

Museum of expeditionary cultural learning: case study of 'Telpas Pavasaris'

Žanete Grende*

Uldis Eglavs**

Abstract

Museums are part of an age-old tradition. So much so that they require modernization and re-evaluation to ensure that they do not become outdated. Given that they are involved in historical and conservation activity, museums, libraries and other cultural institutions could be considered to be exempt from these requirements. We object to such a stance, since culture, as much as anything else, is part of humanity and economics. This case study examines the activities undertaken by the Viegli Foundation to complement the museum and its mission. We believe that this approach is one of several new ways in which museums can operate. This *modus operandi* came about exactly because the organization was conceived in a modern way, unencumbered by traditional notions.

Keywords

Museum, expeditionary cultural learning, case study, cultural industry, *Telpas Pavasaris*.

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The problem with cultural industries

In entrepreneurship, senior management is responsible for developing and managing strategy execution. Such strategies derive from vision and mission statements, which often underpin the very foundations of companies and organizations. Below strategic decisions lie tactical and operational decisions, which rely on strategies to plot the course at each successive level. When plans fail or situations change, strategy or mission statements provide a fall-back option by becoming the starting point for new efforts. Occasionally, they can also lead to a conclusion, although this can be for good reasons (mission completed or vision achieved) or bad reasons (decision to abandon the mission).

During her tenure as Latvian Minister for Culture, Ms. Grende (one of the authors) came face to face with a blatant lack of vision and strategy within cultural entities. She took up the position of minister with a business background and a less orthodox perspective of the traditions within the field. She observed that, because the law required every museum, gallery, performer and library to have a vision and mission, void and impractical phrases were being used. However, the statements were not being applied beyond these documents, as management tools. For this case, the economic and sociological factors behind culture need to be examined, so a brief overview of this subject will be provided in the following paragraphs.

(*) Mg. sc. soc., Latvian Academy of Culture, Latvia.

(**) Mg. sc. soc., University of Latvia, Latvia.

Museums form part of the heritage industry. Generally perceived as operating within the service sector, museums provide access to their collections, which are supplemented by information and discussions about relevant subjects. However, such a perception fails to take account of the utility and meaning behind cultural enterprises, and fails to explain the economic reasons behind museums.

Cultural enterprises have little to fear that their missions will be accomplished, since new clients are constantly being born and all of them will need the education such enterprises are charged with providing. However, at the heart of the problem lies the lack of a true mission statement for the whole heritage industry. In the 21st century, the simple role of conserving and preserving is just not sufficient for a pragmatic society. Worth must be proven, otherwise the public sees no merit in paying people and organizations to safeguard artefacts; even less so if they are paid for with public funds (Towse, 2010). Given these conditions, museums are seeking solutions in various disciplines, including psychology, pedagogy, management and marketing (Stransky 1995).

The value of the museum lies in its usefulness. A museum's possibilities are almost infinite. Museums can impart knowledge, stimulate cognition, develop skills, provide aesthetic and emotional adventures, strengthen social bonds, mould behaviour and define values. If a museum does not offer value to the community, then it is wasting its resources (Weil, 2002).

From an organizational standpoint, the purpose of a cultural enterprise is to safeguard objects and sites of cultural significance in order to extend their lifetime, thereby disseminating information to as wide an audience as possible. Thus, in the information age of the 21st century, passively waiting for beneficiaries is an outdated and wasteful approach (Towse, 2010, p. 66). It is necessary to develop effective strategies and invest time, capital and energy in seeking out individuals who are interested in acquiring the empirical *a posteriori* knowledge (often in its commodified form) offered by the entity. The current digital society makes only a minor distinction between different knowledge sources, so without an effective strategy, libraries, museums and art galleries are at a disadvantage compared to the Internet.

The logic behind culture as an industrial element arises when the need to engage the audience is recognized. By promoting the museum's contents, the organization responsible for maintaining the site is actually creating influence. Technically, museums are entities that generate influence and seek to direct individuals down a desired path, towards a desired action, by exhibiting past examples. They strive to mould clients' worldview, without any sinister motives, in a way that is perceived to be beneficial by the curators. Conservation and research are secondary goals, because such tasks aim only to extend the lifespan of the resources (e.g. collections) and uncover supplementary information (Towse, 2010, p. 108). Both activities are ultimately pointless if the organization does not utilize its resources by influencing people. The ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums establishes the values and principles shared by ICOM and the international museum community. However, for such a well-regarded document, it shows little concern for people and society, supposedly the beneficiaries of cultural activities; the entire document contains four mentions of the term *visitor*, as opposed to 61 mentions of *collection*. Satisfying curiosity might be a pleasing goal, but it is hedonistic and useless if analysed pragmatically.

While mission statements can form a good starting point for the evolution of operations, museum curators must develop strategies that are more along the lines of those of NGOs than those of entertainment venues. Depending on the country, they can present new and previously unseen challenges to operations. A museum's success is characterized by its ability to define a clear overarching task. It must be both useful in the view of stakeholders and able to react to a certain target audience (Weil, 2002). In countries whose citizens have lower levels of freedom, cultural enterprises can be expected to present a certain worldview, promoted by the government (e.g. propaganda). Such conditions limit the scope for expression and achievable goals.

Luckily, the Viegli Foundation operates on a slightly different premise than most establishments in the cultural industry and has been able to position itself and function in an unhindered manner. It has a clear vision and a publicly posted mission statement, both decreed by the patron of the foundation himself, to whom it is dedicated: Latvian writer and poet Imants Ziedonis. The museum is one of the foundation's original entities. And much can be learned from a private museum that is managed as a *means to an end*.

Organizational structure of the Viegli Foundation

Imants Ziedonis (1933–2013) is one of Latvia's most prominent poets. He encouraged his readers to get to know, love and respect Latvia and its culture and nature, not only through his poetry and writing, but through his charisma. Ziedonis' poetry and stance helped unify the people of Latvia by creating a sense of belonging to the country and, by extension, to Europe as a whole. The Viegli Foundation was set up to continue the work of the poet.

Viegli operates as an NGO and has been a non-profit entity since it was founded in 2011. Its main sources of funding are donations and income generated by the foundation and museum's activities. However, the revenue streams differ depending on the situation, task and unit. For example, several sections, including the Laiks Ziedonim Award and publishing activities, acquire financial support through grants provided by the National Culture Capital Fund.

The foundation was originally established by 14 individuals who also make up the general meeting of Viegli. This group created the foundation's constitution and acknowledged the strategy that was co-authored by Imants Ziedonis himself. Both documents and many of the subsequent declarations included the creed and mission statement: *Latvia is a miraculously beautiful country, but the beauty needs help to emerge*.

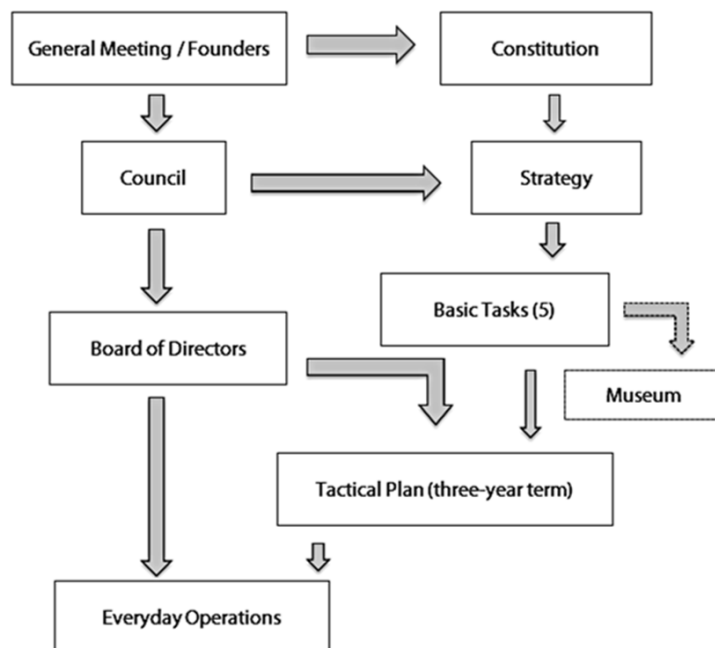
The second objective was to support and develop society's creativity. The main practical goal was declared to be the creation of a museum, according to the vision expressed by Ziedonis in conversations and interviews prior to his death. In accordance with the constitution, the general meeting also created the two structural entities through which the foundation is managed: the Council and the Board of Directors (see Figure 1 below). As with any business entity, the Board of Directors carries out executive functions, while the Council is the legislative unit. Organizationally speaking, the Council is the supreme decision-making body, but it is not permanent. Ever since its creation, the Council has held meetings a few times a year, during which changes can be made to Council and Board listings and the organizational structure, tactical and strategic mis-

sion statements are decided upon, and budgets are approved. The Board of Directors is elected for a three-year term (in compliance with Latvian law) during the first Council meeting, and its mandate can be renewed after the term has expired. If changes to the Board of Directors are required before the term has ended, these can be made through a Council decision; however, such changes involve only the dismissal or approval of members, rather than the Board a whole. Following approval, the Board of Directors becomes the foundation’s full-time maintenance unit, tasked with everyday operations, while complying with the strategic decisions made by the Council. The tasks defined by the Council have remained unchanged since the foundation was created. In essence, the foundation is more akin to a business enterprise in that many of its characteristics mimic the managerial structure of a commercial entity. It has strategic planning activities, a business model and the most efficient executive functions. The main difference between NGOs and commercial organizations lies in the principles of profit sharing: commercial entities can divide profits among shareholders, while non-commercial enterprises such as foundations can invest them only in socially beneficial ways (in other words, NGO shareholders gain no financial return).

For practical reasons, each of the tasks can also be expressed by one word. These are as follows:

- Place: establishment and maintenance of an Imants Ziedonis museum.
- Award: establishment of the Laiks Ziedonim Award for creativity.
- Publishing: support for the publication of books by and about Imants Ziedonis.
- Creativity: creation and promotion of art through music and multimedia.
- Foundation: maintenance of the Viegli Foundation as the organizational and financial basis of all operations, in accordance with the strategy.

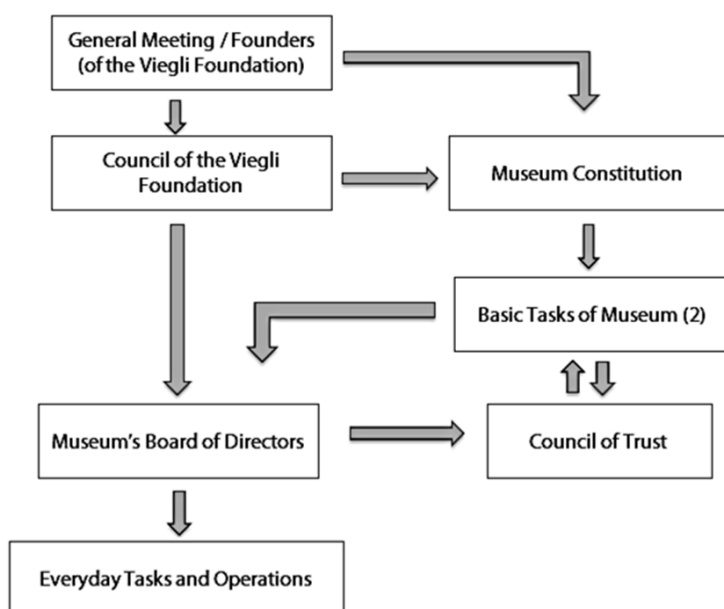
Figure 1. Organizational structure of the Viegli Foundation



As shown in Figure 1, the museum and its maintenance were originally included as one of the Board of Directors’ tasks, included within the five strategic tasks set by the

Council. In 2015, with a view to facilitating cooperation with government institutions and optimizing operations, a decision was made to spin off the museum into a separate entity (indicated by the dashed lines in Figure 1). It was placed at the same level as the Board of Directors of the foundation as a whole. However, the museum's internal operations were changed. The organizational structure following the change is shown in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2. Organizational structure of the museum following the reorganization



After the reorganization, the museum acquired its own Board of Directors, which operates as a separate unit at the same level as the foundation's Board of Directors, but subordinate to the foundation's Council. The museum's basic tasks (*Place*) were also spun off from the foundation's five outstanding tasks, thus reducing the number to four and expanding the museum's tasks to include *Promotion/Propagation*. This extended the reach of the dissemination activities beyond the scope of the *Place* (museum building in Murjāņi). The Council of Trust is elected by the museum's Board of Directors and serves as a quality and originality control tool. Since Ziedonis was fairly eccentric, his museum was envisaged as a unique experience. His close friends, family members and contemporaries are therefore necessary to validate the authenticity of the strategy and basic tasks. In fact, the members of the Council of Trust are chosen from this social circle, as well as from the professional community of museum specialists, creative individuals, scientists and researchers. The Council of Trust meets several times a year to review the results of the Board of Directors' operations and evaluate them in relation to the two main tasks and the overall strategy. The Council operate as the museum's review and consultation unit and holds no legislative or executive power, but has the power to issue recommendation to all of the foundation's entities, all the way up the structure, as far as the General Meeting and the founders. From an organizational standpoint, the Council of Trust could be changed to any other body that carries out independent reviews within other establishments, such as focus groups, think tanks and academic partners.

Overall, the museum remains subordinate to the foundation and is instrumental in achieving the overarching goals and vision for the future. However, a key difference lies

in the fact that, for Viegli, the museum represents the means to an end; the museum is designed to do the work, rather than simply receive funds.

The Telpas Pavasaris project

The basic task of *Place* gave rise to a condition originally established by Ziedonis that the museum is not designed for mandatory excursions organized by schools for their pupils. He regarded the mandatory visits and the rigid presentations as an ineffective way of nurturing minds. We're imbued with genetic programming, which starts to operate only after acquiring certain experiences. Museums and their resources can be used in a number of different ways. However, each way requires a personal resolution. Museums are inextricably linked to voluntarism (Waidacher, 2005). Thus, the condition clearly stated that only interested individuals are to be allowed to visit the museum. This meant that the museum was forced to seek new ways of fulfilling the task of *Promotion* without breaching the condition.

To reach children and adolescents, the foundation and museum developed several innovative museum projects. For primary-school level, this was a digital museum; a 3D replica of the Murjāņi site within a game relating to one of Ziedonis' prosaic series *Krāsainās Pasakas* ("Colourful fairy tales"). For middle-school level, a similar 3D museum game was created based on the more complex literary series *Epifānijas* ("Epiphanies"), which is taught from fifth to ninth grade. Since there was no overt gamification option for high-school level, the museum was required to identify another method of engaging young people, while not being intrusive or making such methods mandatory. *Telpas Pavasaris* ("Spring of space") is an expeditionary project, in which participation is voluntary, and was conceived as one of the most beneficial and efficient means of promotion.

The project *Telpas Pavasaris* arose during a meeting initiated by the Viegli Foundation's Board of Directors between those responsible for running the museum and several Laiks Ziedonim Award recipients.

The Laiks Ziedonim Award is presented annually by the Viegli Foundation in five categories: Youth, Science, Ethnography, Literature and Entrepreneurship. Each of the five categories is judged by a different jury of distinguished visionary artists, who select a shortlist of nominees, from which the winner is chosen. However, the award ceremony is usually only the beginning of a much longer collaboration campaign, during which unique projects are carried out, with the foundation and museum playing different roles, depending on the circumstances. Viegli has sponsored, supported or published some projects, but with others, an initial idea has been put forward by the foundation's staff, and the foundation has approached nominees and award winners have been approached due to their talent.

In the case of *Telpas Pavasaris*, the award winners were asked to submit ideas to resolve the challenge associated with *Promotion* among high-school children, without compromising the condition imposed by Ziedonis. The Viegli Foundation needed a way to identify, evaluate and select students from the whole country and engage them meaningfully, thereby stimulating their creative development and promoting the foundation's agenda. Professor Jurgis Šķilters from the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Latvia proposed an idea to create a joint research programme, with several extracurricular activities across the country.

Dr. Šķilters was the winner of the 2015 Laiks Ziedonim Award science category, and his field of expertise is cognitive science and research on spatial cognitive processes. His interest lies in the way in which individuals express and describe their surroundings and environment. By contrast, Imants Ziedonis was not as concerned with the cognitive side of the subject as he was in the appreciation of nature, society and living spaces in general. A research project on how high-school students analyse space and related subjects was interesting and useful for both the university and the foundation. A vital objective of these projects was to ensure that numerous stakeholders would benefit from the project (Weil, 2002). A wider range of benefits contributes to social cohesion and reduces the project's risks, since a failure in one aspect does not imply an overall loss, as long as the other aspects reach a satisfactory conclusion.

The project stages were as follows:

- Initial research and creative task, youth engagement on social media.
- Workshops in the regions and selection procedure.
- Main conclusion workshop in Riga and further selection procedure.
- Event at Murjāņi museum for young people selected through the project.

The research and creative tasks were initially derived from the prior academic knowledge and outstanding questions on the cognitive research side, and were subsequently developed to ensure they aligned with the foundation's purpose and narrative. The Republic of Latvia celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2018 and the nation's scientists have been urged to work on the theme of each citizen's personal image of the country. This theme ties in with the objectives of this joint project. As a result, the research side was funded by a grant from the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development. Dr. Šķilters introduced a novel way of evaluating perception through visual mapping, and this task, which required a particular kind of imaginative and 'visual' thinking, was highly consistent with the foundation's need to nurture creativity in society. In parallel, the foundation used the basic draft of the research project to devise a creative task for respondents. This would be used to evaluate individuals and then select the young people who would be invited to participate in the second stage of the project, i.e. regional workshops. The overall division of responsibilities for the first stage laid the groundwork for further collaboration, in which the academic side produced most of the content, while the foundation used its social status and reach for management and communication (both public and internal). For the selection process, a jury was created from all participating parties, because the people invited to the workshops needed to be accustomed to have a deeper scientific inquiry, as well as were asked to be creative and interested on enough for the museum. If the selection were one sided, it would impede further development of the project. It would not be a problem if the collaboration were to last for a shorter period, for example, the first stage only. However, when further progress is required for both sides, input is constantly needed from every entity involved.

The second stage of the project, i.e. the organizational aspect, was led by the foundation. The staff from the Viegli Foundation and the museum organized workshops and coordinated with the academic side for scheduling purposes and material requirements. Since the project took place during the first trimester of 2016, the second-stage

workshops had to be organized as closely as possible with the students. For optimal student engagement, in accordance with the size of the country, a decision was made to hold four workshops, one for each region: Kuldīga for the Kurzeme region, Dobele for the Zemgale region, Valmiera for the Vidzeme region and Rēzekne for the Latgale region. For reasons that have yet to be analysed, the municipalities were positive and forthcoming in their reactions. The foundation requested accommodation, equipment and transport, and it had sufficient influence to acquire all these services free of charge, as a form of support from the municipal governments. Each of the four cities had at least one professional cooking school to provide the catering as part of its students' training, thereby further expanding the number of project beneficiaries. With respect to the workshop locations, it was decided that they would be held away from school buildings in order to ensure that the school environment did not adversely influence the students' mindset. Each learning experience inevitably involves the limbic system, in other words, it is emotional. In this case, it is important to note that meaningful communication from the museum can take place only in a positive environment (Waidacher, 2005). Schools would not influence the young people in a way that would benefit the museum or project.

The workshops themselves included lectures by scientists led by Dr. Šķilters and were supplemented with activities and creative tasks run by the foundation and its creative partners. The workshop tasks were designed to address the same cognitive mapping issues that formed the basis of the research. For the workshops, however, the research value of the results was less relevant than the creative effort. As this was a group task (usually seven or eight students per group), the workshop output was bound to be less reflective of the young individuals' natural thought process. The interests of the Viegli Foundation and the museum were prioritized. Academic utility could be derived from the results of such group work, but Dr. Šķilters did not require them to be fully valid. The academic side benefited mainly from the opportunity to promote their fields of study among potential students and to promote STEM fields in general. In Latvia, education suffers from the same problem seen globally, i.e. a lack of popularity with respect to the exact sciences. Universities have long complained that there is little interest in STEM degrees and preparation in schools is unsatisfactory. However, little can be done when this fact is underpinned by a lack of motivation and interest on the part of students. Any opportunity to draw attention to hard science must be seized.

The main subsequent use of the group tasks was to mentally stimulate the participants and provide material to further select the individuals who would be invited to the third-stage workshop.

Each workshop concluded with a lecture, a meeting and a short presentation of some of the most effective public relations resources at the foundation's disposal. The Council, the Board of Directors and the foundation's close partners include some of Latvia's leading performers, including Renārs Kaupers from *Prāta Vētra*, Goran Gora, *Astro'n'out* and *Carnival Youth*, whose fame has allowed the foundation to promote the organization and the ideas that underpin it. For the second-stage workshops, these performers were essential for attracting interest, because being able to meet and listen to respected figures helps encourage adolescents to get involved and embrace information and experiences. This is another way in which the Viegli Foundation uses business practices as a practical tool for NGOs and museums, i.e. the marketing of ideas and

involvement through wide-ranging and socially useful projects. The goal of every museum's work is not the physical collection, but the emotional experience it evokes. When working with young people and children, there are three key components: activities carried out in certain historically important places; informal education; and the use of motivational methods instead of the recitation of facts (Waidacher, 2005). The first component was postponed until the very end of the project and was not as evident, but positive informal learning engagement and the avoidance of rigid recitations were strong principles. After all the second-stage workshops were complete, the joint jury organized another selection process during which participants in the third-stage workshop were chosen. The selection process was based on their performance during the regional workshops, and took account of both individual performance and teamwork.

The third stage of *Telpas Pavasaris* focused primarily on individual work and the conclusion of the research phase. It was organized in Riga, the capital of Latvia. The main sponsors of the event included Riga City Council and three other patrons. The location was a school that specifically promotes itself as supportive of the creative development of its students. Dr. Šķilters and his partners presented the preliminary results of the research to which the participants had contributed and gave a detailed explanation of the implications of the results. To avoid repetition, the activities were diversified to expand the range of stakeholders involved. Based on the young people's interests that were observed during the previous stages, the foundation approached several entities with proposals for collaboration. All parties that were approached agreed to participate in the event. The lack of rejections during this phase helps further illustrate the value of good social capital for activities that are not merely commercial in nature. The foundation acknowledges that such a positive response could be purely coincidental, but nor is there any evidence to suggest that such success was accidental. As time goes on, the foundation and museum will gain a clearer insight into this hypothesis. The newly attracted entities were the School for Young Physicists, an improvisation group, a poet, a communications expert, a musician and art students. It allowed the range of activities to be increased to seven.

Each group organized a 45- to 50- minute workshop. Given that the schedule made it possible to visit three workshops only, each young person had a unique experience. It is worth noting that the selection and order of the workshops attended were chosen in a blind process. Upon their arrival, the participants were invited to choose three images from a vast selection and present them on the posters in the meeting hall. The images could be selected based on personal preference but, unbeknownst to the participants, the different images symbolized their workshop choice and schedule. The participants were informed of this after the opening address, during the first lecture by Dr. Šķilters. Such an unusual selection procedure was chosen for several reasons.

Firstly, it ties in well within the museum's narrative, which states that museums are a source of inspiration and a path through which everyone finds their own approach.

Secondly, blind selection is a useful way to prevent oversubscription to certain courses that initially appear more interesting.

Thirdly, this method did not allow the participants to choose their favourite subjects and instead sometimes forced them out of their preferred fields and into new territory. For example, many of the young people who had unknowingly chosen the physics

workshop later stated that they would never have made such a choice. However, none of them regretted taking part in the experience and all were grateful for the opportunity to view physics in a new light, which is a testament to the interesting workshop methods employed by the School for Young Physicists.

The fourth aspect, which was not intentional, but actually turned out to be very successful, was the way the participants were divided between the workshops and the unique experience they enjoyed. Since two friends would rarely select the same set of images, the participants, who arrived in pairs, were separated from each other during the workshops, thereby prompting them to communicate more with others. Moreover, upon completion of the three-workshop course, the participants met again and had a unique experience to share with the others. Even if they had attended the same workshop subject, as long as they had attended it in a different order, they had enjoyed experiences that were unknown to the other party.

This method is unorthodox and often cannot be used, but in this particular case it suited the project organizers' intentions. The participants developed and were stimulated in a way that was unfamiliar and less predictable. This innovative method also contributed to the effectiveness of the activity as a whole, because activities tend to be less effective when the participants are already aware of the methods or expected results. Neither the academics nor the foundation or museum were inclined to receive the usual scripted reactions and responses. The results needed to be authentic, instead of formal.

The fourth and final stage of the *Telpas Pavasaris* project was the final two-day creative study at the Murjāņi museum. During the conclusion of the third-stage workshop, participants were given voluntary homework to write an essay on their reasons for attending the Murjāņi workshop. Since this was not necessary for the project and the workshop itself had taken place in June, which meant that the participants had to set aside time during the school holidays, only genuinely interested people were expected to comply. The essays were then read and assessed to select the 24 people who would be invited to attend the Murjāņi event. This time the selection process was not carried out by the joint jury, but instead fell to staff and researchers from the foundation and museum.

Results of Telpas Pavasaris

The first stage of the *Telpas Pavasaris* project attracted over 2000 responses for the scientific research, 1013 of which came from young people aged between 15 and 18, the target audience for the project's subsequent stages. Out of the 1000-plus responses, 284 included a completed creative task. After evaluation by the joint jury to verify the validity and quality of the completed tasks, all 284 respondents were invited to the second-stage workshops in the regions. Four regional workshops were organized. However, only three workshops were actually held, because the response level in Latgale was too low and it was more efficient to include the few viable participants in the Vidzeme workshop. The foundation has noted that unique regional characteristics can sometimes influence the project's implementation. In this case, the unique cultural background and seclusion of the Latgale region could have caused the low response level, although this is a merely hypothetical notion. After the second stage of the pro-

ject, all participants were asked about their views and what they had gained from the experience. This helped shed light on the results and benefits of the activities, for both the team of organizers and the individual participants. For the third stage, 77 participants were selected and invited to a large workshop in Riga. The event was fully attended, even though it was held on a working day in May. As the fourth-stage participants were selected through an essay competition, the number of submissions was capped at 80, but a lower number was expected. In total, 38 young people submitted essays. Finally, 24 were selected and invited to a creative two-day study session at the Murjāņi museum complex. One interesting point observed from numerous responses was surprise among the participants at having had relatively little exposure to Imants Ziedonis as a person, and some even wondered if there was any exposure at all. From the foundation and museum's standpoint, this is considered a positive result, because the foundation's strategy is not about one person and reverence for that person; it is about developing a creative mindset and a unique worldview.

From a scientific standpoint, the respondents' contributions could be used to create an interactive map of Latvia, which would feature characteristics of different locations, with a particular emphasis on how creativity is expressed in the different parts of Latvia and how the various places inspire creativity. The map could then be used as a teaching resource in schools and for lifelong education (integration of the different nationalities and religions in Latvian society is becoming increasingly important). The map could be continually enhanced by those in possession of the map and by professional artists. It would allow the map's data over the years to be aggregated and compared, thus creating a kind of emotional "barometer" of Latvia.

In-depth study of the project's effects

During the fourth-stage creative study in Murjāņi, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the participants. Thirteen thematic questions were asked, and these were supplemented with additional questions, depending on the answer and circumstances. A total of 20 interviews were conducted. The order of the interviews was randomized between all study participants, but the final interviewees were dismissed due to time constraints (the study lasted only ~30 hours). The interviews were recorded and registered. After the interviews, a discourse analysis was carried out to extract information from the conversations and draw conclusions about the respondents' states of mind. The English translation of the list of questions used for the interviews is provided in Annex 1.

A concise discourse analysis table was created to make it easier to observe the common themes of the answers. In the following paragraphs, we will endeavour to express the conclusions drawn from the analysis. To best reflect the observations of each theme, the most expressive answer is quoted. The quotes are translated from Latvian in a way that is less concerned with technical accuracy and instead focuses more on conveying the idea.

The opening theme was designed as an icebreaker. The creativity question had already appeared in the main *Telpas Pavasaris* questionnaires and the scoring questions provided some baseline data to compare the various answers later on. With respect to the definition of creativity, the most widespread discourse related to *Expression*, fol-

lowed by *Ability* and *Capacity to think outside the box*. These are fairly straightforward answers, which fell within expectations. It was relevant that 19 out of 20 reported that their opinion on the subject had changed during the project. The dominant discourse about how their opinions had changed was that they now perceived creativity as being more varied and diversely expressed than before. *Telpas Pavasaris* had prompted them to view creativity as an element that is present in everyday life, whereas before they had thought of it more as an episodic phenomenon.

Human expressive ability to show and demonstrate outside the box. (16th respondent)

Creativity can be developed. (2nd respondent)

In the self-scoring task, various aspects of the young participants' personalities were evaluated. Even if their own responses did not count as an objective measure, they were useful for cross-referencing purposes. The participants' subjective opinions of themselves revealed more about the profile of our sample. In the resulting answers, three aspects were scored between 2 and 10 (on a scale of 1 to 10). Given that the answers ranged across almost the whole spectrum and that the sample size was $n=20$, the results were not as revealing as expected. Nevertheless, it was still possible to gain some insight. See Table 1 for the results of the self-scoring exercise.

Table 1. Statistical results of the self-scoring exercise

	Creativity	Strangeness	Sociability
Average	6.75	7.4	6.85
Median	7	7	7.5
Mode	7	6	8

First, the statistical average of the positive traits of creativity and sociability was lower than the median or mode. This means that there was a disparity between the scoring level and the deviation from the norm: ; those participants who scored themselves more negatively gave themselves lower scores than could be offset by the participants who scored themselves highly. The opposite effect held true for strangeness, which is a supposedly negative trait. It was not necessarily defined as negative and, in the context of Ziedonis' personality, many narratives revolve around strangeness as one of his defining quirks. However, within the societal norms to which young people are routinely exposed, strangeness is a descriptor best avoided. The deviation of the average from the median and the mode, in either direction, is an indicator that, at the very least, this observation was consistent.

When asked an additional binary question about artistic involvement, 16 participants responded that they carried out some form of art. When the results of those who answered in the affirmative were analysed, the numbers were found to rise slightly. This suggests that those who practised art regarded themselves more highly than those who did not. It is important to note that these scores were not reflected or confirmed in any way during the practical activities carried out as part of the Murjāņi event. The young people who reported the highest creativity or strangeness scores did not significantly outperform their humbler peers. It is important to reiterate that the intention of such a task was to define the state of mind of the participants, not to diagnose them with precision.

With respect to the first open question about what participants had personally gained from their involvement in the project, everyone answered that they had gained something. The most widespread discourse related to communication, which was mentioned in eight answers. Other popular ideas were *cooperation* (three mentions), *confidence* (four mentions) and *active listening* (jointly with *empathy*).

Communication, cooperation and new approaches. (20th respondent)

Appreciated Latvia and noticed Ziedonis more. (19th respondent)

Many referred to communication, and when their answers were observed alongside their self-scores, the highest response rate came from those who scored themselves as either high or low on the *outgoing* aspect. The average scorers tended to mention it less often. Out of the four who reported *increased fearlessness* or *confidence*, three (the 1st, 5th and 6th respondents) were from more remote places or small villages. The limited opportunities in such locations seems to be associated with a lack of self-confidence. The respondents' subsequent answers supported this hypothesis, thereby suggesting that young people from remote areas require additional personality training to reach the levels of confidence and independence enjoyed by young people who live in cities.

With respect to missed opportunities, 12 reported none. Of the others, three noted a lack of communication skills (none of these mentioned this as something they had gained) and the remaining three regretted not having been able to attend all seven workshop activities during the third-stage Riga workshop.

Only three out of seven workshops [...] Wanted to attend the other four. (12th and 14th respondents)

Such regrets suggest that the project organizers need to re-evaluate the suitability of their approach. There seems to be an unnecessary burden of choice and sometimes it is beneficial to limit client choices to increase their satisfaction and perceived benefit.

The second question examined the ways in which the activities stimulated creativity. Seventeen respondents said that they acquired new ideas or ambitions during the project. Only one gave a negative report, while the remaining three gave inconclusive answers, which could not be coded as positive. Seven of the positive answers mentioned ideas related to literature, such as poetry, writing and publishing work. The other tendency observed within the positive answers concerned self-improvement (three direct and several indirect discourses).

Decided to apply to Riga Design High School. (16th respondent)

In 18 cases, participation in *Telpas Pavasaris* helped the subjects advance personal agendas beyond the scope of this project. Three general trends were observed within these answers, all relatively similar to the subject addressed above: *self-improvement*, *creativity* and *more writing*. These answers were expected, as many of the young people selected had been creatively active in literature or another genre even before they enrolled in the project.

(affirmative) Aided - improvement, improvisation and liberation. (17th respondent)

With respect to school-related improvement, the responses were overwhelmingly negative whenever the discourse alluded to formal education. Eleven were overtly dismissive and two were inconclusive. The remaining seven gave answers that were coded as *flippant*, because none of them answered with a *yes*, they gave tentative an-

swers and doubt was reflected in their facial expressions. The most commonly mentioned benefit was, once again, *communication*, since this is useful for social life at school. However, we were not sure whether this should be considered an educational benefit. The same applied to the discourse of *self-improvement*, which was the second most frequently mentioned benefit. In two overt responses, participants with artistic tendencies reported a more positive perception of STEM subjects due to the activities provided by the workshops with the scientists and the School for Young Physicists. This finding was the only indication that *Telpas Pavasaris* improved the academic performance of the students.

At school, only things that sharpen the mind are taught. Very tense. (15th respondent)

At school, creativity isn't necessary. (21st respondent)

The fourth thematic question referred to networking effects. Only two of the respondents reported that they had formed new friendships with other participants. They both gave themselves a score of 8 for *outgoing*. Five reported that they had acquired acquaintances, but their discourse reflected a tendency towards closer ties, while not quite defining such ties as *friendships*. A further five said that at least one positive contact had been established, while the remaining eight said they had not established any new relationships.

We talked a little. (11th respondent) (*Outgoing* score of 2)

There was no correlation observed between self-reported sociability scores and the probability or tendency to establish new relationships. Thus, it is possible that other factors were involved in the formation of bonds between participants and that the current results were coincidental.

The fifth question was mostly formal and a decoy question, and offered little insight. The reported reactions of friends uninvolved in the project included mentions of *joy* (five cases) and *like* (five cases), and 19 mentions of *positive* (the remaining two were inconclusive).

What the hell is going on with you there? I want to do it too. (5th respondent quoting a friend)

The reactions of parents were positive overall, with 19 positive discourses (the remaining one was inconclusive due to infrequent contact with the parents). The main differences lay in aspects of their positive feedback. *Joy* was mentioned nine times.

Parents are proud that we were well together with Ziedonis. (10th respondent)

The sixth question about the conclusive argument in favour of participation was a very important point of interest for the foundation, as it would indicate the most effective ways of approaching such audiences. Three main points stood out: *teachers* (nurturing effect), *friends* (established teams) and the *idea itself* (Ziedonis and the activism of the Viegli Foundation).

I was taken by the idea of space in the title of *Telpas Pavasaris*. (6th respondent)

When asked about the reasons for doing the essay homework after the third stage, participants exhibited a tendency to see the activity through to its conclusion and not drop out halfway through. Ten participants completed the essay purely in order to visit Murjāņi. However, four carried it out mainly because the event appealed to them and

they wanted to see it through to the end. The other four answers reflected a discourse of pursuing further personal growth.

I felt that I want to be at the museum. Ziedonis' poetry opened the door to literature for me. (19th respondent)

The seventh thematic question contained a choice. We needed to identify the dominant factor behind the appeal of the fourth stage. Respondents were not permitted to address the question by expressing the discourse of equivalence. Interviewees were prompted to pick one, even if it was by a tiny margin. Effectively, the main factor in choosing to attend the fourth stage was determined to be the creative programme itself. Ziedonis' personality overshadowed Murjāņi as a museum, with 12 versus eight. However, this was in relation to the extended stay. When asked about alternative conditions, 18 replied that they would be willing to visit the museum even without the creative workshops. Knowing that these young people were selected from over 1000 applicants, it is not surprising that they had a deep-rooted interest. However, the appeal of the activities was undeniable, even among this sample.

I'd like to be here, in the museum, alone. (16th respondent) (*Sociability score of 7*)

The eighth question was a trick question about similarities between the respondents and Ziedonis. To properly answer, they had to supplement self-reflection with knowledge of the poet. Ziedonis' image is associated with nature, creativity and eccentric personality. Their similarity to Ziedonis was well reflected in their responses. Few could link their own personality traits to those of Ziedonis, but seven mentions of *maturity* and five of a tendency towards *thought and introspection* showed that their narrative did not reflect the image of a poet so much as a nature-loving and wanderlust-obsessed philosopher. When the subject was later turned on its head in the sub-question of the 11th theme about the differences between the young people and Ziedonis, an unexpectedly large number (five respondents) were unable to express a definite answer. The most popular discourses concerning the differences between the participants and Ziedonis were *inactivity* (disdain for walks and nature tours), *limited perception* (they considered themselves as less perceptive than the late Ziedonis) and *limited appreciation of Latvia* (they take it more for granted and cherish the land less).

Ziedonis wrote about how to make Latvia better. I'm still [only] enjoying it. (15th respondent)

An unfortunate conclusion drawn from the interviews was that the perception of Dr. Šķilters' lectures and teachings was underwhelming. Five people expressed a totally negative opinion. Of the rest, six had a positive impression, but admitted that the lectures had not influenced them. Nine expressed both positive feedback and affirmative responses about the influence on their overall worldview, but expressed this moderately. There is little possibility of evaluating the longitudinal effects of the teachings, but it is concerning that the impact of the scientific side of the project was so low, especially compared to the foundation and creativity side.

It made me contemplate space. I'm space. Emotions are space... Fascinating. (18th respondent)

The development of one's own space was the general theme of the interviews and was posed in a way that would help gauge the inspirational effects of the project as a whole. The content of the answers could not always be attributed to the merits of the project per se, but that can never be the case. Overall, the development of one's own space was seen more as a problem of perception than a problem of action. This might

have been due to the fact that more studious and literate young people were selected during through the various stages, but most of those interviewed responded along the lines of internal change. Eight called for an *ambience change* towards more creativeness, joy, peace and beauty. In other words, the discourse was about making one's immediate surroundings homelier through minor behavioural changes. A further six related more to internal change within oneself. As there was no correlation between the self-scores and the interview questions, the research team was not able to dismiss the possibility that these were placebo responses expressed to supposedly please the interviewers but ultimately ungrounded. A more grounded discourse was made by four participants, who talked primarily about changes through communication and friendliness. Here, again, there was no correlation with, for example, sociability self-scores. However, the more outward approach implied less of a hypothetical and more of a practical intent.

Space is everything. And everything is enough. (12th respondent)

When the participants were pushed more towards expressing their personal capacity to benefit their own space, the responses became distinctly outward and utilitarian. Seventeen of the answers contained discourses of positive and useful activity towards others. Within those 17, however, 13 expressed it in a passive form such as poetry and other influences. Once again, this reflects on the study sample, which was selected for certain characteristics, thus rendering the respondent profile somewhat skewed. Only three participants talked about physical activity when asked about the scope of their current ability.

Doing whatever one does best. (15th responder)

In a sub-question about the limiting factors to explain inactivity and obstacles to development, three main themes clearly linked to the previous discourses were observed. *Fear and insecurity*, which stem from outside influence or assumed opinion, was the dominant answer and observed in seven cases. Closely related, but intrinsically limited, was *self*. This added four more responses to the discourse, but since there was no confirmed explanation about the elements within oneself that impede development, they could not be categorized within the *fear and insecurity* discourse. The context of these responses meant they were perceived as more determined and admitted internal faults, beyond the scope of the *insecurity* discourse. The easiest discourse to identify was the most pragmatic one, which related to a *lack* of time, resources, other aspects of everyday life and routine. The five respondents who gave these answers saw the obstacles as being mostly external. Although this is a very mature response, such answers stood out in the context of the whole conversation as being highly reflective of society's tendency to shift the blame to economic elements.

I don't believe I can. (4th respondent)

The results of the previous section tie in with the results of the 10th thematic question about social activism. Out of the whole sample, 16 said that they did not participate in public sector organizations and groups. Among those, seven did not engage because of a fear and dislike of communication, while five reported that they did not have time. For the young people with the specific profile targeted by this project, civic involvement is not a particularly viable option (at least, not at their stage of life). They tend to be fairly withdrawn and occasionally marginalized. The self-scores for strangeness and

sociability support the thesis that they regard themselves as outside mainstream groups. Nevertheless, it was particularly surprising that the responses to this question were so consistent. Imants Ziedonis was very proactive in civic matters, but that aspect of his personality has not filtered through to these young people.

To further expand on the 12th conclusive question group, nine talked about the need to grow more and continuously develop themselves, and five did not yet know what they wanted from life and what path to take. The lack of motivation was reflective of the overall situation in modern society, as many young people lack the drive and motivation to pursue their passions and have not yet developed such leanings. Five were very practical about their immediate future steps; three were working towards graduating and two were making plans for the next stage of education.

I'm halfway. I have life plans. To get into a school where I can prove myself. (19th respondent)

In the supplementary questions about the museum itself, eight responses could be grouped into *Extraordinary place*; it was either homelier or stranger than expected. The liberating environment was the second most popular theme, expressed in four replies. A major theme was the sensual presence of Ziedonis' individuality or spirit in the place (six mentions). Eighteen confirmed that they had read at least some of Ziedonis' literature while the project was ongoing. Additionally, all of them had also done some reading during the activities, as the organizers had included such tasks in the programme. Each obtained a quotation, which they later took with them from the museum as a personal memento. It was clear that the message of the Ziedonis museum providing a kind of path on which to make personal progress was successfully conveyed to them.

The Ziedonis museum is for self-growth. (15th respondent)

Conclusion

The overwhelmingly positive results of the project and the satisfaction of all participating parties proved the following: (1) The use of managerial strategies to run a museum and its projects is a viable approach; (2) The strategic management of the museum's owners, the Viegli Foundation and its patron Ziedonis has been implemented through museum pedagogy and expeditionary learning. Only the truly willing were prompted to participate and grew and developed in the foundation's intended direction; towards more open-minded perception, creativity and appreciation of one's living environment; (3) The museum was used as a tool for cultural learning, because participants were motivated to read, write and create more. It did not resort to worship of the personality, but used the cultural heritage of Ziedonis as the backdrop and primary motive for the activities, while keeping it subliminal; (4) *Telpas Pavasaris* was the second instance of a successful collaboration between a cultural enterprise and scientists. There were mutual benefits. The scientists benefited by acquiring a sizeable sample for their research, an audience for dissemination of knowledge and promotion of STEM subjects. The museum gained the opportunity to influence the participants in a positive way, and; (5) It demonstrated the usefulness of museums as places to meet and engage in meaningful exchanges. There was a noticeable return to the basic essence of Aristotle's museum, which was a place for inspiration and personal growth.

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Annex 1. Semi-structured interview questions

1. What is creativity? (If and how has your attitude towards this question changed?)
 How creative are you? (scale from 1 to 10) Do you practice art? (Yes/No)
 How strange are you? (scale from 1 to 10)
 How social are you? (scale from 1 to 10)
2. What practical skills or knowledge has this project given to you?
 Were there something that you didn't manage to acquire?
3. Have you since the start of the project gained any new ideas you want to realise?
 Please tell about them.
 Has the project helped advance some of your prior ideas?
4. Have the skills and knowledge from participation in this project helped you in school?
 Which skills, which subjects and how?
5. Have you gotten closer to other participants of "Telpas pavasaris"?
 Would you call that friendship or rather an acquaintance?
6. What's the reaction and opinion of your friends about TP and your participation in it?
 What's the reaction and opinion of your parents about TP and your participation in it?
7. What was the "last drop", that convinced you to take part in this project?
 What was the reason to write the essay to get here, to Murjāņi?
8. Which was the main reason for coming to Murjāņi – Ziedonis as a personality, or this camp as an event? (answers of equivalence are expected, but one must be chosen)
 Would you've had the interest/motivation to come here, if there were no event?
9. In your opinion – how are you and Ziedonis similar?

10. Since the beginning of the TP in February, have you read or re-read some works of Ziedonis?

Which ones and why?

11. Do you take part in any social groups or organizations outside the school and extracurricular activities?

Have you ever wanted to do it? If "No", what is the reason?

12. Did the lectures of professor Šķilters during the workshops influence your perspective on the world in any way?

Did you view Latvia differently before? If "Yes", how?

In your opinion – What are the differences between the way you see this land and how Ziedonis saw it?

13. How would it be possible to advance your living space?

What can you accomplish by yourself? What is limiting or impeding you?

How far do you think you've come along the way from your beginnings towards your maximum potential? What is the next step for you to take on that path?

Museu de l'aprenentatge cultural exploratori: estudi de cas de Telpas Pavasaris

Resum: Els museus són part d'una tradició antiga, i per això mateix requereixen modernitzar-se i reavaluar-se per garantir que no quedin desactualitzats. Malgrat això, podria pensar-se que els museus, les biblioteques i altres institucions culturals estan exempts d'aquesta necessitat, atès que estan involucrats en activitats històriques i de conservació. No compartim aquest punt de vista, ja que la cultura forma part, sobretot, de la humanitat i de l'economia. Aquest estudi de cas examina les activitats dutes a terme per la Fundació Viegli per complementar el seu museu i la seva missió. Creiem que aquest enfocament és una de les noves maneres com poden funcionar els museus. Aquest modus operandi va emergir justament perquè es va concebre l'organització del museu d'una manera moderna, sense que les idees tradicionals suposessin una càrrega.

Paraules clau: Museu, aprenentatge cultural exploratori, estudi de cas, indústria cultural, *Telpas Pavasaris*.

Museo del aprendizaje cultural exploratorio: estudio de caso de Telpas Pavasaris

Resumen: Los museos son parte de una antigua tradición y, en tal medida, requieren modernizarse y reevaluarse para garantizar que no queden desactualizados. Sin embargo, podría pensarse que los museos, las bibliotecas y otras instituciones culturales están exentos de esta necesidad, dado que están involucrados en actividades históricas y de conservación. No compartimos este punto de vista, ya que la cultura, sobre todo, forma parte de la humanidad y de la economía. Este estudio de caso examina las actividades emprendidas por la Fundación Viegli para complementar su museo y su misión. Creemos que este enfoque es una de las nuevas formas en las que los museos pueden funcionar. Este *modus operandi* surgió exactamente porque se concibió la organización del museo de una manera moderna, sin que las ideas tradicionales supusieran un obstáculo para ello.

Palabras clave: Museo, aprendizaje cultural exploratorio, estudio de caso, industria cultural, *Telpas Pavasaris*.

Un musée de l'apprentissage culturel exploratoire : une étude de cas de Telpas Pavasaris

Résumé: Les musées font partie d'une tradition ancienne et, de ce fait, ils doivent être modernisés et réévalués afin de ne pas devenir obsolètes. Néanmoins, on aurait tendance à croire que les musées, les bibliothèques et toute autre institution culturelle sont dispensés de cette obligation, du fait qu'ils sont engagés dans des activités historiques et de conservation. Nous ne partageons pas ce point de vue car la culture fait partie, notamment, de l'humanité et de l'économie. Cette étude de cas examine les activités réalisées par la fondation Viegli dans le but de compléter son musée et sa mission. Nous considérons que cette approche est l'un des nouveaux modes de fonctionnement possibles des musées. Ce mode de fonctionnement a émergé précisément parce que l'organisation du musée a été conçue d'une manière moderne, sans être entravée par des idées traditionnelles.

Mots clés: Musée, apprentissage culturel exploratoire, étude de cas, industrie culturelle, *Telpas Pavasaris*.