ways to learn and work outside of the formal education system. Being involved in events and festivals can help schools create engaging activities for the curriculum that teachers may not have the time or resources to prepare for themselves. Such relationships can support schools in areas of teaching that might be more challenging. Moreover, cultural events support the professional development of school staff and nurtures their commitment to giving back to the community.

How? We are here to help!

How to start? We developed 3 handy tools to get you started:

1. The CULTURE UNITED culture unions set up toolkit (that you are reading now) will show you how you set up a sustainable partnership with your local cultural sector and how you can make a culture plan for your school;
2. The CULTURE UNITED online training will guide you through the process of establishing your own CULTURE UNITED project and learning materials.
 - English version [here](#)
 - Finnish version [here](#)
 - Dutch version [here](#)
3. The event organisers toolkit is especially made for the cultural sector / festivals in your network. It will give them reason and tools to start working with schools. Feel free to share this toolkit with your network.
4. www.cultureunited.eu will give you insight in our partnership and our own experience with CULTURE UNITED. It will also provide you with extra tips and tricks.



Alongside with this toolkit, we suggest that you start with the The CULTURE UNITED online training. Check out this short introduction to the training:



Get started:

- English version [here](#)
- Finnish version [here](#)
- Dutch version [here](#)



How to use this toolkit

This toolkit has been especially designed for schools and teachers of elementary grades. In a wider perspective, it provides help to schools and municipalities in creating an equal and inclusive cultural education plan, with emphasis on starting and developing cooperation with culture and art festivals. We believe the material will also interest literature festivals, events and book fairs to increase the audience development with schools.

The IO2 toolkit has been created in cooperation with cultural organizations, teachers and literature art teachers from Finland, The Netherlands, Scotland and Ireland, and has the authentic voice and opinions of these participants. As Finland has always been very innovative in terms of education and culture, this toolkit is based on their 'culture education plans' project: a project that gives schools tools to set up an educational programme and plan.

Finland has been the leading country in creating local and regional cultural education plans, and they have been created in cooperation with local festivals since the beginning. Finnish children's culture professionals have a solid network and have founded the website culturaleducationplan.fi, that includes a toolkit on creating said plans. As a result of CULTURE UNITED, the toolkit has been further developed to meet the international needs. The specialist partner in the work has been the Finnish Association of Children's Culture Centres.



In the beginning we describe what the Oulu partner in CULTURE UNITED is about and what the Oulu Childrens Culture Centre has to offer in international co-development as a part of the project. The small history and insight to the current situation helps the reader understand what kind of structures there already were in the Finnish context when CULTURE UNITED started. An amazing result from the project is that all international partners were interested in finding out how the Finnish cultural education plan could fit into their own regions to add cooperation between schools and culture organisations. This material also provides insight to their experiences.

The festival partner in the CULTURE UNITED project from Oulu is Enchanted Words – children's and youth's word art and literature festival. The choice came from the partner school Oulu International School, and their wish to develop the literature education, and their need to further strengthen the cooperation that already existed with the festival. We describe what is an literature based pedagogical festival, and what kind of cooperation we developed between the school and the festival in this project with the feedback from teachers and the international partners.

The CULTURE UNITED festival cooperation managed to meet their goals in the midst of the COVID-19, and succeeded in adding multidisciplinary and experience-based teaching methods into education, while keeping the point of view of utilizing cultural heritage and word art.

We hope you enjoy this reading sessions,

The CULTURE UNITED team from Dundalk, Edinburgh, Oulu and Leeuwarden.

With a special thanks to Oulu CULTURE UNITED team:

Katri Tenetz, CULTURE UNITED Oulu project manager and editor-in-chief of IO2

Tenetz works as the children's culture manager of the city of Oulu and has special expertise in the development of cultural education plans, art and culture productions and conceptualization of services. In this project, she is responsible for overall planning, administration and IO2 content production.

Anna-Kaisa Kettunen, culture event producer

Kettunen has worked in the Oulu culture field for over a decade, working in theatres and culture events, performing, teaching and producing. In CULTURE UNITED she was the producer for the City of Oulu and has translated documents for the project.

Anna Anttonen and **Kati Inkala** CULTURE UNITED Oulun festivaali- ja kouluyhteistyökumppanit
Anttonen and Inkala work as literary art teachers at Oulu Children's Cultural Centre and as artistic instructors of the Lumotut sanat - Enchanted Words festival. Tässä hankkeessa he ovat kehittäneet festivaalien ja koulujen välistä yhteistyötä erityisesti Oulun kansainvälisen koulun kanssa.

Tanja Salo, Finnish mother tongue and Drama teacher

Salo has worked as a subject teacher at the Oulu International School and its IB Middle Years Program for the past ten years. In the CULTURE UNITED project Salo has strengthened the transdisciplinary learning and teaching methods in collaboration with Oulu Childrens' Cultural Center and Lumotut sanat - Enchanted Words festival.

Eeva Laitinen, project coordinator in Association of Finnish Children Culture Centers

Laitinen works as the project coordinator of the Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers in the project to promote cultural education plans. In her work, Laitinen aims to promote cultural education plans nationwide and to share cultural education expertise between municipalities and the children's culture network. In the CULTURE UNITED project, Laitinen produces materials related to cultural education plans and aims to spread information about cultural education plans internationally.



About Oulu Culture Centre for Children and Youth

Oulu Culture Centre for Children and Youth was established under the auspices of Cultural Centre Valve in 2003. Today, up to 65,000 children, young people and adults participate in our activities every year.

The centre acts as a nationwide developer of the children's culture sector in literary and film arts education, as well as planning cultural education and art education. It creates art-based methods to support basic education and early childhood education and care and provides further training for teachers and educators.

Locally, the centre offers art education and cultural events for children, young people, and families, especially in film and literary arts. The staff of the Oulu Culture Centre for Children and Youth act as experts in national networks and as partners in a wide range of international projects. [The center is a member of the Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers.](#)

As part of the centre's activities, there is School for creative writing and literature. It develops word art education in national level. The aim is to encourage children to express their own thoughts and stories creatively by writing, storytelling, talking, listening, playing with words, exploring, and reading. There are over 100 hobbyists in weekly clubs, age groups are between 0 – 18. Centre produces Enchanted words - Word art and literary festival for children and youth in Oulu every spring. Art school develops new methods and materials for teachers, publishes children's texts and creates great touring exhibitions

In the activities of the center, the child is encouraged to express creative self-expression and to present their own ideas, especially through film and literary arts. Our art education ideology is based on experiential and life-enhancing learning.

We experience and look for new ways of doing things. This CULTURE UNITED project has been great eye-opener for international co-creation and at the same time it forced us to write down our own methods and concepts to share everyone. We hope this toolkit helps teachers and festival producers to create together unique and long-lasting projects for pupils in your own area.



A short history of cultural education plans in Finland

Cultural Education Plans are relatively young toolkits. For a few decades the plans have supported schools and municipalities in actualizing cultural initiatives and promoting accessibility of art and culture nationally.

Although the cooperation between schools and culture providers is not a new invention, the systematic, obligating and thorough action that cultural education plans provide hasn't existed for long. The first cultural education plan was carried through in Turku, Finland, in the beginning of the century. In Turku, a plan was created in order to ensure organized culture and art organisation visits for students, and to create a connection between the visits and the school curriculum. The Taikalamppu / Magic Lamp network, founded in 2003 by the initiative of Education and Culture Ministry, created the foundation for an organized, national cultural education plan work. One of the goals of the network was to promote the accessibility of children's culture and culture education nationally.

The Oulu Children's Culture Centre had the national development task of coordinating and developing cultural education plans since 2005. The task was led by Katri Tenetz (one of the CULTURE UNITED partners). In 2013, the centre collected all known cultural education plans to date and published them on the website of Finland's children's culture centre association. Back then 32 plans were in action, which is only a tenth of Finnish municipalities.

The year 2014 was remarkable for cultural education plans. The members of the network influenced the reformation of the national education plan in many ways, so that the position of culture would be enhanced in the everyday lives of children. As the result of hard work, the new national education plan had many mentions of the municipality-level cultural education plans. Cultural education plans took a big leap forward with Kulttuurivoltti – the Culture Leap. The Culture Flip (2015-2016) was the first national project that aimed to enhance the cultural education plans. It was created by The Association of Cultural Heritage Education in Finland and The Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers. The project was influenced by the 2014 Children's cultural political programme suggestion, that suggested that children's and youth's cultural rights should be established as a structural part of all culture activities both nationally and regionally.

The need for development came from the notion that even though there was knowledge and experience on making cultural education plans, they didn't reach everybody – the aim was to create a general toolkit, free to use, that would be an concrete and inspirational help in the planning process. Culturaeducationplan.fi – website acts as a material bank and a concrete toolkit supporting the creation of cultural education plans. The website and the toolkit included there helps planning cultural education in municipalities of all sizes, and the target group was the

education and culture sections of municipalities around Finland.

In 2015, 43 municipalities in Finland had a cultural education plan in action. The developmental goal was to double the amount, and as soon as in 2017 the number of cultural education plans had grown to over 90. **More plans are developed as we speak, and now, thanks to the CULTURE UNITED project, some of them are developed outside of Finland as well.**

The Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers made cooperation between schools and culture organisations more widely known through their work, progressed the discourse around cultural education plans and united the vocabulary relating to the subject. The work done for cultural education plans got the association the 2018 Europa Nostra- cultural heritage awards main award. According to the judges the project outlines an inclusive and flexible approach to educational planning through an innovative use of digital technology, which is relevant at local, national, and European levels. Using this method cultural education could be inclusive of all children, regardless of their background, and that it is more effectively distributed to municipalities and regions where cultural experiences for children and young people are, at times, lacking.

"Culture education development work has stressed the importance of including education related to the arts, culture and heritage in the regular curriculum, in turn underlining its important role in creating responsible citizenship and instilling value in innovation and creativity", the jury stated.

The city of Oulu together with Association of Finnish Children's Cultural Centers has a dream of expanding the amazing concept of Cultural Education Plans into a worldwide phenomenon. This CULTURE UNITED project has given us great support on this trip. The city of Oulu CULTURE UNITED team is happy to share some of our results in this IO2 material.

Eeva Laitinen



The Cultural Education Plan in nutshell bridge between cultural actors, artist, festivals, and schools

First, it's good to think **about** these big questions in your municipality.

- Do children have equal and fair possibility for culture services like art festivals?
- How schools are choosing where to go for culture heritage, art institution or festival visits?
- What is the minimum that children should learn or experience about cultural heritage and art?
- Who pays the tickets or cost of transportation?
- Do schools and daycares know what's happening and where to visit?
- What children will learn if they are involved?
- Who does the planning?
- How to give more culture and art experiences to children in their everyday life?
- Would you like to be involved? What could you do?

What is a cultural education plan?

A cultural education plan is a plan for how cultural, artistic, and cultural heritage education is implemented as part of teaching. It is based on the municipality's range of cultural services, festivals, and cultural heritage, as well as on the voluntary activities of children and young people. The plan can be referred to as a cultural education plan, cultural trail, cultural stairway, or cultural route, for example

The plan is a shared aid for schools and actors in the arts and culture sector. It combines the objectives of the local curriculum, the municipality's cultural heritage, and the municipality's cultural offer into a systematic whole. At the same time, it gives every student an equal chance to participate.

In some municipalities in Finland, the cultural education plan also covers early childhood education and secondary education, or even the entire life cycle. A plan can also be shared by multiple municipalities, in which case the municipalities can agree on common content or operating methods.

Cultural education brings together different subjects and applies to all instruction in addition to artistic and practical subjects. The cultural education plan is based on the local curriculum and makes the cultural education activities of the schools more goal-oriented.

It's possible to build a plan for only one class, the whole grade, the whole school or to whole area or municipality. In Finland there is also recommendations in national Curriculum, and quite many cities has agreed which grade is taking part to what cultural activity, for example culture festivals etc. to be sure that each child has same possibilities depending teachers will or school resources.

Why a cultural education plan?

A cultural education plan guarantees children and young people equal opportunities to experience art and culture. With the help of such a plan, art and culture can be provided in a way that suits the age group as a natural part of the school day. Produced through multi-professional collaboration, the plan promotes the overall growth and development of students. Through the cultural education plan, regional equality in cultural education can be promoted and children's culture can be made a more significant contributor to wellbeing. The cultural education plan benefits students, teachers, actors in the arts and culture sector, as well as the municipality.

How does culture education benefits to school?

- Art visits can strengthen, expand or refine the learning of the content defined in the curriculum and contribute to achieving the set goals.
- The plan makes cultural and artistic content a stable part of school life.
- It makes cultural education coordinated and easier to predict.
- It makes teachers' work easier, as the content does not depend on the interest or financial opportunities of the individual teacher or school.
- It offers opportunities for creating multidisciplinary learning modules and drawing on wide-ranging areas of expertise and phenomenon-based learning.
- Collaboration with arts and culture actors enables teachers to share expertise and learn about new teaching methods.
- Out-of-school trips offer learning environments that cannot be modeled in the classroom.
- Collaboration with out-of-school cultural actors is one of the most important promoters of learning in cultural education.
- Cultural content can be incorporated with a variety of school subjects.

How does the cultural education plan support art and culture festivals?

- It helps in the development of cultural activities for children and young people, and in meeting the needs of schools.
- It increases the number of visitors to festivals and broadens the visitor base.
- In this way, a cultural education plan contributes to enlarging audiences in the future.
- It provides job opportunities and operating conditions for arts and culture professionals.
- Visiting artist from long distance can have more job opportunities during a festival.
- School visits promotes festival for young audiences, and quite often, children promote to parents.

Recommendations for teachers to culture education and festival visits

1. Pre task at school or homework
2. Visit or performance to festival, museum, historic place, gallery, music hall or dance, theater, circus performance or library, etc.
3. Presentation on the art form/work of artist/art institution
4. Workshop, driven by art pedagogue or artist, either within the destination or in the classroom after the visit/performance
5. Further work in the classroom

"This tool helped us to set up a culture plan for our school, including tips to set up a 'Culture Union': a local cooperation with cultural parties and events"

How you can start planning for you own municipality or school?

In Finland we use Culture Education tool to build culture education plans for new municipalities or one school. It is an open-access tool, free-of-charge aid for developing a cultural education plan. In CULTURE UNITED project we tested this tool in international context and we collected good feedback to develop tool further.

The tool contains questions, tips, and ideas for the various stages of the design process. It is intended to be used by one team working together.

The goal is to create a complete, shared plan that covers each grade for the entire **school**.



Where to start?

The work begins with appointing a person in charge of the cultural education plan work. They be a representative of the municipality's cultural services or a basic education teacher, or a two-person team, with one from each of these areas. The person (or persons) in charge is allocated working time to prepare the plan. The cultural education plan is created between actors in the field of education and culture. Good results can be guaranteed through shared expertise, time spent working together, sensible resourcing, a clear division of responsibilities, and the use of multidisciplinary networks.

The next step is to assemble a planning team. Who can we get help from? The work can also include representatives from education, art schools, as well as municipal cultural and art institutions and associations. It is worth including parties that are already enthusiastic and motivated about these topics.

Efforts should be made from the outset to involve children and young people in the planning. How can they be involved in drawing up a cultural education plan? And when can they judge its success? Suitable partners could include school student unions, for instance.

Define the goals of the cultural education plan – What are the values guiding its planning and implementation? What is the purpose of the plan? Based on these questions, a systematic and high-quality cultural education plan can be drawn up.



What is being done in the municipality already?

There's no need to start from scratch. Drawing on existing content and previous practices in the municipality will make the process easier and faster. Make a list:

ASK YOURSELF	MAKE A LIST
<p>What cultural events and activities does the municipality currently offer?</p>	<p>Make a list of arts and cultural institutions in your area: libraries, galleries, theaters, orchestras, art centers, museums, and archives</p> <p>Other cultural sites in the area: local cultural environments, architecturally significant buildings, important sculptures and statues, places of traditional value, cultural walks, religious buildings, castles, and World Heritage Sites</p> <p>Cultural events in the area: festivals, theme weeks, campaigns, village day events and district day events</p> <p>Local actors in the arts and culture sector: artists, cultural and artistic associations, local history societies, experts in traditions, artists' cooperatives, art educators, basic art education, performers, and touring groups</p>
<p>How is cultural education currently provided in schools?</p>	<p>Celebrations, excursions, visits, other events...</p> <p>Previous collaboration with arts and cultural actors.</p>
<p>Is something missing from your area?</p>	<p>You can supplement the range of activities on offer with virtual materials and collaboration with regional and national actors.</p> <p>These may include touring theaters and orchestras, digital services for school cultural education, online materials, streaming, and more.</p>

<p>Remember to keep the different cultural and artistic fields in mind already during the planning phase!</p>	<p>Architecture and the built environment Movies Cultural heritage and interculturalism Fine art, photography, and cartoons Literary art and literature Media and new areas of culture Design and handicrafts Music Local culture Dance, theater, and circus</p>
<p>What can your cultural education plan include?</p>	<p>Excursions to art and cultural institutions and sites in the area Artist-led workshops and artist visits Performances by touring groups Preliminary assignments, workshops, and follow-up work at schools</p>

How can the plan be made?

There is no right or wrong way to draw up a cultural education plan. Due to the lack of a national policy, there is a lot of variation in the names and contents of cultural education plans. Each municipality or school should draw up the cultural education plan that suits it best. The model does not have to stay the same – it can change and evolve over the years.

The plan can be referred to as a cultural trail, a cultural stairway, or cultural route, for example.

Cultural trail

A plan in which a particular art form or cultural activity or experience is selected for each age group is often called a cultural trail. For example, all third-graders in the municipality might visit a museum, fourth-graders visit a library, and fifth-graders could attend a concert

Cultural calendar

A cultural calendar contains targeted information for teachers about the cultural services in the area as an aid in planning their teaching. The cultural calendar is usually created annually, and can include pre-scheduled and age-appropriate cultural and artistic activities for the teacher to choose from. In the background of the calendar, the municipality may also have a cultural education plan in use, specifying the principles and goals of the activities. A cultural calendar is especially suitable for municipalities where there is a lot on offer. It allows schools to choose their own areas of emphasis. On the other hand, experiencing culture in this way may not be as equal as on the cultural trail.

Cultural route

A culture education plan can also be developed around an annually changing theme of some sort. Having a changing theme is well suited to a workshop-focused plan that does not depend on the programs of cultural institutions. The changing theme provides freedom and the opportunity to address a topical theme.

Where does the money come from?

This does strongly depend on your region and school system. In Finland and Scotland, the municipality's educational and cultural activities share the costs of the cultural education plan. The plan ties up some of the available resources, and they are used equally for the benefit of children and young people in the whole municipality. The aim is to integrate the cultural education plan into the municipality's local curriculum. The municipality is then obligated to implement and finance it.

In The Netherlands, schools can access culture via a cultural organizations financed by the municipality that offer schools "culture menu's" that they can pick and choose from. In Ireland, each school has their own policy on culture, depending on local interests and financial possibilities of the school.

When a wide range of actors in the field of education and culture are committed to the cultural education plan, this also ensures that significant human resources are committed to the plan. Could even two weeks a year of the working time of the staff of the municipal cultural services be reserved exclusively for children's culture? Could a children's culture week be extended into a children's culture month? Could the skills and hobbies of teachers and other school staff be put to good use in carrying out the cultural education plan?

In all cases however, a systematic approach is also cost-effective. Instead of an individual school ordering a single performance of a presentation, for example, the entire municipality or a cluster of schools can order multiple performances or a tour jointly with neighboring schools. Sometimes simply reorganizing the available resources can create savings, at the same time allowing at least part of the plan to be implemented.

In most cases, local arts and cultural institutions are aware of the different possibilities that schools have for public events, and also invest in the implementation of the cultural education plan financially or by offering their own input. Art institutions can offer free performances or free admission. Reciprocally, the teaching profession offers pedagogical expertise and a future clientele.

Getting culture to the kids or the kids to the culture (transport)

Cultural education and different learning environments requires moving from place to place. However, children and young people do not always have to be transported – art can also come to schools. Short trips can be made by bike. In some municipalities, school groups are allowed to travel free of charge on public transport within the municipality. Centralization and careful planning also help reduce transportation costs. For example, one class from a school can go to the swimming pool, and another class from the same school to the museum at the same time, on one bus. Some municipalities have requested a special grant for transport from the Ministry of Education and Culture for measures to promote equality. And one can always ask: if the age group were to be transported to the museum once every nine years, would there be funds for the bus journeys?

Sometimes cultural education plans are prepared partly with action grants. Artists and cultural and artistic associations can apply for grants or other financial assistance to fund school art workshops or other activities. Internships for and thesis research by students in the fields of arts and culture can also be drawn on in planning and implementing some activities.

The plan is complete – what next?

Great, congratulations! You have created your school's cultural education plan. The first stage has been completed.

The next step is to implement the cultural education plan in the school or schools, and for actors in the arts and culture sector to communicate about it, and to provide cultural education according to the plan. It is a good idea to appoint a culture contact person for each school. The cultural education plan can first be piloted in a few schools before being implemented in the whole municipality / other schools.

Evaluation

Consider and make plans for how you will collect feedback each year, and when you will evaluate the success of the activity yourself. The key players in the development work are the culture contact persons appointed in the schools, who provide feedback on the content and success of the cultural education plan. And how can other teachers, children and young people evaluate

the cultural education plan? Assess when the next development round for the plan will be held.

We share the same ambition -work together!

It's important to work together with teachers, head teachers, art teachers, culture and art institutions, artist, and festivals because in the end, we all share same ambition. One teacher can be leader of the proses, but it's not recommended to work alone with teachers only. You can also start with only one culture organization, for example one festival, if that suits butter for your school or municipality.

You can now start your own culture plan and set up your culture union here: www.culturaleducationplan.fi and in [English](#) and in Dutch



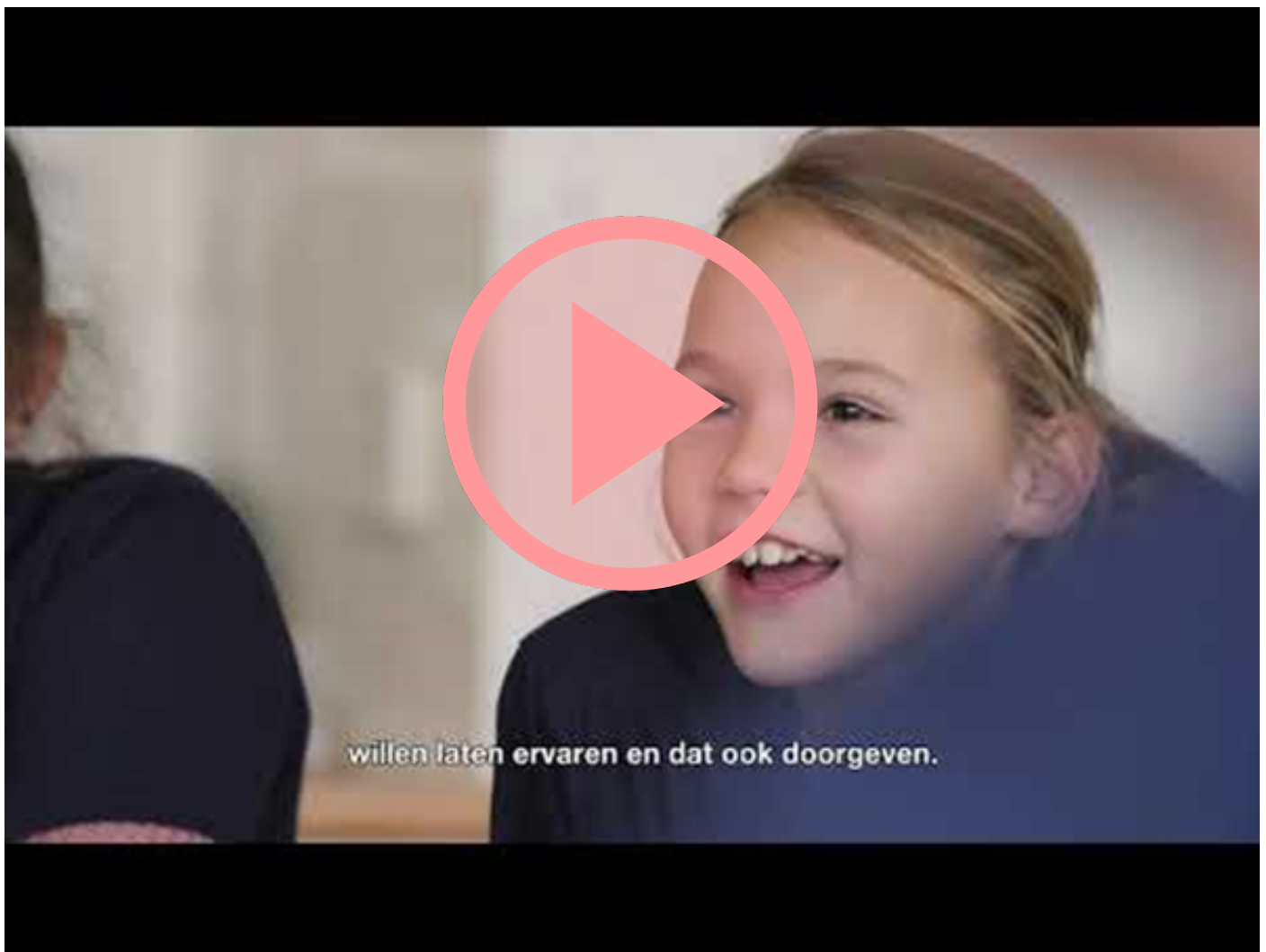
Case studies

Below you can watch local cultural education projects that our CULTURE UNITED partners have set up with local festival and other cultural providers. In the videos, you will learn more about the experience of the teacher, the children and the festival organisations.

Case Study 1:

Elfstedentocht Project, Leeuwarden, The Netherlands

Within our Culture United project, there is an activity called "Elfstedentocht project". The final goal of this project is to build connections between history and culture for primary students. Therefore, the students will delve into the past and search for the history of the Elfstedentocht (Eleven Cities Tour)- a traditional Frisian event in The Netherlands where contestants ice skate 200km through the eleven historical cities of Friesland. Furthermore, students will learn how to create a musical performance for their next school year. Below is the kick-off video about the project.



Case study 2:

SEEK Festival, Dundalk, Ireland

The SEEK Festival is centred on promoting contemporary urban art in Dundalk, Ireland. By commissioning established and emerging artists locally, nationally and internationally, we aim to promote the town culturally and artistically, repositioning the area as a vibrant hub for creativity.



Case study 3:

Enchanted words festival, Oulu, Finland

Enchanted Words is an annual literature and literary arts festival for children and young people. Its programme spans several weeks and includes a literature-themed exhibition. In addition to events and performances, the programme features workshops, training sessions and meetings with authors. Texts written by children and young people are published during the festival. The festival is organised by the Valve School of Literary Arts for Children.



Case study 4:

Harry Potter, Edinburgh, Scotland

During Covid, Edinburgh teacher Evelyne Morris could not take her class to a festival, so she decided to bring some Scottish culture to the classroom. She explains how a local cultural theme like Harry Potter can help with multidisciplinary learning and bring joy and inspiration into the classroom.





More about case study Enchanted Words in detail

If you want to know even more about organising a festival for and with children, you can read all the ins and outs about the Enchanted Words festival in Oulu, Finland, [here](#).

Enchanted Words festival concept in Oulu

The Enchanted Words festival has been organised in Oulu since 2007. The annual event not only brings high-quality word art and literature programmes for children, young people and families, but also for professional educators. The programmes also complement the art curricula of kindergartens and schools. At the festival, it is possible to meet writers and illustrators, see and hear literature performances and concerts, immerse oneself in exhibitions and experience and make things. An important part of Enchanted Words' programme are free workshops for thousands of children and young people. Adult programmes and workshops are also offered, allowing art education to reach even more children and young people across Finland.

Workshops take place in literature exhibitions. Often the event produces the exhibitions, and they are planned so that they can go on tour afterwards. After the Oulu festival, the exhibitions tour Finland for years. The festival also brings exhibitions from all over Finland to Oulu. Cooperation between the children's cultural centres on exhibitions is active and productive.

During the festival's word art weeks, the children and young people are not only the audience, but also the creators of the art. The festival releases an annual collection of writings by the children and young people. The children and young people also actively participate in the planning of the events and perform with the artists at many performances.

The Echanted Words Festival is one of the only regular, long-term, professionally produced events for children's and youth literature in Finland. In the northern region, the festival is the only one of its kind. The target audience, children, young people and families, comes mainly from Oulu and nearby regions. The adult word artists - authors, other artists, teachers and word art teachers - come from all over Finland.

The festival is produced by the word art department of the Oulu Children's Culture Centre. It was originally founded at the request of the public by word art hobbyists, but over the course of 15 years has grown into a nationally notable and unique literary event open to all.

Visitation numbers

Exhibition 700-15 000 visitors

- Word art workshops for kindergartens, schools and institutions: 2000-3000 participants
- Other events (concerts, artist meetings, performances, tours, etc.) 1500-3000 visitors
- In past years, the percentage of pre-school and school audiences out of all visitors during the festival was around 22%.

The Vision

Reading opens doors to other worlds – and to other people. Immersing in stories one can meet new, different characters and gets to go on a journey inside those characters' minds: cry, laugh, cheat, love, fear, hate and forgive with them. While reading one can experience and learn to understand the feelings of many different kinds of people and creatures. In this way, books inevitably develop one's moral imagination, empathy and tolerance.



Part of the event's vision is to provide wow experiences and create long-lasting arts educational effectiveness, enticing children and young people into a lifelong relationship with reading and writing. The project has a long lifespan, constantly developing sight in the arts but also working on the professionalism of arts pedagogy. The ideal is to produce artistic programmes that affect the well-being of children and young people all over Finland in a holistic and long-term way.

In planning and producing the content, it strives to keep the artistic and productive level as high as possible. The festival respects and listens to the voices of children and young people and connects them with top artists and art content. The guidelines for the work are joy, experiences, community, quality, equality and accessibility.

The festival tracks the operational environment and developmental challenges in the field of word arts. In recent years, declining motivation to read and declining reading skills of children and young people have been a topic of lively discussion. Enchanted Words aims to encourage children and young people to read and provide every adult working in education with literature and word art resources. The festival listens carefully to children and young people and tries to keep in touch with current developments in literature.

Promoting Children's literature

The lifespan of a book is short, at worst just one season. The aim of the festival is to extend that lifespan and make work opportunities for authors more diverse. The festival promotes quality Finnish literature, authors and illustrators through a diverse, literature-based programme: performances, concerts, meetings with artists, exhibitions, writing courses, workshops, etc.

Literature as an art form is silent and invisible. Enchanted Words aims to bring the stories to life, to be seen and experienced, by producing high-quality exhibitions about literature or bringing them to Oulu. Its own productions are created in collaboration with local arts and cultural organisations. They are made to be tour-ready, and workshops and internet materials are created around them, free for all to use. The aim is to produce high-quality content not only for the festival, but for the whole of Finland.



What is an educational arts festival?

The aim of the Enchanted Words festival is to offer children, young people and families a memorable word art and literature programme that is also artistically and pedagogically high quality. The word art festival supports children and young people's reading pleasure and skill, as well as self-expression and positive identity development. The event brings art experiences and joy into their lives and promotes the well-being of families.

The aim is also to give children and young people equal opportunities to participate in culture and art. This is why the event works closely with kindergartens and schools.

The festival offers hundreds of free workshops for kindergartens, schools and facilities. In addition, many of the festival's events are free, and for others the cost of tickets is kept as affordable as possible.

Cultural Education Plan and cooperation with schools

The festival supports cultural education in kindergartens and schools. It is part of the city of Oulu's cultural education plan. The festival also works closely with school libraries. At the events, the children and young people are not only the audience, but also the creators of the art: they participate in planning the programme and also perform. At the exhibitions, there are daily storytelling tours, word art workshops and guided tours.

For the books chosen as theme books at the festival, word art exercise materials will be created. This material will be available online for everyone, before or after visiting the exhibition, as well as anywhere and anytime.

Programme planning for children, professionals and schools

Enchanted Words aims to provide tailored content on literature for all age groups from children to young people.

At the festival, children and young people are not only the audience, but also the creators of the art. They also perform with professional artists in many events. There is an event for children aged 5-10 and another for 11-plus. The writings of children and young people are performed, exhibitions are made of them and they are published in blogs and analogies.

In addition, the festival organises regular training programmes for teachers and educators, and meetings for word art professionals.



Teacher and students experience in CULTURE UNITED co-operation:

“Can we please read the Nunnu story again?”

The Enchanted Words collaborative project

between the word art festival and our school

Tanja Salo Drama teacher in Oulu International School and CULTURE UNITED project teacher

Oulu International School is a comprehensive school which gathers students from age groups 7 to 16. We follow Finnish national core curriculum and both IB PYP and MYP programs. One of our main goals is to provide multidisciplinary ground for learning together as a community, not just within our clas-



ses and school facilities. Therefore, taking part in this CULTURE UNITED Erasmus+ project has given us new tools to practice all this with Oulu Children Culture Center and The Enchanted Words festival.

“I think they should try to make it as easy as possible for many teachers to participate. So, making very simple guidelines, maybe some kind of activities that we can do in school before we go to the festivals. And kind of what we can expect. It’s really hectic sometimes in the classrooms and organizing the timetables and schedules but the easier it is for us to go somewhere the more people will participate.”

At Oulu International School, we have about 440 students, three classes of which were involved in the CULTURE UNITED project. Our groups 1st and 5th of Finnish mother tongue and the drama students of group 9 worked closely together and learned a lot about literature, word art, imagination and dreams. Our school's mission statement "Joy of learning in a diverse and caring community" was put into practice in various ways during the 2020-2021 school year, which all came together in the first week of June at Valve Cultural centre.

The pupils of grades 1 and 5 started their Enchanted Words journey with a huge pile of books their teachers brought them from Oulu's city library. The librarians had collected many novels, short stories and poetry books related to the exhibition, and the pupils delved into the world of Enchanted Words long before their visit to the exhibition. All in all, every year our teachers are eager to take their students to the Enchanted Words exhibition and Valve's word art workshops, but usually we have not been able to arrange enough time to get to know the books well in advance, so this time it made the whole process more meaningful.

Already in autumn, our 7-year-olds loved the stories and the world of fiction, which prepared them for the upcoming visit. At the same time, the grade 5 teacher noticed that his students were opening up as they got to know the books, so from this point of view, it was more than fruitful to watch, interpret, discuss art without haste. As we know, literature is a wonderful gateway to getting to know others and especially oneself, so all this provided a good platform for teaching emotional and safety skills, even though that was not one of our main goals in planning the whole project.

At our school, group 1 and group 5 pupils work as 'buddies' throughout the little ones' first school year. In practice, this means that the 7-year-olds get their own buddy pupils who support them in all daily things at school, but also later on in ICT and reading, for example. This school year, the buddies also took on a big role in the CULTURE UNITED project. After being introduced to the books, the group 5 pupils made "book talks" in which they gave hints and tips for the group 1 pupils to make them even more enthusiastic about the exhibition literature. Because of the Covid-19, this was done through Teams, which fortunately worked out well given the circumstances.

At the same time, Group 9 drama pupils were also introduced to the exhibition books. They worked in pairs and introduced some books to others in the class. After choosing their favourite books, they made book trailers using the app iMovie and its trailer option. These trailers were sent to Group 5 and 1 students to enjoy them and get even more excited about the project and the upcoming visit in the summer. At the same time, Group 9 pupils learnt to express themselves in the form of a video.

After our students became familiar with the exhibition literature, word art teachers Anna Anttonen and Kati Inkala gave a workshop to grade 5 students. They too had been trained as word art teachers! The idea was to encourage the students to try out word art exercises and make some of their own. It was a very useful workshop for the older pupils to grow within the project and prepare themselves to later take on the responsibility of guiding younger pupils.

Group 9 drama students were also able to enjoy Kati's expertise through Teams. After analysing Oili Tanninen's children's book Nunnu, Kati gave us a virtual workshop on how to become an enchanted guide and how to turn Nunnu into a play. The students were very happy about this, because now the two scripts really started to make sense. After this workshop, the students knew better what was expected of them. In six months' time, they would provide tours of the exhibition space for the younger students and perform a play based on the Nunnu, an essential literary piece of the show.

From January to the end of May, students practised hard 90 min a week. We did a lot of character work, worked closely with our costume designer and gathered confidence as professional exhibition guides. All this happened mainly in our school's drama class, which made things challenging. All we could do was imagine the enchanting exhibition space and its possibilities - and limitations. Things eventually got a lot easier when the exhibition was built and we got to dramatise the play and rehearse the tour in the real setting at Valve at the end of April.

Because of the rather challenging Covid situation at the time, we had to divide our 10 drama students into two groups, which had three performances in a row per day. This meant that everyone had to be both an exhibition supervisor and an actor, increasing the pressure to memorise things for the world premiere. The whole performance day was arranged so that there was an outdoor word art workshop by grade 5 pupils to grade 1 and exhibition visits that culminated in a Nunnu play - plus, of course, ice cream!

The whole process was demanding, but very rewarding. The collaboration between our school and the local festival grew from single visits to a full project in which all pupils learned the exhibition literature well, gr. 5 pupils learned a lot about making word art and gr. 9 about acting and improvisation. All in all, our older pupils learned to take responsibility and guide younger pupils, which helped them develop these useful life skills.

What did we learn?

We learned a lot as a school community, and because of these following issues, among others, we would like all schools to consider a longer festival project

"Of course, every time we go out of the classroom it's new and exciting and it helps the kids focus, and observe and absorb things differently, say, I would just show pictures and tell what these displays are like, they wouldn't get nearly the same kind of experience. So, I think it's more holistic when we actually go somewhere, and we get to do things with more than just one sense."

We learned a lot as a school community, and due to e.g. these following things we'd like all schools to consider a longer festival project:

- Covering objectives of the curriculum in a fun way: reading and writing skills improved
- Learning about life (emotional and safety skills): students shared their thoughts and feelings evoked by the books
- Drama and improvisation skills: getting out of the normal settings, learning to work with young audiences
- Collaboration between different age groups of students: learning from each other
- Collaboration with colleagues from different grade levels: learning from expertise of others
- Collaboration with Culture Center Valve: both students and teachers learned new things and gained confidence in continuing art education in the future
- Community feeling: gave light in the middle of the pandemic

Yet the best feedback was given from one of the 1st graders day after the Unikudelmia exhibition experience. Even though he had got to know the Nunnu story inside out, the first question of the day was: "Can we please read the Nunnu story again?" What could be more precious than providing students with meaningful art experiences?

Planning

Planning is essential in these projects. We share our planning and hope it can help you establish yours.

September to December 2020 work meetings with the team:

- Choosing The Enchanted Words festival as a platform, development work (16.10)
- Co-operation with library (20.11.)
- Steps for the spring season (17.12.)

Month	Meeting topic between school and festival	Work	Grade 1 (age 7-8) working on the project	Grade 5 (age 11-12) working on the project	Grade 9 (age 15-16) working on the project
Jan	Work meeting (27.1)	Interdisciplinary work / teachers & staff	Getting to know the enchanted literature	Getting to know the enchanted literature	Getting to know the enchanted literature & making book talk trailers for gr. 1 & 5
Feb	Planning virtual workshop How to Become an Enchanted Exhibition Guide? to gr. 9 students (10.2)	Interdisciplinary work / teachers & staff	Getting to know the enchanted literature	Getting to know the enchanted literature and word art exercises	Analysing Nunnu book and scripts Workshop by OLK (17.2)
March		Interdisciplinary work / teachers & staff	Preparing for the visit in June	Preparing for the visit in June	Character work Collaboration with costume designer
April		Interdisciplinary work / teachers & staff	Preparing for the visit in June	Preparing for the visit in June	Getting into the exhibition space and rehearsing

May		Interdisciplinary work / teachers & staff	Preparing for the visit in June book trailers by gr. 9	Preparing for the visit in June: word art workshops ready book trailers by gr. 9	Several extra drama lessons & dress rehearsals
June	Online event to our project partners: Introducing the Enchanted Words festival and the collaborative approach 2.6	Interdisciplinary work / teachers & staff	Show time on 31.5 and 1.6: workshops by gr. 5 & exhibition tour and play by gr. 9	Show time on 31.5 and 1.6: holding workshops for gr. 1 and visiting exhibition tour and play by gr. 9	Show time on 31.5 and 1.6: exhibition tours and play to gr. 1 and 5 students

Oulu International School (OIS)
Oulu Children Culture Center (OCCCY)



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