

# Comparative report on learning and pedagogy in Baltic museums in 2014



NORDIC-BALTIC  
MOBILITY  
PROGRAMME

Culture



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.



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## 1.> BACKGROUND

NCK, after acknowledging the need to advance the existent knowledge regarding learning in Swedish museums, conducted a nationwide survey in 2011 in collaboration with the Association of Swedish Museums. Questions of the survey addressed museum directors in Sweden who were invited to answer anonymously a number of questions concerning learning and pedagogy in their institutions. The results of the survey brought to the fore the call for advancing the pedagogical skills and knowledge of the museum pedagogical employees. This expressed call for further education was addressed through the launching of four university courses in museum education in the autumn of 2014.

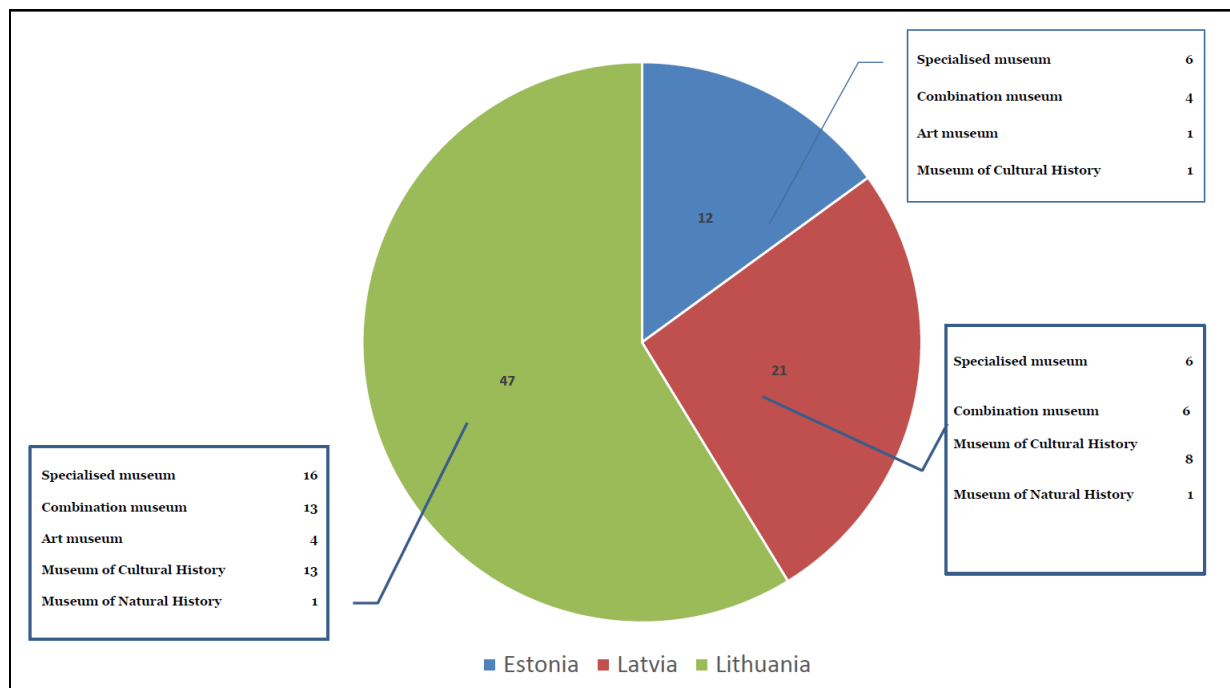
Following the Swedish survey, similar online surveys were conducted in Denmark, Finland, Norway and the Baltic countries. The questionnaire was prepared in dialogue with the Museum Associations in each country, apart from Latvia. It consists of 11 questions and open-comment fields in which the informants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

A report was written for each country, followed by a comparative report of the Baltic countries, a comparative report of the Nordic countries, and a Baltic – Nordic comparative report. All comparative reports were produced in February 2015. 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. We hope through these comparative reports to shed light on important insights and allow us to gain a better understanding of the Nordic and Baltic status quo.

## 2.> WHO PARTICIPATED

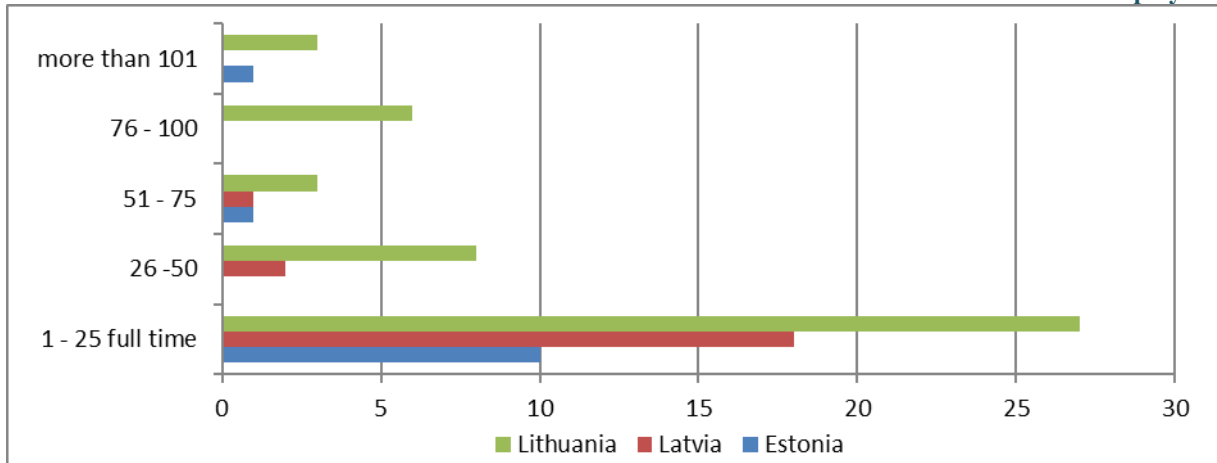
For the purposes of the comparative analysis, it is useful to get an overview of the number, the size and the type of the Baltic institutions participating in this survey. In total, we received 80 responses from museum directors in the Baltic countries. As seen from Chart 1, we received most replies from Lithuania, followed by Latvia and then, Estonia. Most museums participating in this survey were *specialised* museums (28), followed by combination museums (23) and museums of Cultural History (22). We have no responses from any Art museum in Latvia, as well as none from museums of Natural History in Estonia.

Chart 1. Number and type of museums per country



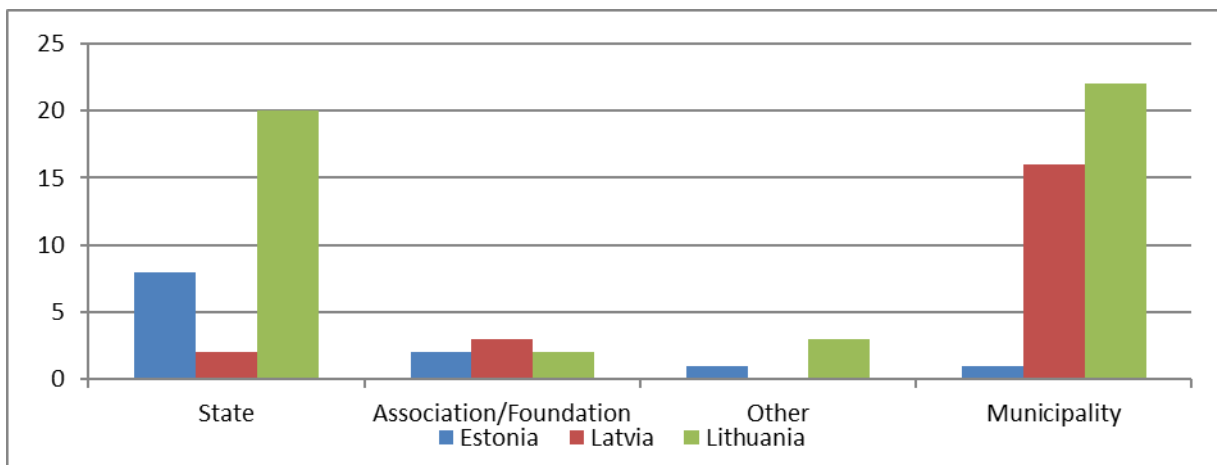
It can be seen from Chart 2 that **55** of them fall under the category of *small* museums – that is, they have no more than 25 full time employees.

Chart 2. Number of employees



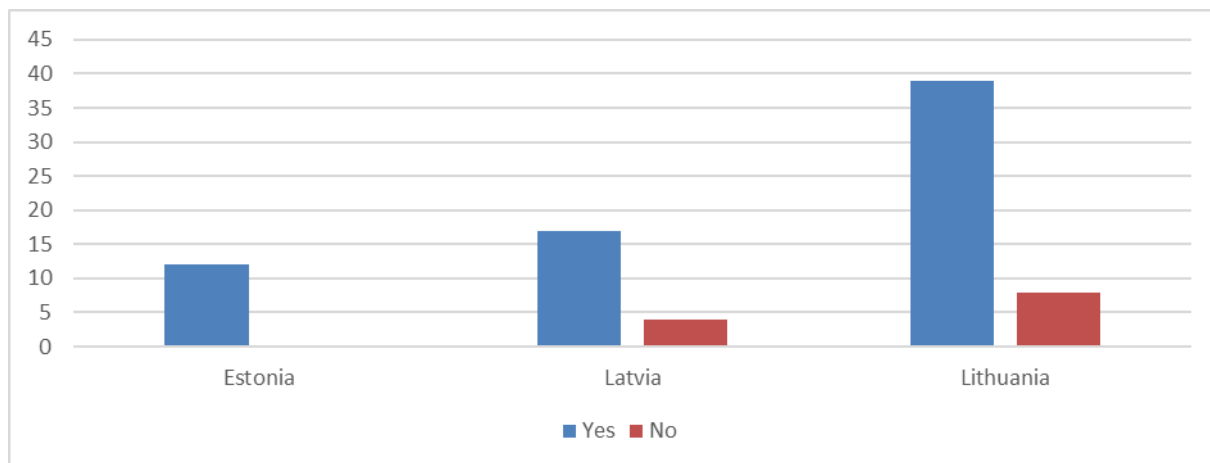
When it comes to ownership, most museums in both Latvia and Lithuania are owned by the municipality whereas the Estonian museums are mostly state – owned (Chart 3).

Chart 3. Ownership of the museums per country

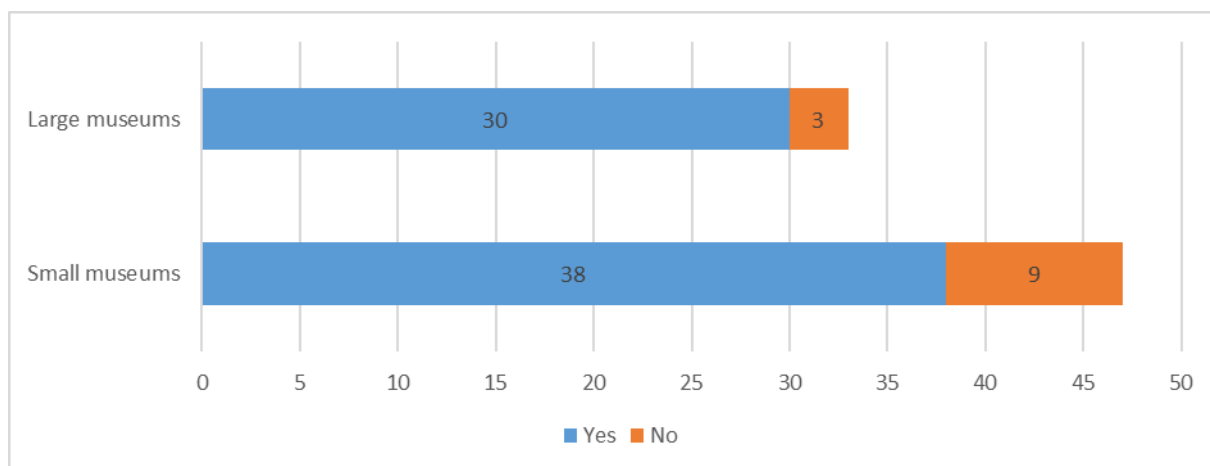


Including learning in the museum’s policy documents is considered a way to encourage the cultural organisation to think about its provision for learning, to assess what it currently does and to think about what is realistic and achievable to aim for when planning a high quality experience for its visitors. For the 68 out of 80 museums across the Baltic region which participated in our survey learning is included in the most important policy documents, highlighting the importance of learning as part of the museum’s mission and agenda (Chart 4). As Chart 5 illustrates, there are no significant differences when it comes to the size of these museums.

**Chart 2. Is learning included in the museum's most important policy documents?**



**Chart 3. Inclusion of learning in the policy documents in terms of the museums' size**



It is interesting to turn to these museum directors who have stated that their institutions' policy documents do not include learning. As Estonian museum directors unanimously confirmed that learning is on their agenda, we examined more carefully the type of the museums and their ownership in Lithuania and Latvia.

As it may be seen in Table 1, the museums in Latvia and Lithuania that do not include learning in their policy documents are specialised (5), art (2) or museums of Cultural History (5). In their majority, these are municipality (8) and state-owned museums (2).

**Table 1. Baltic Museums which do not include learning in their policy documents**

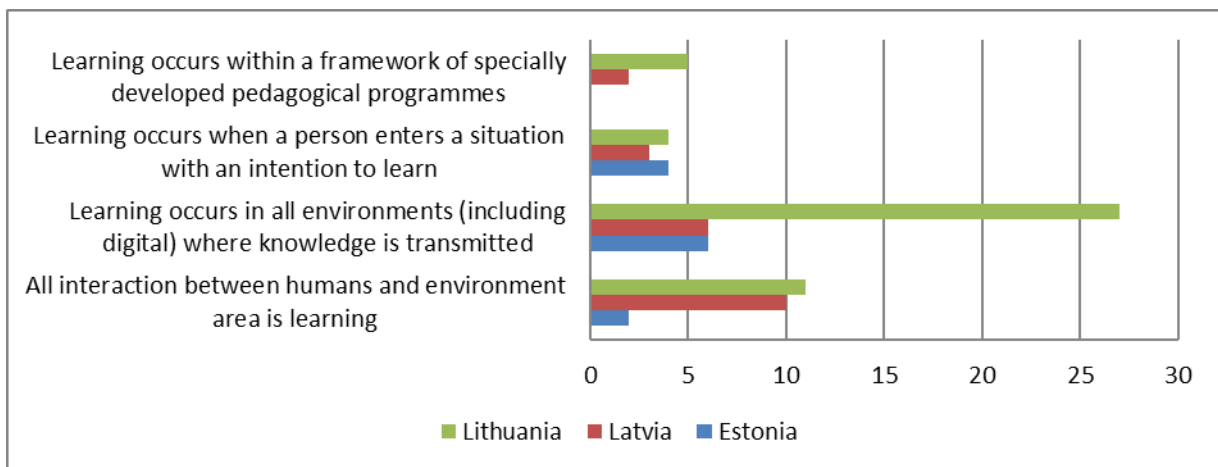
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Latvia</b> <b>4 museums</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lithuania</b> <b>8 museums</b></p>
3 specialised	4 Museums of Cultural history
1 Museum of Cultural History	2 Specialised museums 2 Art museums
<b>Ownership</b>	
3 Municipality	5 Municipality museums
1 State	1 State
	1 Other
	1 Association



### 3.> DEFINITIONS OF LEARNING

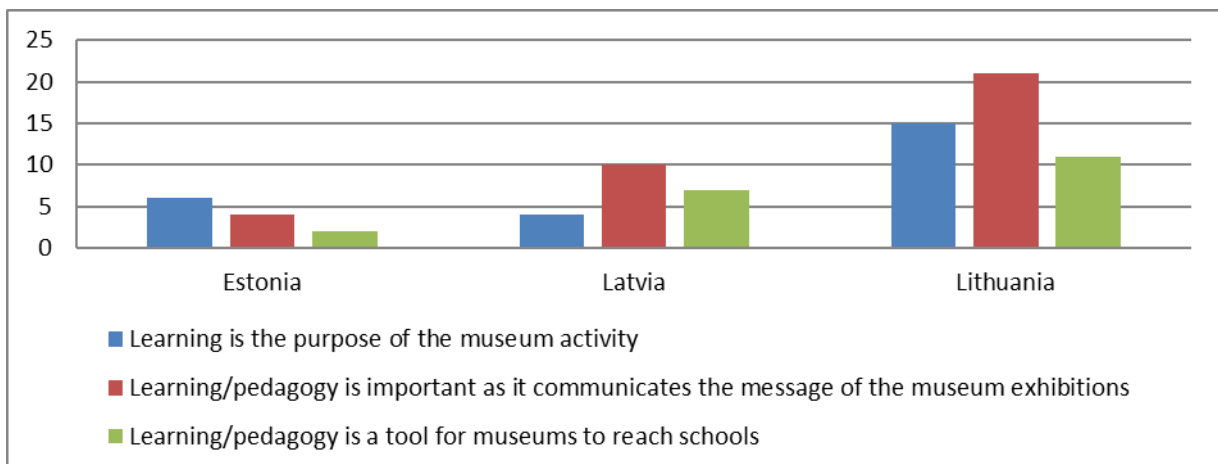
When turning to explore the directors’ perspectives on learning, nearly half of them (39) see learning as something that takes place in all environments (including digital) where knowledge is transmitted, whereas 23 of them see learning as all interaction between humans and the environment.

**Chart 4. Definitions of learning across Baltic museums**



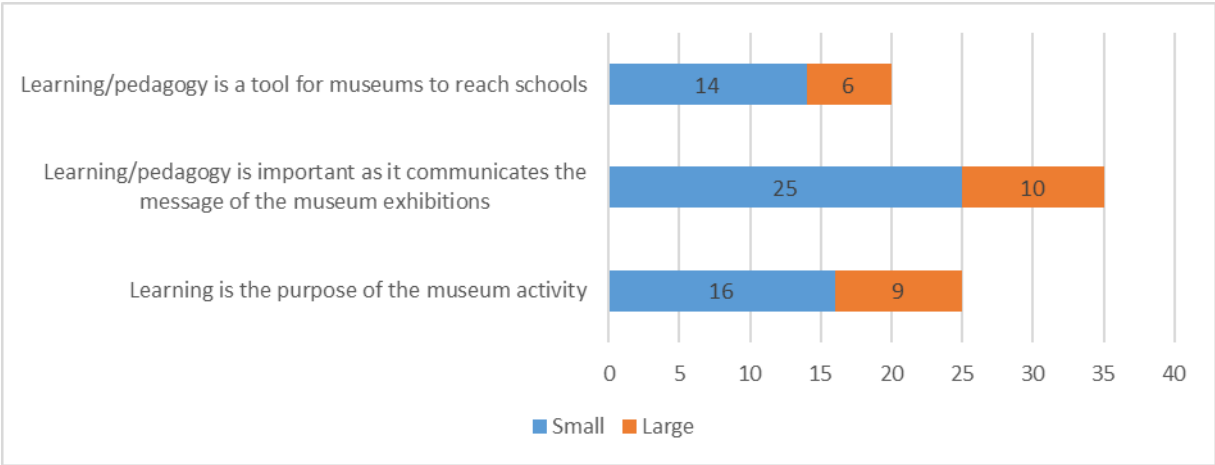
For most of the museum directors in Latvia and Lithuania, learning is important as it **communicates the message of the museum exhibitions** whereas for those in Estonia, learning is important as it is the purpose of the **museum**.

**Chart 5. Importance of learning in regards to the museum setting**



When it comes to museum directors' perspectives on learning in terms of the size of the museum, we can see in Chart 8 that the directors in most of the small museums think that learning is important as a means for communicating the message of the exhibition. Approximately the same number of directors see learning either as a tool for museums to reach schools or as the purpose of the museum activity. Museum directors in the large Baltic museums are equally divided between learning being a means for communicating the message of the museum exhibitions and learning being the purpose of the museum activity.

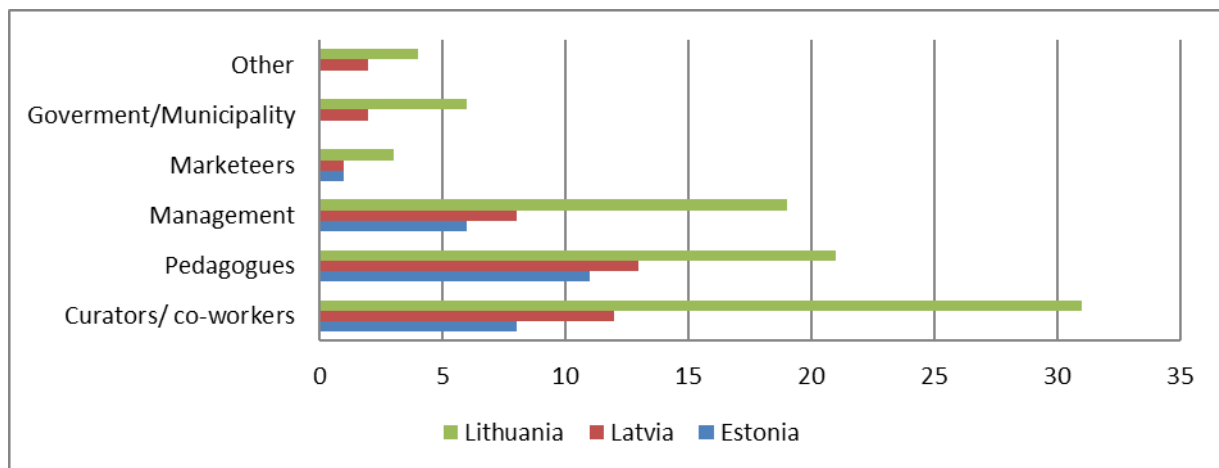
**Chart 6. Importance of learning in regards to the size of the Baltic museums**



## 4. > TARGET GROUPS

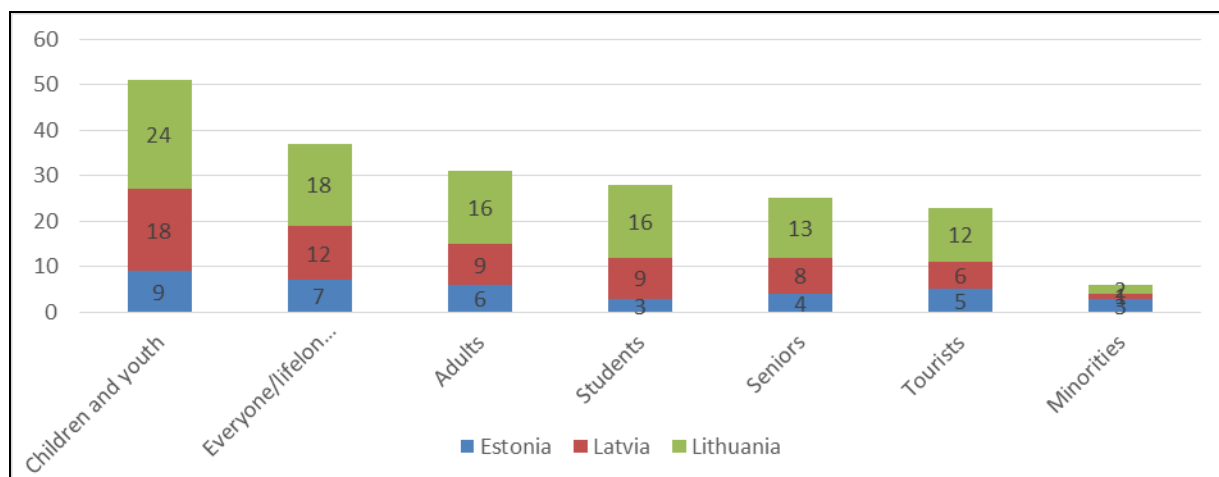
The comparison across the three Baltic countries points towards the fact that out of the 88 museums participating in the survey, curators and co-workers decide the target groups of the educational programmes at 51 of these whereas the pedagogues are responsible for these decisions at 45 institutions. An interesting deviation is that in Lithuania, curators and co-workers are responsible for making the decisions on the target groups of the museum educational programmes and activities. In Estonia and Latvia, the pedagogues are in charge of these decisions.

**Chart 7. Who is responsible to make the decisions when it comes to learning?**



As we see in Chart 10, the main target audience for most museums is that of children and youth. On the contrary, minorities have not been a priority for most Baltic museums.

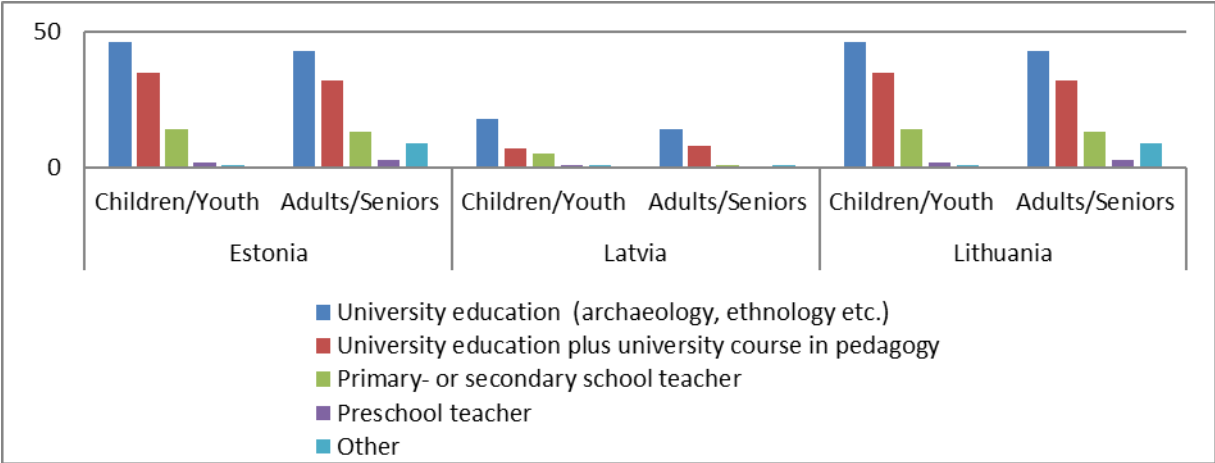
**Chart 8. Main target groups across the Baltic countries**



# 5. > EMPLOYEES & FURTHER EDUCATION

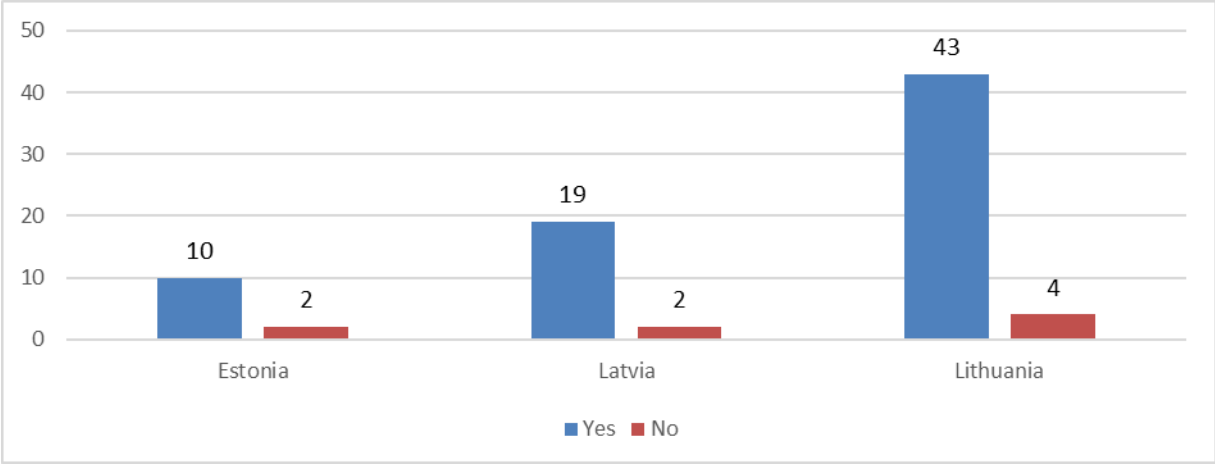
The employees responsible for running the educational programmes for both children/youth and adults/seniors have a range of educational backgrounds as seen in the following chart. It is interesting to note that the number of employees with a background in preschool education is very low across all three countries. Especially for the case of Latvia, there are no employees reported with preschool background. Another interesting finding is that all 80 museums reported that the majority of their employees have a **university degree in a field relevant to the museum that they work at**, followed by those holding a university degree while having received further pedagogical training. This finding triggers the question as to why most museum employees have not received further pedagogical training if learning is indeed important for the museums in the Baltic region.

**Chart 9. Educational background of full time employees**



When being asked about the need for their museum educators to receive further education, it is interesting to see that there was some, very limited though, objection to that from the museum directors in all the Baltic countries (Chart 12).

**Chart 10. Do you think there is a need for further education for museum educators?**



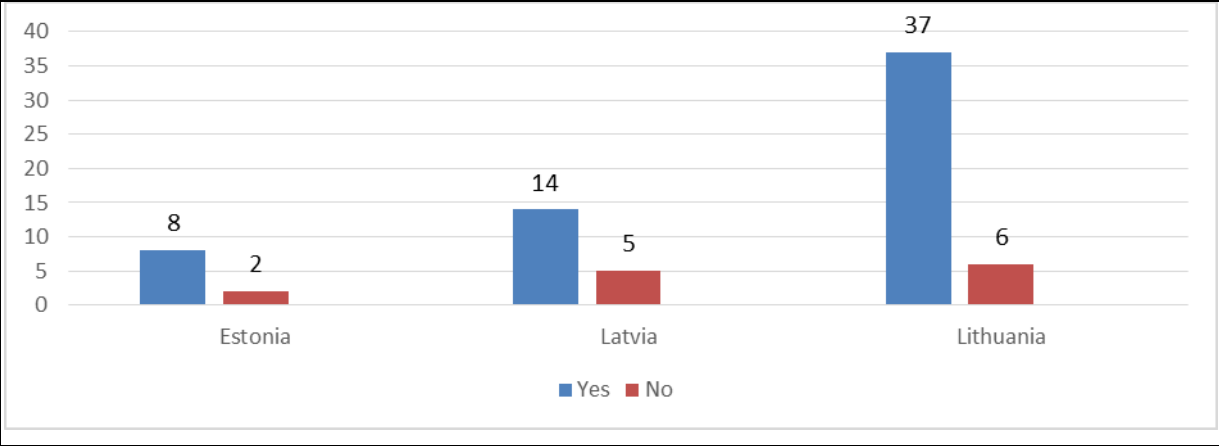
It may be interesting here to explore a bit more in detail these institutions which object to receiving further education. Eight museum directors in the Baltic region objected to their employees receiving further education, despite seven of these having learning in their policy documents.

**Table 2. Overview of the Baltic museums disagreeing on their employees' further education**

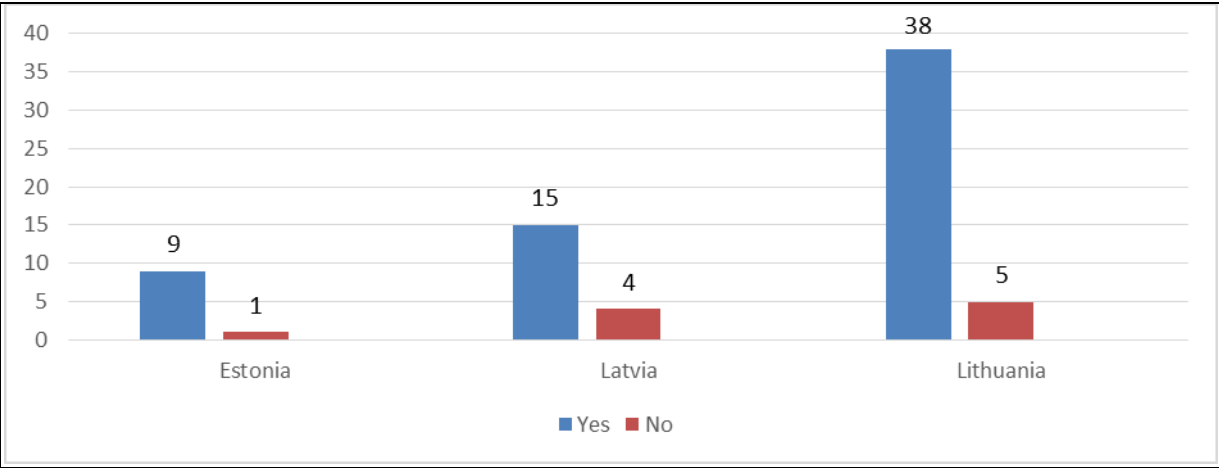
	<b>Estonia 2/12 museums</b>	<b>Latvia 2/21 museums</b>	<b>Lithuania 4/47</b>
learning included in their policy documents	yes, for both museums	yes, for both museums	3 yes, 1 no
ownership	both State museums	1 Association, 1 municipality	3 municipality & 1 other
type of museum	1 specialised, 1 Art museum	both Museums of Cultural History	2 Specialised museum, 1 combination, 1 art museum
size of museum	1-25 employees	1-25 & 26-50	all 1-25 employees

When asked if they think that their employees' knowledge in pedagogical theory should be increased, 59 out of the 72 museum directors agreeing on further education think that this is necessary (Chart 13). As we saw in Chart 12, children and young people are mainly target through the educational programmes of the Baltic museums. This may imply a strong collaboration between museums and schools and a pre-existence of detailed knowledge about the activities taking place at schools. Chart 14 illustrates that 18 museum directors disagree on the necessity for them to increase their knowledge about what takes place in formal settings of learning.

**Chart 11. Do you find it necessary to increase the knowledge about pedagogical theory?**

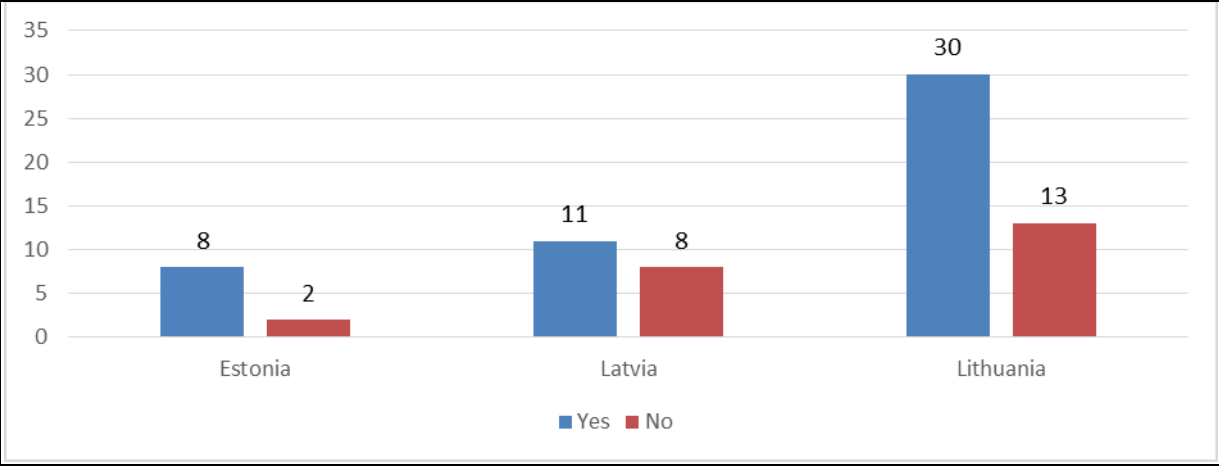


**Chart 12. Do you find it necessary to increase the knowledge about activities taking place at schools?**

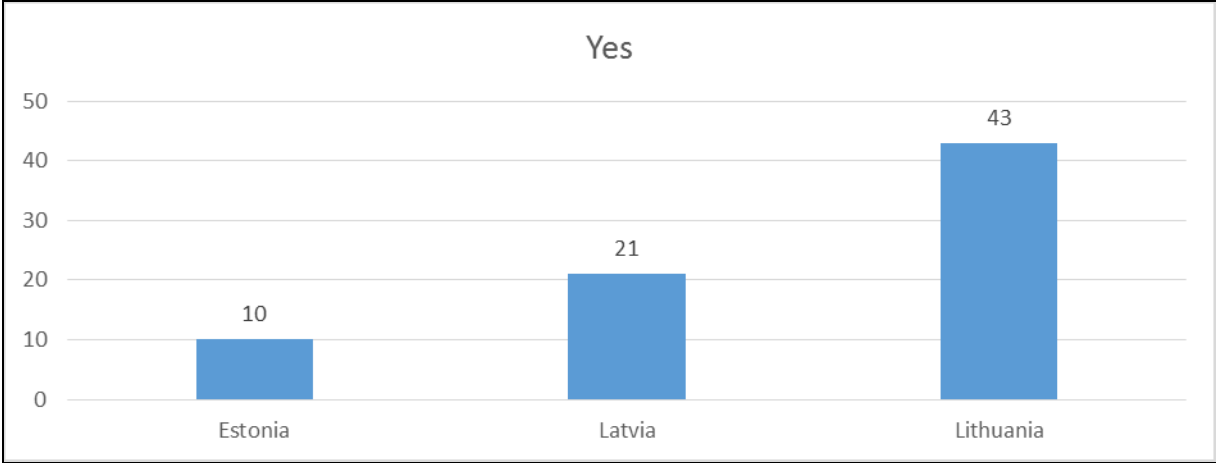


When further prompted to elaborate on the character of this education, there is a diversity among these 72 museum directors. As may be seen in Chart 15, 49 agree on that being of formal character whereas 23 disagree. Despite this nuance, museum directors unanimously agree on the Association of Museums being responsible for designing and running the opportunities for further education for the museum employees (Chart 16).

**Chart 13. Should further education be of formal character?**



**Chart 14. Do you think that the Association of Museums should organise the opportunities for further education?**



## 6.> 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:

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**Comments:**

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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 environment



**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:

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**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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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:

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**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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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 Latvian 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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