



British Council Lithuania
People to People
programme
2016–2021



Introduction from the Country Director



“Don’t give up, just go and do it”, advises Eglė, a community leader from Veriškės, a small village in Eastern Lithuania. These profound words served to inspire and motivate not only the participants of the People to People programme, but also ourselves here at the British Council Lithuania.

People to People was a cultural relations and social partnership programme provided by the British Council, which was active for five years in all three Baltic states. By adopting best practices from the United Kingdom, together with partners throughout Lithuania, we created and implemented unique projects that facilitated the development of leadership and critical thinking skills, sought to

introduce innovative solutions to the educational processes, and promoted community activism and volunteering. It is with great pride that I witnessed the tangible changes initiated by this programme in our country.

From the initiation of the programme, our aim was to enrich the field of education and culture in Lithuania. To achieve this, a range of methods were employed: some partners conducted training for local communities, while others involved students in joint creative activities, or created installations and performances in regional cultural centres. When we turned to our partners for solutions to the challenges we encountered, there was no shortage of innovative ideas and enthusiasm. Ultimately, the goal of this programme was promoting empowerment through enhanced participation.

I am confident that the British Council’s successful cooperation with the participants of the People to People programme and partner institutions will continue to flourish into the future, leading to numerous remarkable initiatives that serve to unite communities throughout Lithuania.

Ona Marija Vyšniauskaitė



About the British Council

The British Council is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We build connections, understanding and trust between people in the UK and other countries through arts and culture, education and the English language.

We work in two ways – directly with individuals to transform their lives, and with governments and partners to make a bigger difference for the longer term, creating benefit for millions of people all over the world.

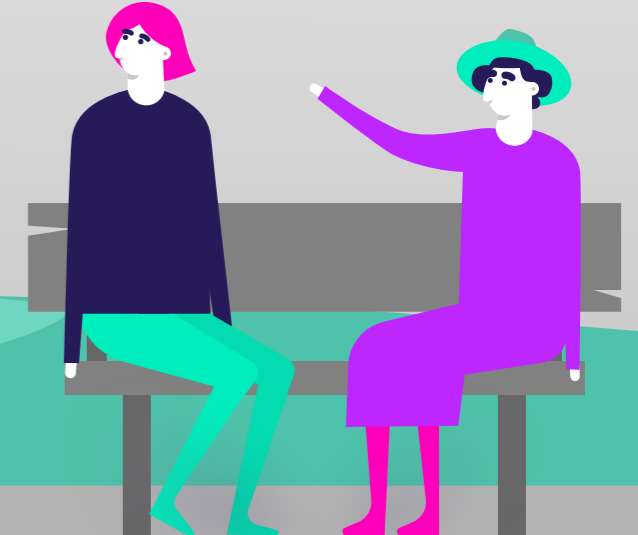
We help young people to gain the skills, confidence and connections they are looking for to realise their potential and to participate in strong and inclusive communities. We support them to learn English, to get a high-quality education and to gain internationally recognised qualifications. Our work in arts and culture stimulates creative expression and exchange and nurtures creative enterprise.

We connect the best of the UK with the world and the best of the world with the UK. These

connections lead to an understanding of each other's strengths and of the challenges and values that we share. This builds trust between people in the UK and other nations which endures even when official relations may be strained.

We work on the ground in more than 100 countries. In 2019-2020 we connected with 80 million people directly and with 791 million people overall, including online and through our broadcasts and publications.

The British Council has been active in the Baltic states since the early 1990s. Over the many years of activity, we have implemented a number of projects and initiatives to improve English language teaching, foster cultural cooperation and develop educational and artistic exchanges between the UK and the Baltic states.





About the People to People programme

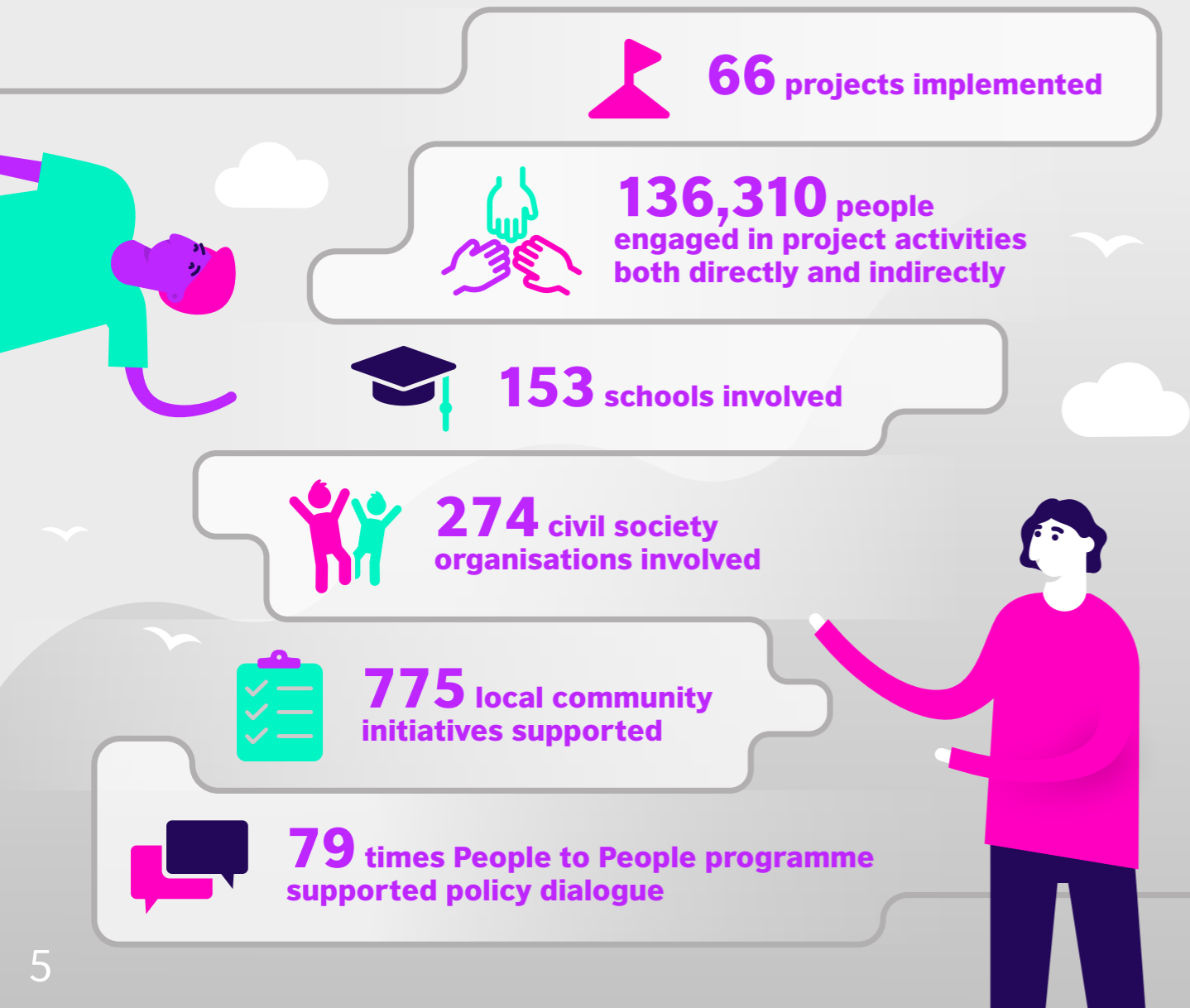
In 2016, the British Council initiated the People to People programme to strengthen social partnerships and cultural ties in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The programme aimed to build cohesion between people from different communities, while enhancing their access to international networks and opportunities.

The programme supported projects that helped to develop 21st century skills, create change through social action and broaden perspectives through the arts. The engaged audience comprised of diverse genders, religions, ages, physical abilities and socio-economic backgrounds.

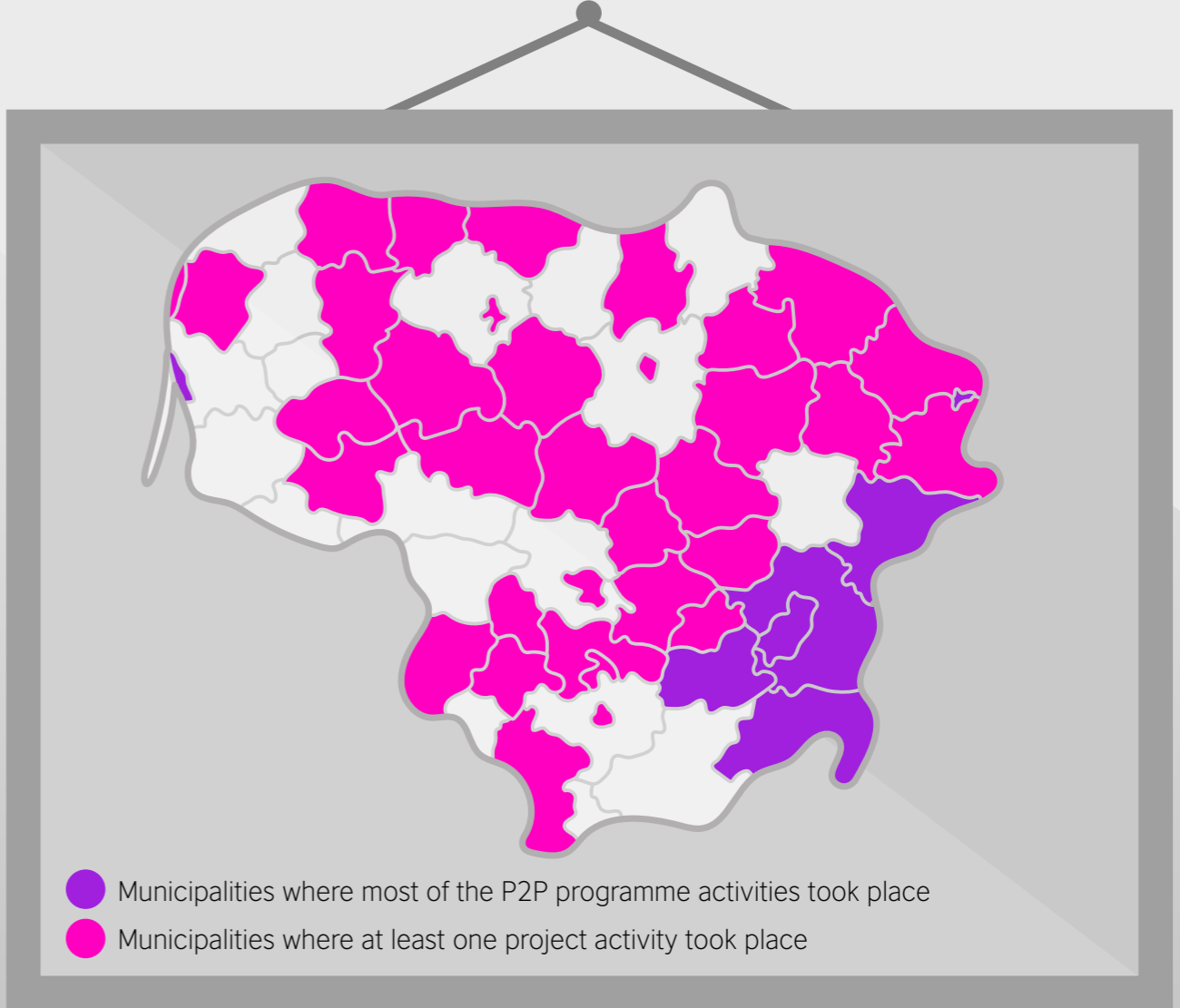
During the 2016–2021 period, the People to People programme delivered over 60 projects in Lithuania, with the focus on providing new skills, experiences and opportunities that empowered people to make a difference in their communities. Some of the projects were implemented on a number of occasions throughout the programme's duration, involving approximately 20 partner organisations.



Key results of the People to People programme in Lithuania 2016-2021



People to People programme activities took place in 40 out of 60 Lithuanian municipalities (67%). The majority of activities took place in linguistically diverse municipalities: Klaipėda city, Šalčininkai district, Švenčionys district, Trakai district, Vilnius district, Vilnius city, and Visaginas municipalities.



Active Citizens

Partner – Institute for Policy Research and Analysis

Duration – 2017–2021

Regions – Klaipėda district, Šalčininkai, Švenčionys, Trakai, Vilnius and Visaginas

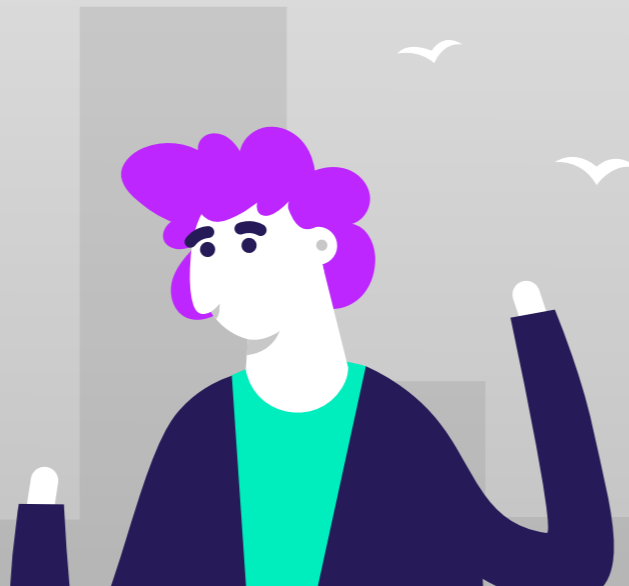
The British Council's global Active Citizens programme connects around 80 countries worldwide, and has provided hundreds of thousands of people with social leadership skills. The Active Citizens programme in Lithuania aimed to promote social change that benefits individuals, communities and the public by bringing together those hailing from different ethnic backgrounds, beliefs and perspectives.

The programme promoted community-led social development by motivating small village or town members to take responsibility for their social needs, providing the requisite knowledge, skills and experience to address them. The main target audience of the programme was the leaders of small communities across various regions in Lithuania.

The programme equipped the participants with the necessary competencies to engage with different social and ethnic groups, while supporting the initiated social action projects. After completion of the community-leader training courses the facilitators organised meetings, during which they defined the needs of the residents and

developed new ideas for the social action projects. Later, project members and facilitators implemented these initiatives, organising activities to help facilitate the creation of a cohesive dialogue within the community.

Activities were organised each year, with community meetings, workshops and social action projects taking place in 13 municipalities across Lithuania. The programme also gained recognition from mayors and municipality representatives, and was actively supported by the First Lady of Lithuania.



Over four years, the programme implemented:

- training for 108 facilitators, who in turn influenced 10,290 active citizens;
- 113 community workshops, attended by 2,633 participants;
- funded and delivered 121 social action projects in 13 municipalities.





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I welcome British Council projects that bring people and cultures from different countries together for creativity and action. Working together, we not only restore and continue Lithuania's historical connection with the Anglo-Saxon tradition and the infinite cultural treasure of the United Kingdom but also, through Active Citizens' activities, we develop a direct, modern community-based connection between Lithuania's regions and the world.

We thank the project Active Citizens that, through the involvement of national minorities in the most remote corners of Lithuania, builds bridges of trust, refines the strengths of different cultures and connects people to common, constructive activities, encouraging them to become creators of the responsible international community. Living locally and acting as partners, we harmonise the rhythm of global change.

We are inspired and bound by a strong shared value tradition – the desire to be human beings who can be trusted in the 21st century. I wish strength to our creative wings and a prosperous journey into the future.

First Lady of Lithuania, Diana Nausėdienė

The Art of Curiosity

Partner – Kūrybinės jungtys

Duration – 2016–2021

Regions – Klaipėda, Šalčininkai, Trakai, Vilnius and Visaginas

The Art of Curiosity was built upon the principles and experience gained through Creative Partnerships, the UK's large-scale education programme focused on identifying creative approaches to learning in schools. The project engaged students, teachers and the wider school community in continuous partnerships with creative professionals from a broad range of artistic, cultural and scientific domains.

In Lithuania, the project introduced innovative teaching approaches while increasing school-to-school collaborations. Each participating school developed a unique creative learning project that responded to a real challenge and harnessed the active potential of the school community. The activities were immersed in daily classroom practice, and were premised on the principles of experiential, all-inclusive and creative learning.

The project participants acquired experience in addressing specific learning challenges by engaging with developed and tested educational methods based on cross-disciplinary approaches, as well as the synergy of art and education. As a result, the project improved the students' critical and creative thinking, collaboration, communication, leadership and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, teachers were supported in the shift away from more directive forms of teaching and lesson planning towards a more creative, engaging and student-centred approach.

It is important to note that The Art of Curiosity received recognition from outside the People to People programme via funding from Vilnius City Municipality, which was implemented in Vilnius secondary schools from September 2020.



From 2016, the project:

- influenced more than 12,500 people from school communities in Lithuania, involving students, teachers, parents and school administrators; and

- was implemented in 39 schools across Lithuania, delivering a wide range of results including:

- more than 1,500 students increasing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills by working intensively with the creative practitioners and their teachers;

- around 835 teachers benefitting from professional development opportunities by engaging in Teachers' Clubs within schools; and

- 110 creative practitioners were trained to deliver educational workshops to students and teachers on 21st century skills.

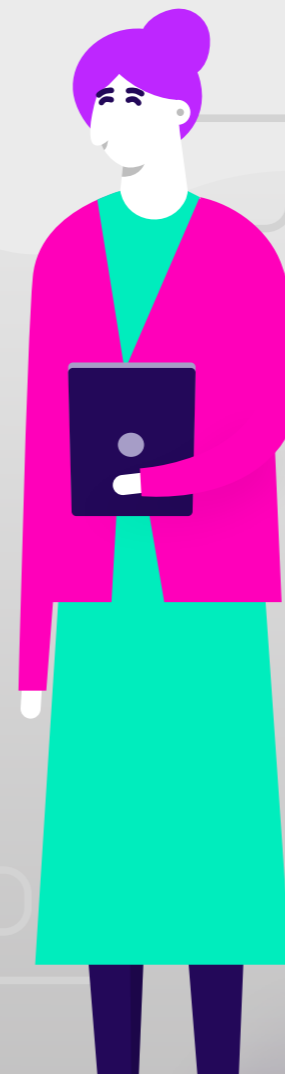


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The concept of critical thinking has become much clearer to me, has emerged from the fog, and I am now confidently telling children what it is and why it matters.

”

Teacher participant in the project



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I learned that I have a boundless imagination that I restrict. I was surprised that I can be creative and have common interests with my classmates.

”

Student participant in the project

Big Small Screens

Partner – Meno avilys

Duration – 2016–2021

Regions – Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šalčininkai, Vilnius and Visaginas; Švenčionys and Vilnius districts

The Big Small Screens project aimed to develop media literacy skills amongst the students and teachers of secondary schools in Lithuania, helping to discover and explore their community, and to nurture the dialogue with other communities by utilising creative and analytical media literacy activities. Together with media experts and partners, workshops were organised for students and teachers who developed skills and awareness on the different sources and types of media. The primary focus was directed towards audiovisual media and media products of particular interest to students, such as films, advertisements, computer games, social networks, television and multimedia journalism.

Students developed their creativity through meetings with audiovisual-media industry professionals, and engaging in creative workshops to improve technical skills like filming, coding and editing, while enhancing communication competency through public speaking and discussions. They also learned how various media channels function, improved their critical thinking and analytic skills, and enhanced their resilience to false narratives and disinformation.

As a final outcome, the students created audiovisual media products by implementing every step of the process, working in conjunction with inspirational professionals, experimenting with new professions, and developing a deeper understanding of how various media products and outlets



operate. After participating in the project, some of the students gave serious consideration to a career in the media industry.

The project was also of particular benefit to teachers, who acquired the required knowledge and belief to consider media literacy as a field of specialisation. After completion of the training and having gained the skills and tools necessary for the critical analysis of different media products, the teachers felt well-equipped and confident to integrate media literacy teaching or introduce diverse forms of media into their lessons.

From 2016, 89 schools and more than 16,400 teachers, students and school community members participated in the project activities, resulting in:

- the implementation of 23 training sessions and creative workshops for more than 400 teachers with media education experts from the UK and Lithuania;
- 75 creative student workshops (involving over 3,000 participants) being conducted with media industry professionals from throughout Lithuania;
- students creating more than 300 audiovisual media products;

- the development of teaching tools for educators, encompassing six forms and areas of audiovisual media, 24 lessons plans and 24 video lessons;

- teachers conducting over 630 media literacy lessons based on these tools;

- five annual media festivals being held, reaching more than 2,000 participants annually; and

- the project airing 15 short media literacy lessons in October 2020 on Lithuania's Lietuvos Rytas TV channel, where these lessons inviting an enhanced understanding of screen culture were watched by more than 200,000 viewers.



Bridging Generations

Partner – The Order of Malta Relief Organization: Young Maltese

Duration – 2020–2021

Regions – Ignalina, Klaipėda, Prienai, Raseiniai, Skuodas, Vilnius and Žiežmariai

From the early spring of 2020, quarantine restrictions were implemented in Lithuania. The scarcity of face-to-face communication and associated social isolation had a powerful impact on everybody, particularly the elderly who live alone and lack reliable information on COVID-19, as well as vital emotional support.

In this context, the British Council Lithuania started collaborating with Young Maltese from The Order of Malta Relief Organization and initiated the Bridging Generations project, representing an intergenerational initiative based on Age UK's (one of the country's leading charities) community social cohesion projects. Its core goals were to strengthen intergenerational dialogue by developing long-term volunteering opportunities for young people to engage with senior citizens.

Bridging Generations also helped to address concerns in the elderly community regarding the pandemic. The project provided important clarification of the myths and rumours projected on various media platforms about COVID-19, vaccines and other associated issues, while improving their general media literacy. In parallel, this project provided essential reassurance during extended periods of social isolation and offered the elderly living in remote areas a greater sense of belonging.

Telephone counselling required robust preparation, and therefore the young volunteers were trained by experts on information, media literacy and psychological support. Each volunteer was provided with 24 hours of preparatory training and three supportive reflections, during which they had the opportunity to consider their experiences, while sharing challenges and good practice.

Subsequently, seven groups of young volunteers (involving 80 young people in total) from different parts of Lithuania participated in the activities. They offered consultations with elderly persons on relevant topics via telephone, while also assisting the seniors with information technology issues. Not only was counselling provided during these telephone conversations, but also emotional support, ensuring that the senior citizens felt a sense of inclusion in the events unfolding.



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Thanks to the project Bridging Generations, I was thrilled to learn about the opportunity to find a friend. I waited for a call from an unfamiliar young man with anxiety and excitement. It was surprising that someone would be willing to listen to me and be ready to find some time for an old man, living a hundred kilometres away.

”

Project participant, Kazys

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Loneliness is a big problem in society, so the opportunity to contribute to its solution without leaving home and maintaining security turned out to be a great idea. So I decided to join the Bridging Generations initiative.

”

Project volunteer, Emilija



Building Connections

Partner – Kūrybinės jungtys

Duration – 2020–2021

Regions – Kaunas, Klaipėda, Vilnius and Visaginas; Šalčininkai, Trakai and Vilnius districts

Child day-care centres in Lithuania are often attended by children from socially excluded or at-risk groups. These centres represent safe spaces for children to access food, homework support and spend recreational time at play. Unfortunately, the day-care staff do not have sufficient resources and knowledge on engaging with children's creativity and other core skills, as they are too busy maintaining the regular operations of the centre.

The Building Connections project aimed to develop creativity and other core skills in the day-care centre attendees, while promoting positive experiences of collaboration and connection with others through art. The focus of the programme was a partnership between a group of children and young people attending day-care centres, and specifically trained creative professionals such as a film director, artist or musician. The children and creative practitioners collaborated for around nine sessions in order to design and deliver an explorative project (e.g. an art installation), which was later presented at the National Art Gallery in Vilnius.





Through a variety of artistic activities such as street art, photography, filming, visiting a silkscreen-printing workshop or the National Art Gallery, the children transcended the boundaries of their social, cultural and ethnic circles whilst acquiring critical thinking skills. Art became a cohesive medium that contributed to inclusion and created the opportunity for the children to express their creativity.



Over its duration, the project involved 15 day-care centres, 200 children from throughout Lithuania and 20 creative professionals hailing from various cultural fields such as the visual arts, music, film, theatre and performative art.



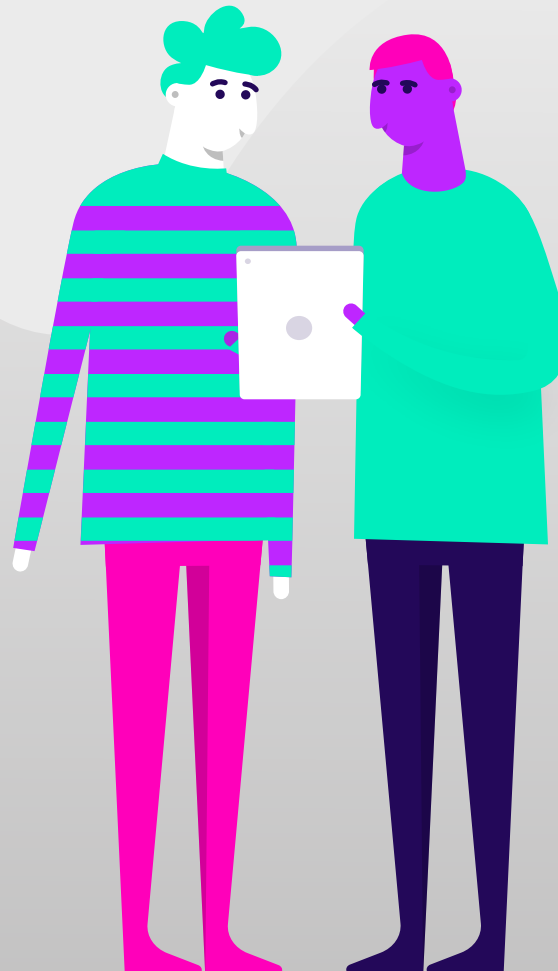
Partnerships with The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award

Partner – The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Lietuva
Duration – 2016–2021
Regions – throughout Lithuania

From 2016, the British Council Lithuania and The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award (DofE) collaborated in organising two projects for 14–19-year-olds studying in Lithuanian schools.

The first project, 3D Youth: Do It Bravely Now, aimed at encouraging young people to identify social problems existing in their surroundings (e.g. libraries, nurseries, orphanages and old people's homes, or city parks, forests and lakes) and to develop effective solutions. These young participants were encouraged to work in small teams with the supervision of professionals, collectively implementing social action projects.

In total, 30 initiatives were implemented by young people, involving more than 260 people from local communities. Additionally, 20 young participants were trained to be able to identify their strengths, challenges and the characteristics that they aspired to improve in the future. They practised team-work, decision-making, time-planning skills and identifying the reasons for social challenges.



The second project, Public Speaking Training for the Youth of Lithuania, focused on building young peoples' confidence in public speaking and encouraging critical thinking. Through a range of tasks and games, young people studied themes relevant to society such as volunteering, digitisation and robotics, social exclusion, multilingualism, urbanisation and cultural diversity. The young participants not only worked individually on their chosen theme, but also collaborated in teams comprised of students from different geographical regions of Lithuania.

Through this training, around 100 young people gained communication, problem-solving, critical thinking, creativity and collaboration skills. Furthermore, they developed the competency necessary for real-life situations, and increased collaboration between different schools and their communities. Interestingly, the project participants organised TEDx events in their communities involving over 3,000 people.





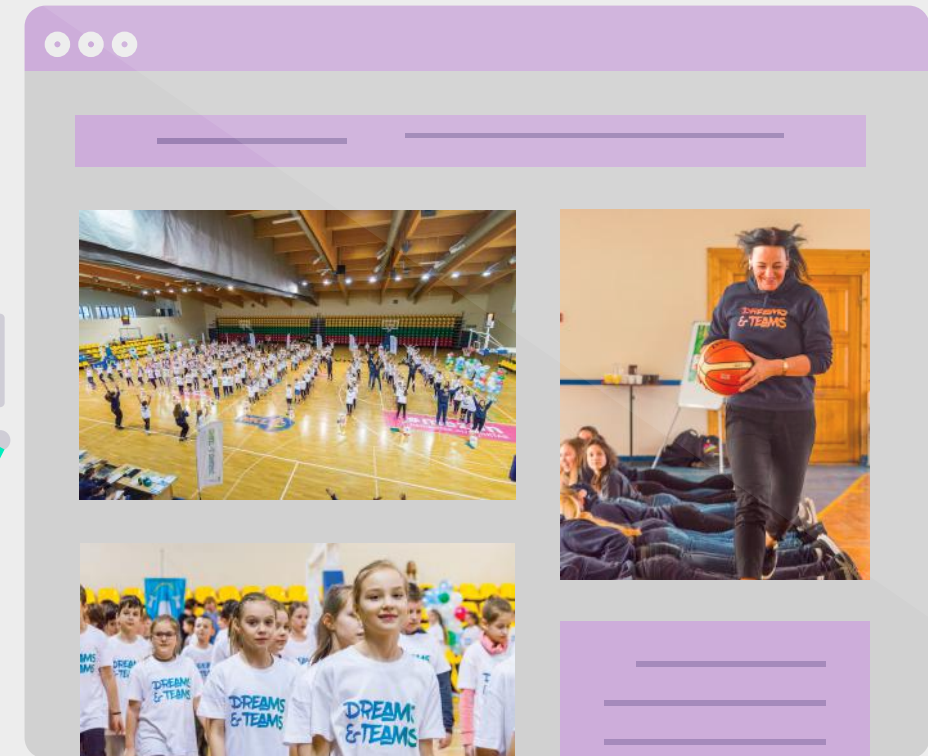
Dreams & Teams

Partner – The National Olympic Committee of Lithuania

Duration – 2017–2021

Regions – Klaipėda, Šalčininkai and Visaginas

Sport is a unique tool for the transformation and development of personal skills, helping to forge ties between different social and cultural groups, bring joy into people's lives and provide social and cultural value to communities. The Dreams & Teams project was developed in the UK by the Youth Sport Trust and the British Council. It employs sport to develop the essential 21st century skills of critical thinking, problem-solving, communication and collaboration, creativity, leadership, personal growth and teamwork.



In Lithuania, this project brought teachers and students together from different schools. The first phase of the project was training specifically designed for students and teachers. During the training and teamwork activities, the participants were introduced to the contemporary skills necessary for sports' leadership. After completing the courses, students planned and delivered educational workshops for their school communities, covering topics such as diversity and inclusion, Olympic and democratic values, and healthy living. The final Dreams & Teams events were organised by the participants and united the schools, as well as the wider communities of the regions involved.

Participants of the project noted that the sports-based activities helped to improve their communication skills, value the opinions of others and solve emerging challenges. Most importantly, through shared activities and experiences, the project drew different school communities closer together and fostered long-term collaborations.



Over its four-year duration, the project engaged:

- around 2,800 school community members who developed their networks and cooperation between teachers, young leaders and school communities;
- over 300 young leaders (aged 13-16 years) who developed their confidence, leadership and creativity skills, as well as becoming more active within the school environment; and
- 150 teachers who gained new skills in youth empowerment and mentoring.



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I highly appreciate the cooperation and the results achieved together with our partner, the British Council Lithuania, for the project Dreams & Teams. Since I have repeatedly met with the children and educators involved in the project, I have seen a remarkable change. Children boldly ask a variety of questions, and they are not afraid to contest the existing theories, discuss with the authorities, and take the initiative. When I saw what topics they had chosen for the team projects, I was pleasantly surprised. A socially responsible, tolerant generation is growing up that is not afraid to make a change.

”

President of the Lithuanian National Olympic Committee, Daina Gudzinevičiūtė



Applied theatre project Home

Partner – Artscape

Duration – 2018–2020

Regions – Klaipėda, Radviliškis and Šalčininkai; Vilnius city and district

Home was an applied theatre project that engaged three layers of the community: professional artists, school children and the wider community as spectators. Through applied theatre techniques, the project created a safe space for young people to express their opinions and share their perceived significance of the concept of 'home'. Each school group was facilitated by an artist originally from that particular area, providing the young participants with a relatable, trustworthy and credible role model.



In each participating town, students from two different schools collaborated in theatre workshops and research. Groups were formed to discover more about their home towns, which necessitated visits to the local community and libraries, searching archives and conducting interviews with community leaders. Finally, the students breathed life into their learnings through various performances carried out in their communities.

The participants highlighted that during the project, they became more confident in expressing their opinions in public. Furthermore, they became more receptive and understanding of the importance of building and maintaining relationships with every member of their community. Through the applied theatre techniques, the students were empowered to harness the medium of drama and body language to communicate, resulting in enhanced self-confidence.

In total, the project trained eight artists who engaged with 13 schools and 168 students. Each school created eight theatre performances, which were attended by both the school members and the wider community.



Strong in Diversity

Partners – Jaunimo asmeninio tobulėjimo centras and The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award

Duration – 2019–2020

Regions – throughout Lithuania

To encourage cooperation among youth from diverse ethnic backgrounds, the British Council and partners organised Strong in Diversity. This youth summer training project was developed and delivered with key governmental partners, including ministries and defence agencies, amongst others.

Each year, 40 young people from different ethnic groups participated in training through which they developed teamwork, democratic decision-making, reflection and critical information assessment skills. The training particularly contributed to bringing the participants closer together and inspiring them to contribute towards the creation of a modern Lithuanian state.

The project had an impact at several levels. First, the participants considerably increased their intercultural competences, stating that they had shifted their perception or become better acquainted with those from different ethnicities following the training. Second, the participation of the Lithuanian armed forces made a strong impression on the participants, with the close interactions with military officers changing the young participants' perspectives on what it means to serve one's country, how the Lithuanian Army is organised, and why it represents such a crucial pillar of the Lithuanian state. Third, the project helped to galvanise the youth's interest and willingness to become active citizens and take an active role in their community through volunteering or other activities.



Ultimately, the participants of the project felt inspired to continue their communication and collaboration after the youth summer training had drawn to a close. In 2020, several young people developed a unique board game that encourages connections between community members, fostering mutual trust and building close personal relationships. The board game gained such popularity among Vilnius schools that it was awarded funding from Vilnius City Municipality and other organisations to extend its presence in communities.



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The People to People programme creates highquality opportunities for young people from different social and ethnic backgrounds to improve their competencies. The programme provides spaces for safe development, communication and learning.

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Director at the Department of Youth Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, Jonas Laniauskas



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Despite all the stereotypes, we can all co-live together, in friendship.

”

Project participant, Dorota



Teenagers' Club

Partner – Vilnius Social Club

Duration – 2019–2021

Region – Vilnius, Naujininkai district

Naujininkai differs from other Vilnius districts. Due to its history and geographical location, the district features a significant concentration of social and economic issues such as poverty, lack of youth employment, and social exclusion among families and individuals. Furthermore, although progress has been made in recent years, problems remain.

In 2019, a team from the Vilnius Social Club initiated the Teenagers' Club project to serve young people from the Naujininkai district who face social exclusion and challenges at school or home, while lacking basic learning or social skills. The club has become a safe space where young people aged 12 to 15 years can acquire essential life skills, enhance their communication and receive comprehensive support in dealing with everyday challenges.



The social workers of the club engage with a group of 7 young people for a year, meeting three times per week for three hour sessions. By participating in common activities such as the preparation of meals, organising trips and playing games, the children learn to communicate with one another, build relationships, resolve conflicts, respect rules and adhere to staying within boundaries. Additionally, young people from local ethnic communities spend time together, becoming acquainted and discovering commonalities they share rather than focusing on their differences.



Due to its relevance and significant achievements, the Teenagers' Club has received funding from Vilnius City Municipality, and therefore the project will continue providing essential services for teenagers until 2024.



Visual Thinking Strategy

Partner – MO Museum

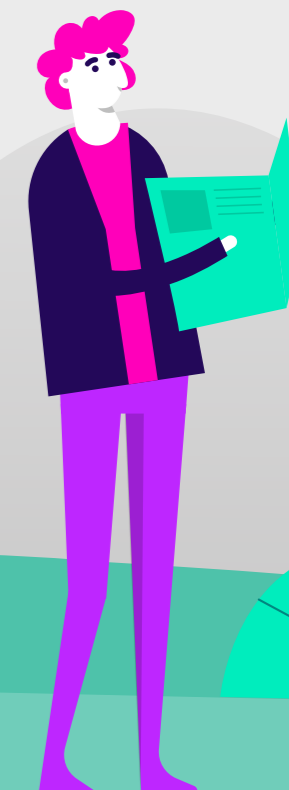
Duration – 2020–2021

Regions – Ignalina, Kalvarija, Kybartai, Marijampolė, Riešė, Šalčininkai, Šilutė, Švečionėliai, Švenčionys, Tauragė, Trakai, Vilnius and Visaginas

The main goal of the Visual Thinking Strategy project was to develop critical thinking and dialogue through contemporary art in Lithuanian schools and ethnic communities. The project's commenced with the exhibition Why Is It Hard to Love?, created by the world-famous British director Peter Greenaway and Dutch artist Saskia Boddeke. The exhibition analysed a particularly relevant and universal theme of opposites in a narrative of inequalities (e.g. social, racial and gender), raising the principal question: Why is it hard to love another?

During the seven months of the project, which ran from June 2020 to January 2021, MO Museum educators aimed to employ the topics explored in this exhibition to allow the engagement with individuals from distinct linguistic or socially excluded minority groups in Lithuania. Through its strong focus on visual thinking, the project furnished participants with the methods and tools to assess information critically and objectively, while empowering those from socially excluded backgrounds with the 21st century skills of critical thinking, creativity and dialogue. Through the educational activities, the educators also encouraged these groups to collaborate around the exhibition narratives and experience different approaches to these themes via the medium of art.

In parallel, an additional Traveling Museum project was carried out in various Lithuanian cities and towns. The museum thus extended its reach beyond the framework of the institution by travelling to communities



where art is not easily accessible. The MO Museum educators met with the local communities and conducted visual thinking-based experiential sessions, encouraging engagement by posing the question: What is happening in this picture? The residents of the town or city were able to identify new means of relating to art: viewing works of art from a variety of perspectives, discussing and expression their opinions, distinguishing facts from the interpretation, and constructing their ideas.

In sum, the project:

- engaged with nine schools and three communities in ethnically diverse regions of Lithuania;
- reached out to 10 communities in Lithuania through the Travelling Museum initiative; and
- saw the participation of 35 teachers, 260 students and 270 community members in various educational sessions delivered locally, as well as at the MO Museum.



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Innovative interdisciplinary cultural education covering all age groups is one of the main priorities of MO Museum. We are pleased that the educators of the MO Museum, in cooperation with the British Council Lithuania, visited various Lithuanian cities and towns. The visual thinking method applied by MO educators encourages creative thinking, develops critical skills, and helps to evaluate and reflect on the environment. These are essential skills for both children and adults.

”

Founders of the MO Museum, Danguolė and Viktoras Butkai





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