

Report on learning and pedagogy in Lithuanian museums in 2014

The Nordic Centre of Heritage Learning and Creativity AB (NCK) is a Nordic-Baltic centre for learning through cultural heritage, located in Östersund, Sweden.



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The contents of this report reflect the views of the author who is responsible for the facts and the accuracy of the data presented herein.



**NORDIC-BALTIC
MOBILITY
PROGRAMME**

Culture



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1. > SUMMARY

This report presents the results from the 2014 survey addressed to museum directors in Lithuania. The survey on learning and pedagogy in Lithuanian museums was done in collaboration with the Association of Lithuanian Museums and conducted in the first months of 2014. The answers were collected through a web-based form with an instruction on the purpose of the survey urging museum directors to engage anonymously. The return rate was a little more than 40 per cent.

The survey aimed to provide insights into the museum sector in Lithuania regarding learning and pedagogy by taking as its point of departure the existence of several definitions for learning. The survey sought to explore the perceptions held by the museum directors in Lithuania in regards to learning, as well as collecting data for the target groups and their priorities for their learning programmes, the educational background of their employees and much more.

We received 47 replies, twenty seven (27) from museums with maximum 25 full time employees and twenty (20) from larger institutions employing up to 100 full time staff members, which are mostly state-owned museums. Out of these 47 museums, 16 identified themselves as specialized museums, 13 as combination museums, another 13 as museums of Cultural History, four as Art museums and one as a museum of Natural History.

Learning is included in the most important policy documents of the majority of institutions (39), out of which 19 are state-owned museums. Both curators and museum educators decide who will be the target group for their learning programmes and activities, with that of children and young people being in favour.

These educators who are involved in making these key decisions while also being actively involved in the pedagogical activities, for both schools and adults, hold a university degree in a subject related to archaeology and ethnology for example, or their university education also included pedagogical training. Nearly all informants (43) consider pivotal for museum educators to advance their skills and knowledge further. According to those who advocate for further education, they seem to find important that the museum educators should hone their pedagogical training and knowledge (37), while arguing that this should be of formal character (30) and perhaps organised by the Association of Lithuanian Museums.

2. > BACKGROUND

In 2011 NCK conducted a survey in which museum directors in Sweden reflected upon questions concerning learning and pedagogy. The underlying reason for designing this survey was the acknowledgment of the need to advance our knowledge regarding learning in Swedish museums. The Association of Swedish Museums actively participated in the on-going discussions and facilitated the design and distribution of the survey to their members. The results of the survey pinpointed towards the necessity to provide further education to the museum pedagogical staff, a need that has been addressed by launching four new university courses in museum education in the autumn of 2014.

Following the Swedish survey, similar online questionnaire surveys were conducted in Denmark, Finland, Norway and the Baltic countries. Museum directors were invited to complete the questionnaire anonymously. The questionnaire was prepared in dialogue with the Museum Associations in each country, apart from Latvia. It consists of 11 questions and open-comment fields in which the informants had the opportunity to elaborate on their answers. The questionnaire is included in the Appendix.

Apart from the reports for each country, a comparative analysis of all reports was produced in February 2015 as it would shed light on important insights and allow us to gain a better understanding of the Nordic and Baltic status quo.

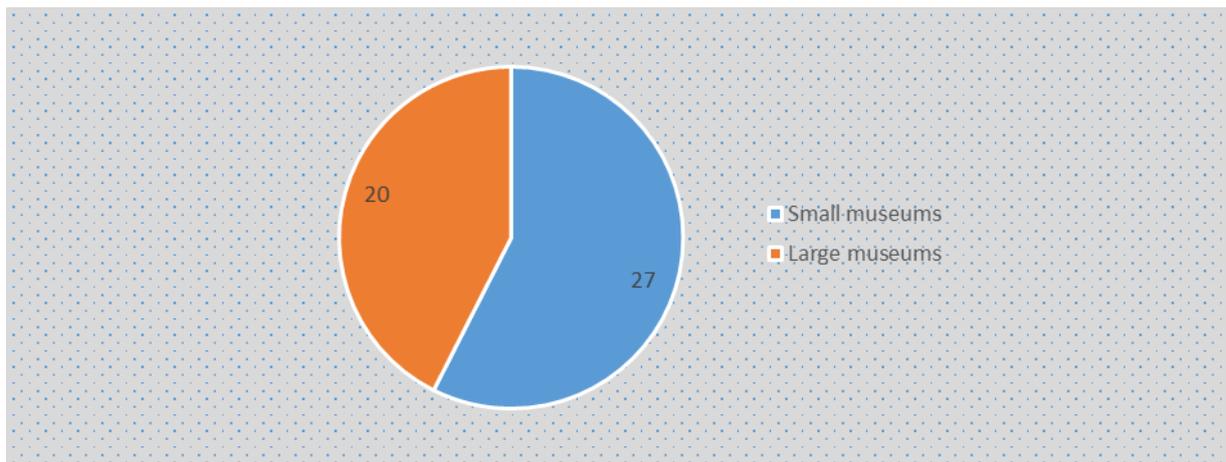
These reports provide a lens through which we may begin to identify the current state of organisational affairs in regards to learning in the Nordic and Baltic museums. In addition to that, these reports provide the basis for further discussion and debate at both political and managerial level.

3. > WHO PARTICIPATED?

The survey was emailed to 113 institutions, all members of the Association of Lithuanian museums, and received 47 replies (42% answer rate) between January 21 and March 5, 2014. A copy of the survey questions and the invitation letter emailed to these institutions may be seen in the Appendix.

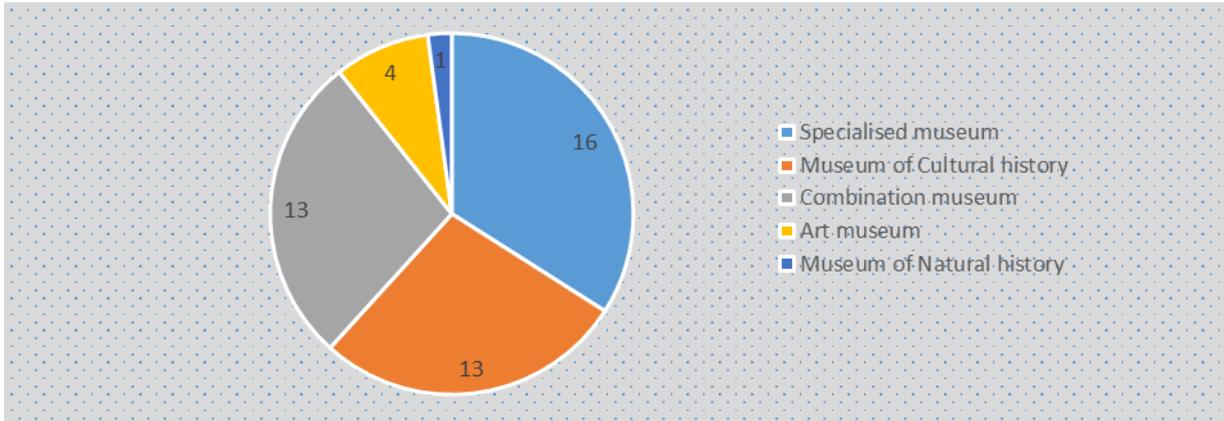
From the 47 institutions that participated in the survey, 27 are what we categorise as small museums – that is, having less than 25 full time employees. The remaining 20 museums fall under the category of large institutions, with eight of them having between 25 – 50 full time employees while the rest 12 employ more than 51 staff members. Specifically, three of them have between 51 - 75 employees; six have 75 - 100 and, the rest three have more than 101 employees.

Chart 1. Share of small and large museums



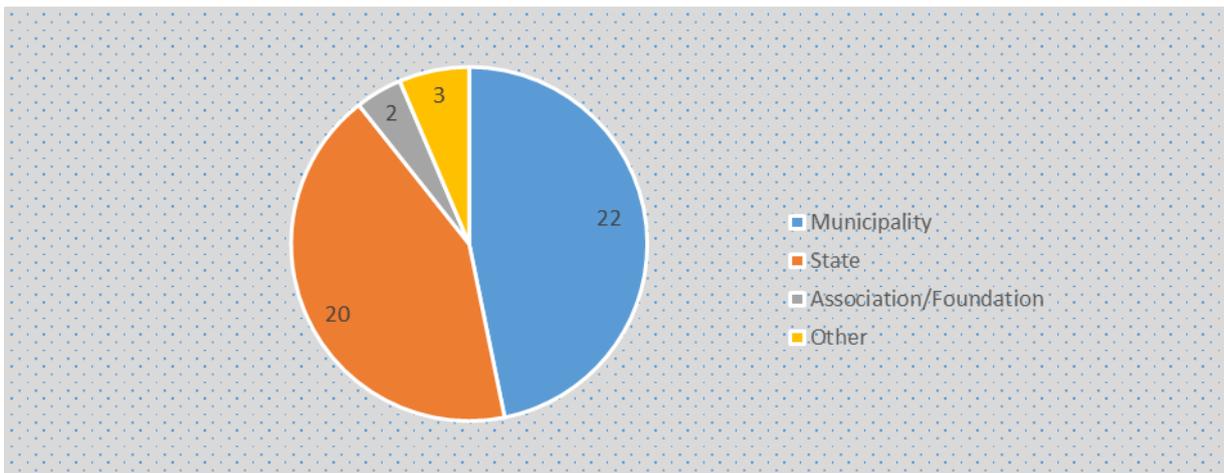
When it comes to type of these museums, they are mainly museums of Cultural History; museums oriented towards a particular theme (specialised museums) and, museums that combine particular themes (combination museums). Only four of these are Art museums whereas only one is a Natural History museum.

Chart 2. Museums divided by content



As seen in Chart 3, most of these museums are either state or municipality owned. Worth mentioning in this regard is that the 20 museums that are state-owned make up for two thirds of the museums that in this report are characterised as large. These museums are also most likely to be found among those categorised as Specialised or Combination museums – 14 of the 20 state-owned museums in the study chose one of these two alternative when asked to typify their museums.

Chart 3. Museums divided by ownership



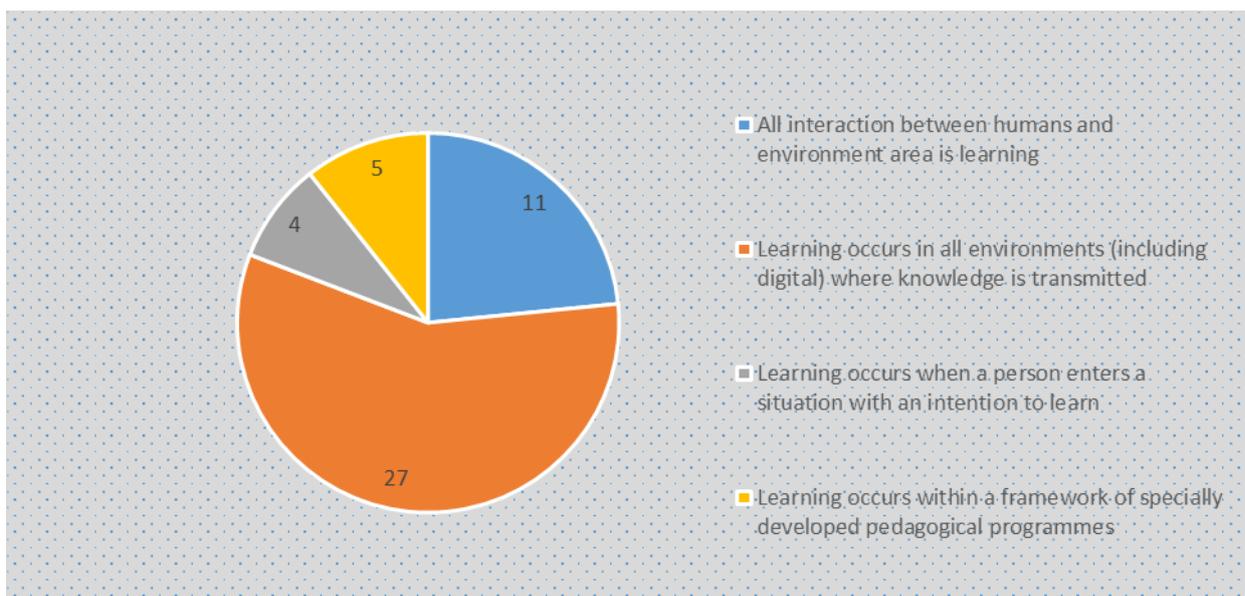
4. > DEFINITIONS OF LEARNING

The significance of learning in museums is of main interest in this study and thus, the first questions of the survey were modelled to capture how museum directors in Lithuania characterise and value learning.

Chart 4 depicts the answers we received when asking the museum directors to select one out of four definitions of learning. As seen in the chart, more than half of the museum directors see learning as something that occurs in all environments where knowledge is transmitted. Furthermore, when asked to elaborate upon their selection, one of them explained that learning has to be approved by a specialist in order to be valid and effective. Equally interesting is the fact that the second most popular definition (11 replies) takes also a wide perspective towards what learning is. Specifically, it sees learning as all interaction between humans and the environment. Less popular have been the two definitions which set specific circumstances for the learners.

All in all, the size, ownership and type of the museum do not influence the way in which the museum directors who participated in our survey define learning.

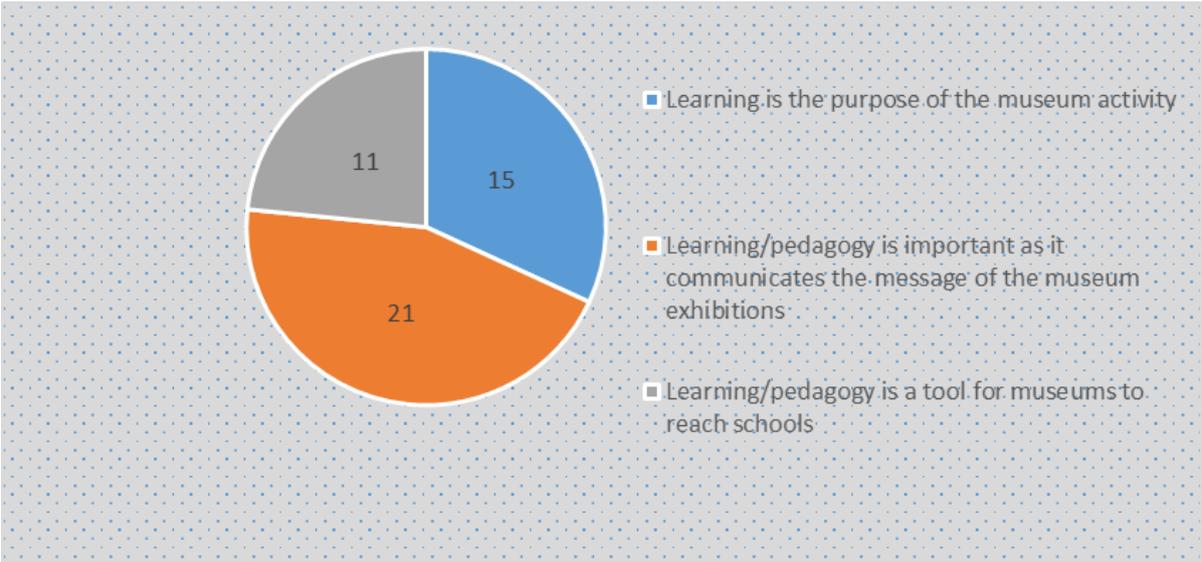
Chart 4. Definitions of learning



We then turned to explore what these museum directors thought of learning specifically when related to the museum context. Once again, the informants were asked to select among three statements describing learning. As seen in Chart 5, a little less than half of the informants think of learning as a means of communicating the message of the exhibitions. Specifically, as elaborated by one of them, learning programmes are the museum’s main activity – although not the official purpose of their organisation – and seem to attract visitors’ interest.

About a third of the museum directors said that learning is the purpose of the museum activity while the remaining 11 informants chose to focus on learning as an instrument in museum-school related activities. There are no significant differences to these results if museums are analysed with respect to size, ownership or type.

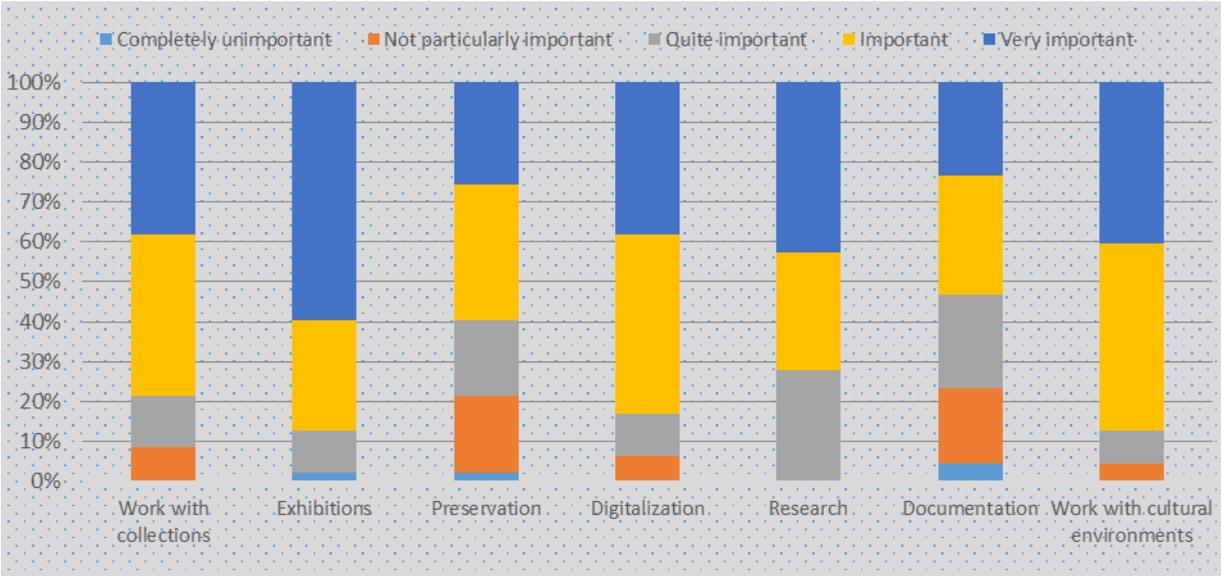
Chart 5. The role and value of learning in relation to the museum



We will now take a closer look into learning in the museum setting. After asking the informants to rate how important learning is in relation to seven different aspects that are vital to a museum organisation, it became apparent that they think that learning is important for exhibitions. Specifically, 28 percent of the informants agreed that learning is important in this context while 60 percent that learning is very important in this context.

Working with collections, cultural environments and digitisation are also viewed as important in this regard. About 40 percent said that learning is important for these contexts and another 40 percent viewed them as very important. Preservation and documentation are the areas in which learning is valued the least, even though more than 50 percent of the informants stated that learning is either important or very important in relation to these aspects.

Chart 6. The role and value of learning in relation to different museum contexts

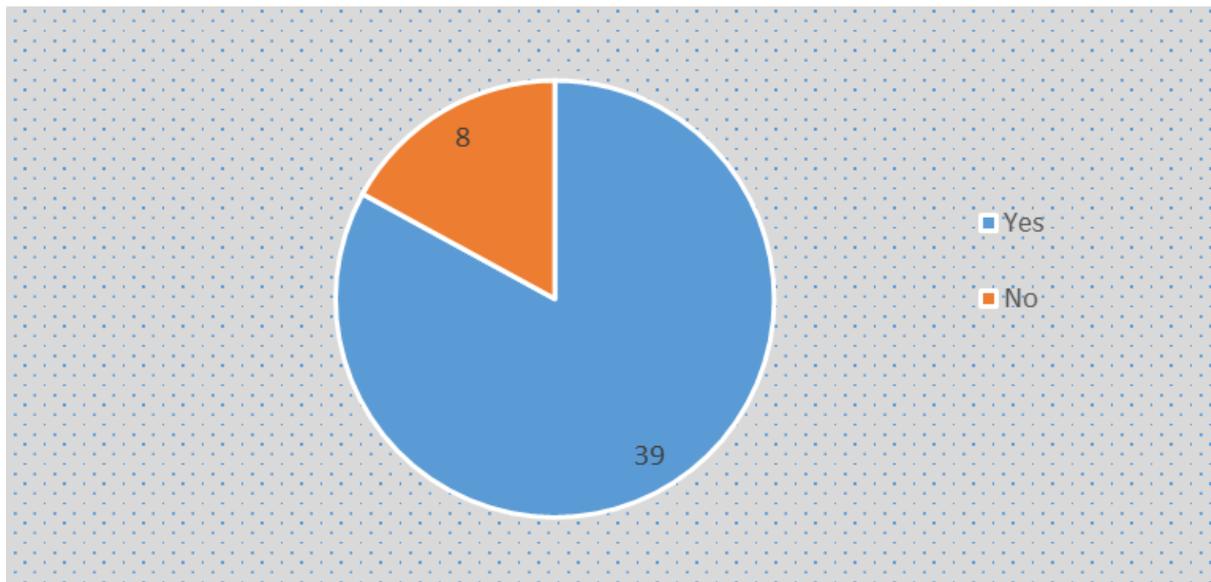


5. > PRIORITIES AND TARGET GROUPS

So far we have explored the Lithuanian museum directors' perspectives on learning and its value. In this section, we will shift our attention to the policy documents of these institutions so as to explore the role of learning in these official documents.

Of the 47 replies, 39 stated that learning is explicitly included in their institutions' most important policy documents. Noteworthy, however, is the difference between the state-owned museums and those with other forms of ownership; most museums that are not state-owned do not include learning in their official policy documents. Instead, only one of the 20 state-owned museums represented in the study answered that learning was *not* part of their policy documents, reflecting upon the fact that learning is a priority for most of the Lithuanian state-owned museums.

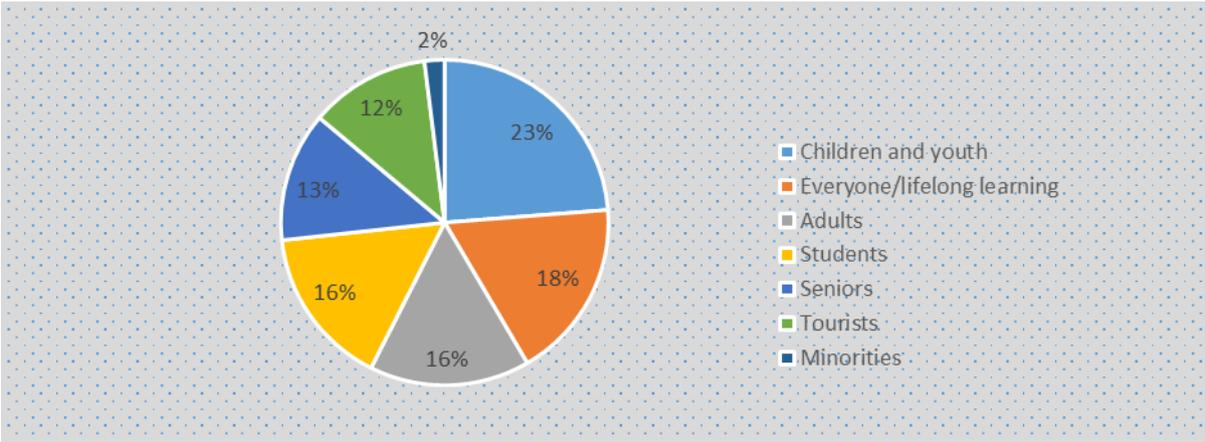
Chart 7. Learning in policy documents



Additionally, we identified the target groups of the learning programmes and activities that these museums offer. Chart 8 depicts the variation among the replies we received regarding their target groups. It has to be noted that some of the categories overlap, completely or partly, and that the informants could choose just one or several of the alternatives. These factors complicate the analysis but at least we get an indication on the variety and the priorities that currently characterise the Lithuanian museum sector.

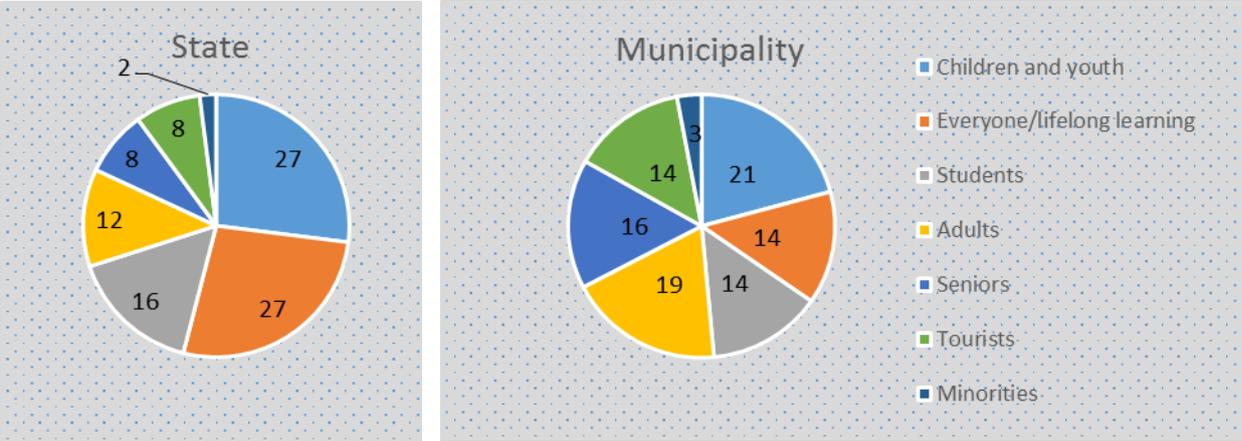
Children and youth are important target groups for the Lithuanian museums. However, as Chart 8 illustrates, many other groups of different ages and in different situations are also addressed by the learning programmes of the Lithuanian museums.

Chart 8. Target groups for learning programmes and activities



If we explore the replies based on their institution’s type of ownership, then state museums and museums owned by municipalities have significant variations. As can be seen in Chart 9, the 20 state-owned museums selected altogether 51 target groups from the list of alternatives in the survey while the 22 museums owned by municipalities chose 81 target groups in total. This may reflect upon the tendency of the state museums to focus on either children and youth, or everyone/lifelong learning whereas the municipality museums target more groups through their learning activities.

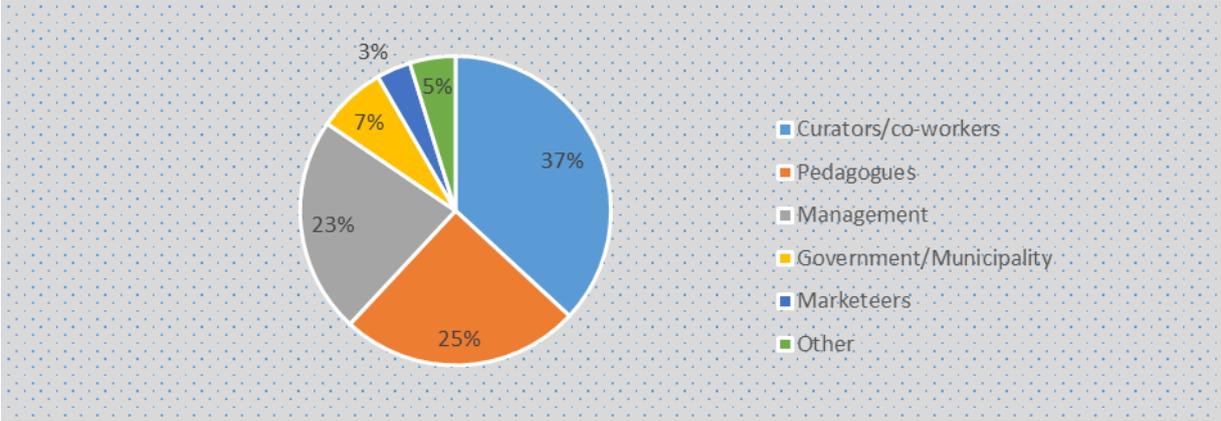
Chart 9. Target groups in museums owned by the state and by municipality



When our informants had to select the group of their highest priority in regards to their learning programmes, children in elementary school came first, followed by those in high school and pre-school. University students and vocational learners ranked fourth in priority, followed by adults and lastly, seniors. Moreover, if we compare state-owned and municipality-owned museums, then the top two and the bottom two rankings are the same. These rankings showcase the importance of school groups and thus, formal learning for the Lithuanian museums.

At this point, it is interesting to see who makes these decisions when it comes to the target groups of Lithuanian museum learning programmes. To explore this, we asked the museum directors to select one or several of the six alternative categories as seen in Chart 10. Irrespectively of the type of museum and according to their replies, it is the curators or the co-workers that make these choices in most of the cases. However, the educational and the management staff members are also actively engaged in the selection of these target groups.

Chart 10. Who selects target groups?

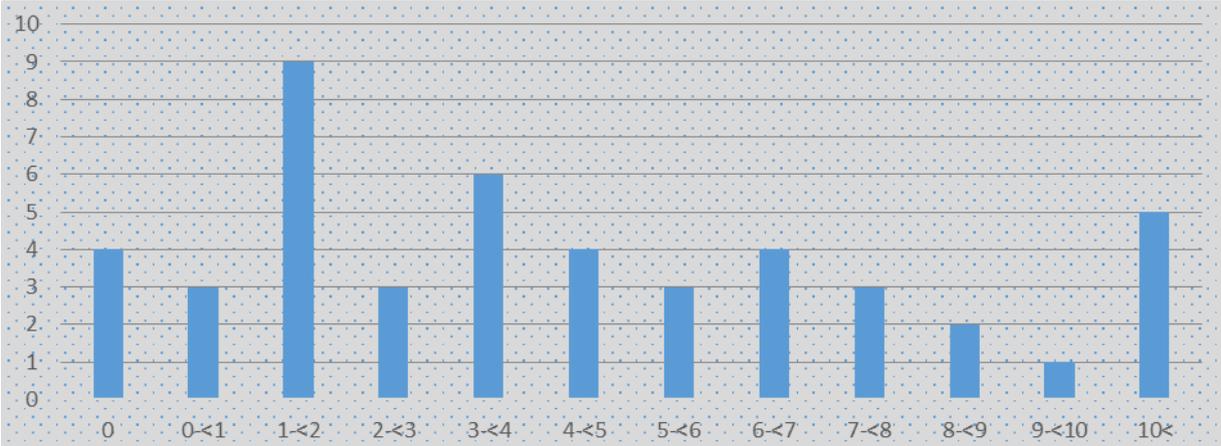


6. > THE EMPLOYEES

In Chart 11, we see that the preconditions in this aspect vary greatly between museums. Of the 47 museums that participated in this study, four have not even one employee working full time in planning and delivering learning activities, whereas five have more than ten employees dedicating all their time to this line of work.

The difference between the state-owned museums and these with other forms of ownership is more profound when it comes to the pedagogical staff employed by each organisation than the difference identified for the rest of the questions of this survey. State-owned museums are predominant as we reach the top of the scale while museums with other forms of ownership are at the bottom. Specifically, four of the five museums that have more than ten full time employees working with learning are state-owned.

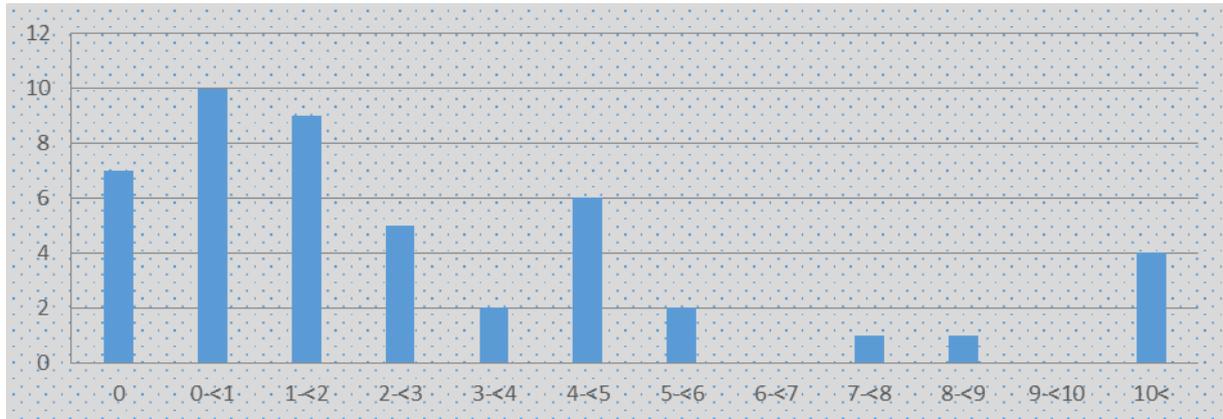
Chart 11. Interval of the number of full time employees that work with learning and meet visitors face-to-face



Nonetheless, as all learning does not happen face-to-face, the survey also had a question about work that concerned learning activities in general such as counselling, and web pedagogy but not work that is a precondition for learning activities as for example digitalizing.

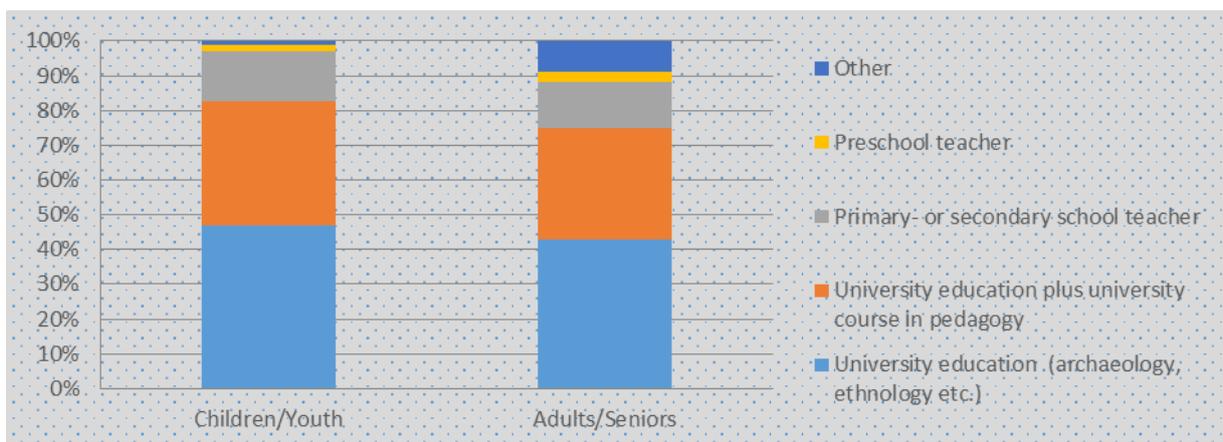
The differences between state-owned museums and other museums are not as profound when we focus on learning in general as opposed to learning face-to-face, though there is still a predominance of state museums the further we move up the scale.

Chart 12. Interval of the number of full time employees that work with learning in general



Lastly, we wanted to find out more about the educational background of these employees and thus, asked the informants to choose among five alternatives. As can be seen from Chart 13, there are no major differences in the educational background of staff working with either children/youth or adults/seniors. About 50 percent of the staff employed for the learning activities have some sort of pedagogical education such as a university course in pedagogy or a pre-, primary-, or secondary school teacher degree. Noteworthy in this respect is that over 40 percent of the staff engaged in learning activities seem to have an academic degree but no formal education in the field of pedagogy and learning.

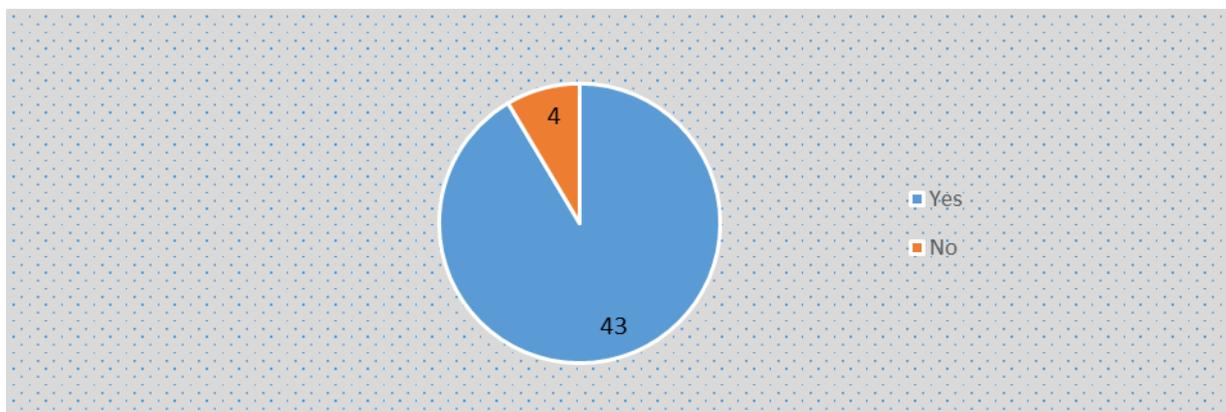
Chart 13. Educational backgrounds for employees who work with learning



7. > FURTHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION

This study has so far described some of the approaches to, as well as the environments and the preconditions of, learning in Lithuanian museums – from the viewpoint of 47 museum directors. We shall now leave the description and analysis of the current situation behind and turn our attention to the future. What are the considerations of museum directors concerning further training of staff that work with learning in the museums? Four of the informants do not think it is necessary to further educate the staff that work with learning at the museum whereas 43 agree that there is a need for further education.

Chart 14. Do you think there is a need for further education for museum educators?



More than two thirds of the informants, who are positive towards further education, think it should be of formal character with a possibility to receive, for example, university credits (Chart 15) while, in their majority, they agree that this further knowledge should be about pedagogical theory (Chart 16). Additionally, they also feel positive towards strengthening the bonds between museums and schools (Chart 17).

Chart 15. Should further education be of formal character?

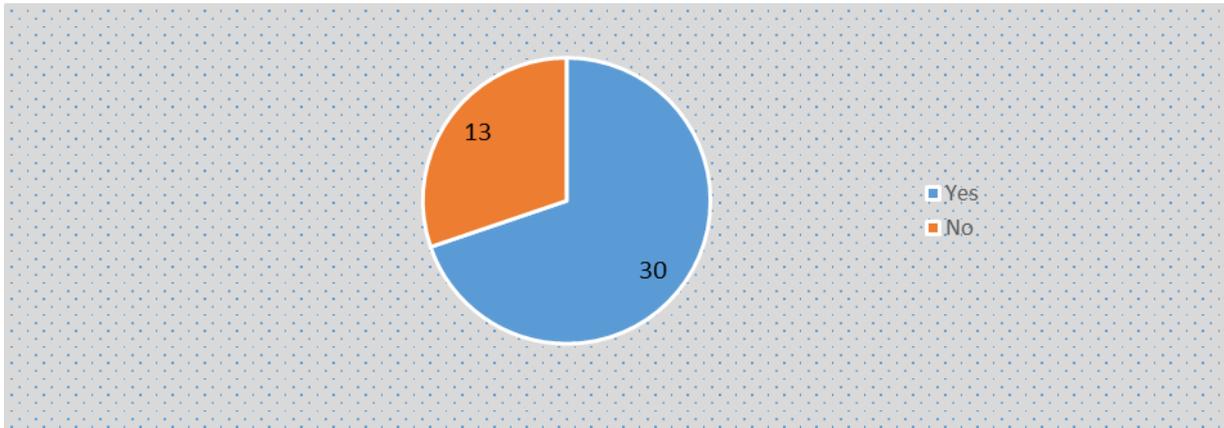


Chart 16. Do you find it necessary to increase the knowledge about pedagogical theory?

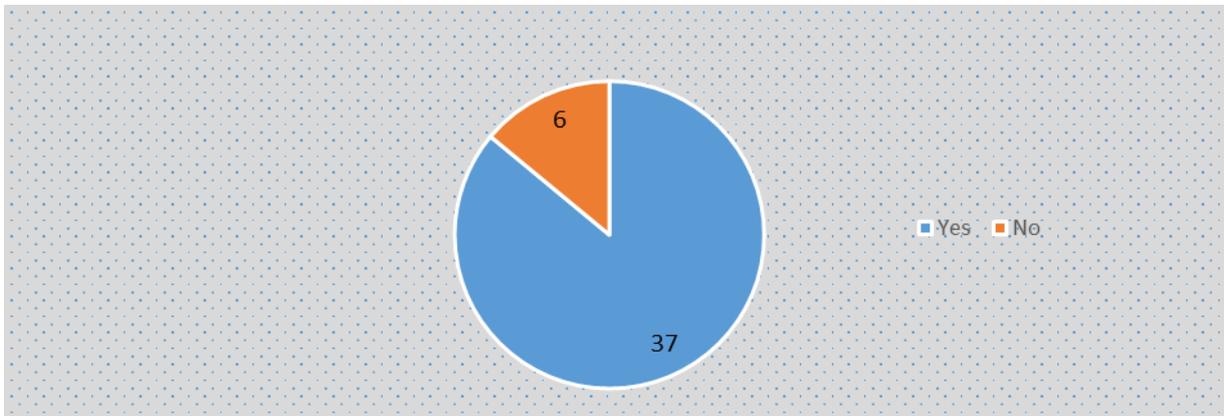
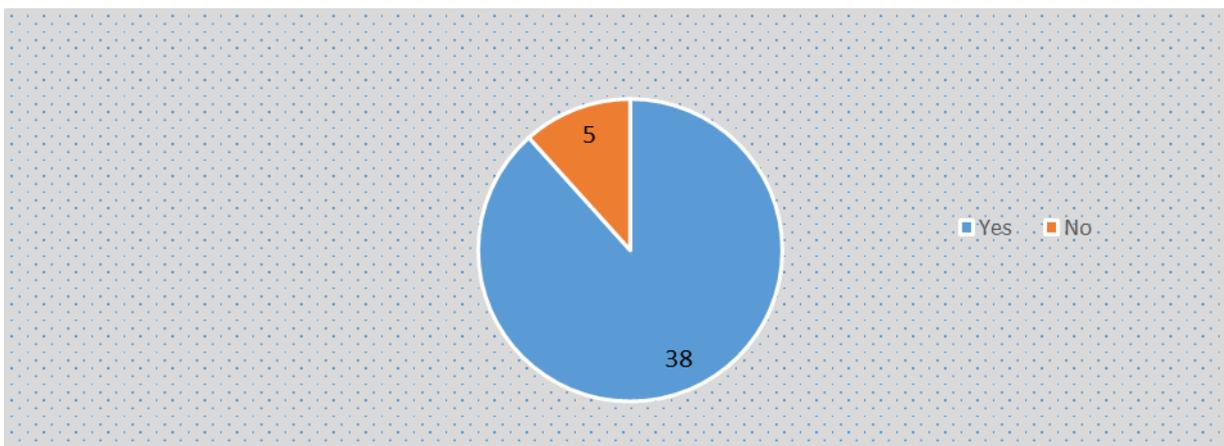


Chart 17. Do you find it necessary to increase the knowledge about activities taking place at schools?



The last question in this section on the future and thoughts about staff's further education attempted to explore their thoughts over the Association of Lithuanian Museums developing these opportunities for further development. All of the informants that in general were positive towards further education (43) were also favourable towards this suggestion.

8. > CONCLUSIONS

Out of the 47 replies we received, twenty seven (27) identified themselves as small museums with maximum 25 full time employees while the rest 20 as larger institutions employing up to 100 full time staff members. Most of these have further identified themselves as specialized museums (16) and either combination museums (13) or museums of Cultural History (13). These institutions that have identified themselves as large, they tend to be state-owned and specialized or combination museums.

Most of the museum directors (27) consider learning as something that occurs in all environments (including digital) where knowledge is transmitted, while when applied in the setting of the museum, then learning becomes the tool for communicating the message of the exhibitions. Their replies seem to point towards a very interesting finding: learning for most of them is very close to knowledge transmission and acquisition.

Indeed, learning is in the agenda of the Lithuanian museums, and thus, included in the most important policy documents of the majority of institutions (39), out of which 19 were state-owned museums. The most favoured target group for learning programmes and activities in Lithuania is that of children and young people, specifically children in elementary school, followed by students in high school and pre-school. These findings pinpoint to the importance of schools, and young people for museum programmes and activities in Lithuania and can be seen in relation to the 79% of these museum directors who believe that it is necessary for museums to increase their knowledge about activities taking place in schools (38). Equally important is to consider who decides which target group of museum users will be addressed through the museum education programmes. Here, the replies we received unveiled that both curators and museum educators make these decisions.

These educators who are involved in making these key decisions while also being actively involved in the pedagogical activities, for both schools and adults, hold a university degree in a subject related to archaeology and ethnology for example, or their university education also included pedagogical training. Nearly all informants (43) consider pivotal for museum educators to advance their skills and knowledge further. According to those who advocate for further education, they seem to find

important that the museum educators should hone their pedagogical training and knowledge (37), while arguing that this should be of formal character (30). All informants agree on the Association of Lithuanian Museums developing and organising an initiative for further education and training.

9. > APPENDIX

Questionnaire for **museum directors**

1. Which definition of learning do you see as the most accurate? Choose *one* alternative.

- All interaction between humans and environment area is learning
- Learning occurs in all environments (including digital) where knowledge is transmitted
- Learning occurs when a person enters a situation with an intention to learn
- Learning occurs within a framework of specially developed pedagogical programmes
- Your own definition of learning:

Comments:

2. How important is learning for museum users in the following museum contexts? Select a number from 1-5 where the number means that learning is: 1 (completely unimportant), 2 (not particularly important), 3 (quite important), 4 (important), 5 (very important).

- ___ Work with collections
- ___ Exhibitions
- ___ Preservation
- ___ Digitalization
- ___ Research
- ___ Documentation
- ___ Work with cultural environments

Comments:

3. Which of the following sentences is the most appropriate for you? Choose *one* alternative.

- Learning is the purpose of the museum activity
- Learning/pedagogy is important as it communicates the message of the museum exhibitions
- Learning/pedagogy is a tool for museums to reach schools

Comments:

4. How do you prioritize the following target groups in regard to learning/pedagogical activities at your museum? *Rank* from A-F (A is highest priority, F is the lowest)

- ___ Preschool
- ___ Elementary school
- ___ High school
- ___ University and vocational training
- ___ Adults
- ___ Seniors

Comments:

5. Is learning or pedagogy explicitly included in the most important policy documents of your museum?

- Yes
- No

6. What target group/groups is/are addressed with the learning and/or pedagogical activities at your museum? Mark the groups that are relevant.

- Everyone/lifelong learning
- Adults
- Seniors
- Children and youth
- Tourists
- Students
- Minorities
- Others

Who has selected it/them?

- Pedagogues
- Marketeers
- Curators/co-workers
- The management/board of directors
- Government/municipality
- Others

7. What kind of education has the staff at your museum that is working with the pedagogical activities for school/high school? Mark the topics that are relevant.

- Preschool teacher
- Primary- or secondary school teacher
- University education
- University education plus university course in pedagogy
- Other:

Comments:

8. What kind of education has the personnel working with the pedagogical programmes for adults/seniors at your museum? Mark the topics that are relevant.

- Preschool teacher
- Primary- or secondary school teacher
- University education (archaeology, ethnology etc.)
- University education plus university course in pedagogy
- Other:

Comments:

9. Do you think there is a need for further special education for museum educators?

- Yes
 No

If yes:

Should further education be of formal character with a possibility to achieve university credits etc.?

- Yes
 No

Do you find it necessary to increase the knowledge about pedagogical theory?

- Yes
 No

Do you find it necessary to increase the knowledge about activities taking place at schools?

- Yes
 No

Do you think that the Association of Lithuanian Museums should (perhaps in collaboration with other stakeholders) develop possibilities for continuing education for museum educators?

- Yes
 No

Comments:

10. Brief characteristics of your museum:

The museum is *mainly* a:

- Museum of Cultural history
- Art museum
- Museum of Natural History
- Specialised museum
- Combination museum

The museum is owned by:

- State
- Municipality
- Association, foundation
- Other

The museum has:

- 1-25 full time employees
- 26-50 full time employees
- 51-75 full time employees
- 76-100 full time employees
- More than 101 full time employees

How many full time employees at the museum work with learning/pedagogical activities and meet visitors face to face?

- 0 full time employees
- 0 - <1 full time employees
- 1 - <2 full time employees
- 2 - <3 full time employees
- 3 - <4 full time employees
- 4 - <5 full time employees
- 5 - <6 full time employees
- 6 - <7 full time employees
- 7 - <8 full time employees
- 8 - <9 full time employees
- 9 - <10 full time employees
- 10< full time employees

How many Full Time employees at the museum work with learning/pedagogical activities in general (for example counselling, web pedagogy etc. **but not** such work that is a precondition for learning/pedagogical activities for example digitalizing)?

- 0 full time employees
- 0 - <1 full time employees
- 1 - <2 full time employees
- 2 - <3 full time employees
- 3 - <4 full time employees
- 4 - <5 full time employees

- 5 - <6 full time employees
- 6 - <7 full time employees
- 7 - <8 full time employees
- 8 - <9 full time employees
- 9 - <10 full time employees
- 10 < full time employees

11. Your comments in general concerning learning/pedagogical activities in museums:

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