

Research Report

Story Tours Alternative Routes

PRESENTED BY

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Introduction

Across Europe and neighbouring regions, young people face persistent challenges, including low civic participation, limited influence in decision-making processes, and a growing mismatch between their skills and labour market demands. At the same time, **non-formal education has proven highly effective in fostering youth engagement, inclusion, and competence development, yet it remains weakly recognised and under-supported within formal policy frameworks.**

The STAR project introduces **Educational Walking Tours (EWT)** as an innovative, place-based methodology that **combines experiential learning, storytelling, and community engagement.** This research explores the extent to which **EWT can move beyond successful local practice and contribute as a structured and recognised tool within youth - work, education, and policy systems.**

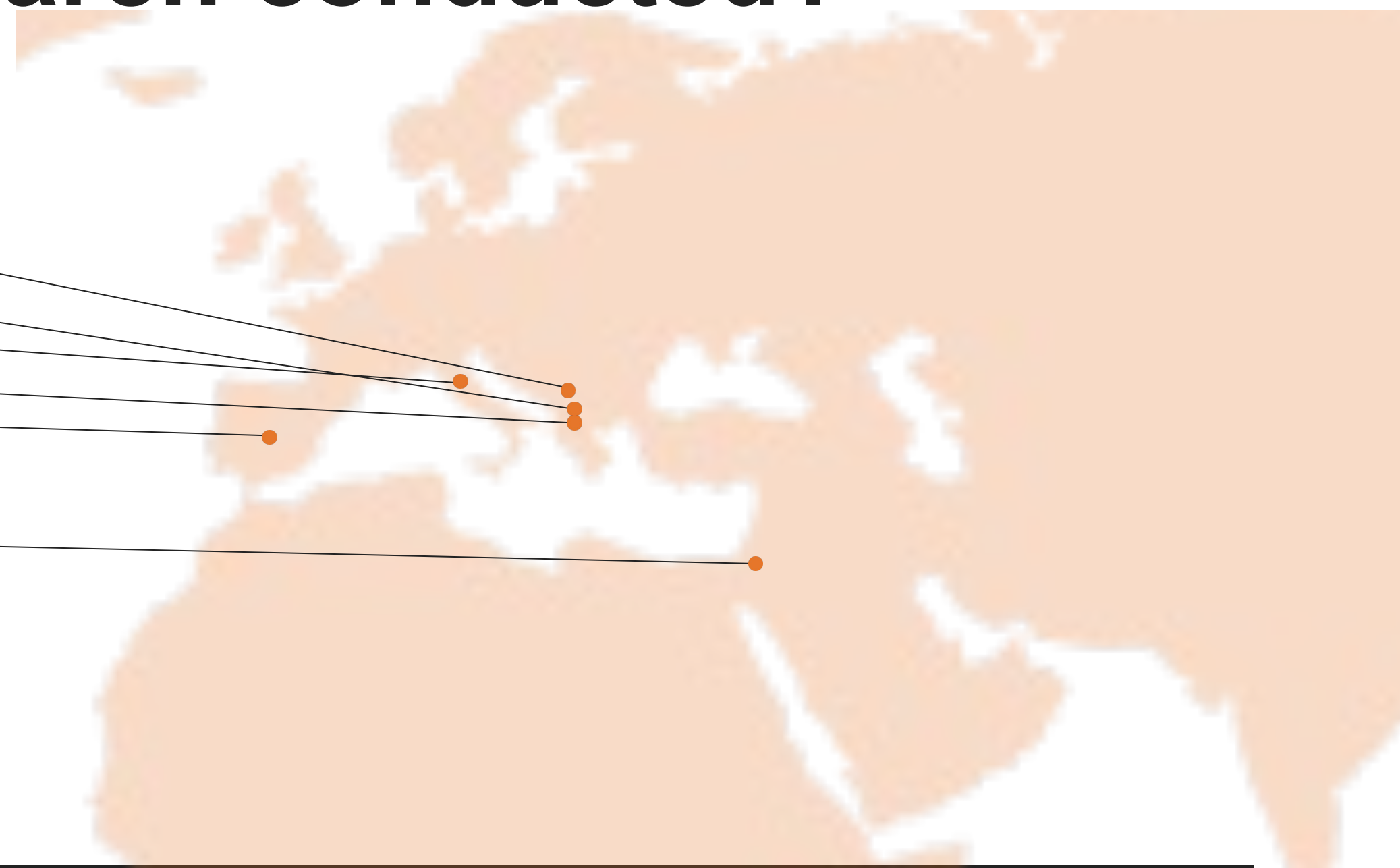
Why was this RESEARCH conducted?

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1. To assess the effectiveness of Educational Walking Tours (EWT) as a youth work methodology
 2. To evaluate impact of EWT on:
 - Youth development (skills, confidence)
 - Civic participation & social inclusion
 1. To identify policy gaps preventing scaling and sustainability.
 2. To develop evidence-based policy recommendations



Where was the research conducted?

- Serbia
- North Macedonia
- Italy
- Albania
- Spain
- Jordan



Methodology

Mixed-methods approach:

1. Survey - 39 young participants (18–30)
2. Interviews 19 youth workers & organisations
3. Focus Groups 7 groups (~ 48 participants)
4. Desk Research Policy and institutional analysis

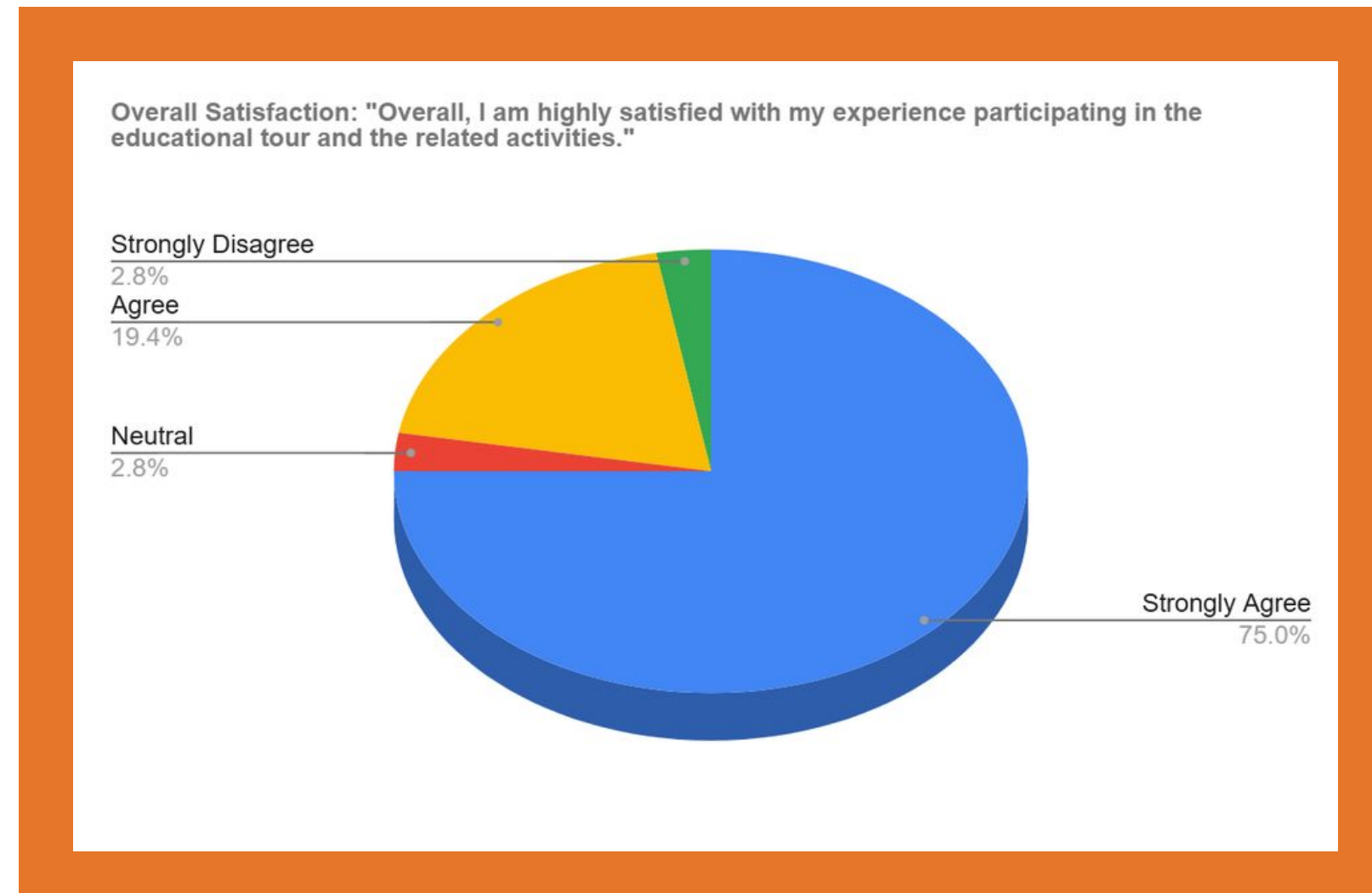


Combines quantitative + qualitative evidence for strong policy relevance

What the research shows:

93.9%

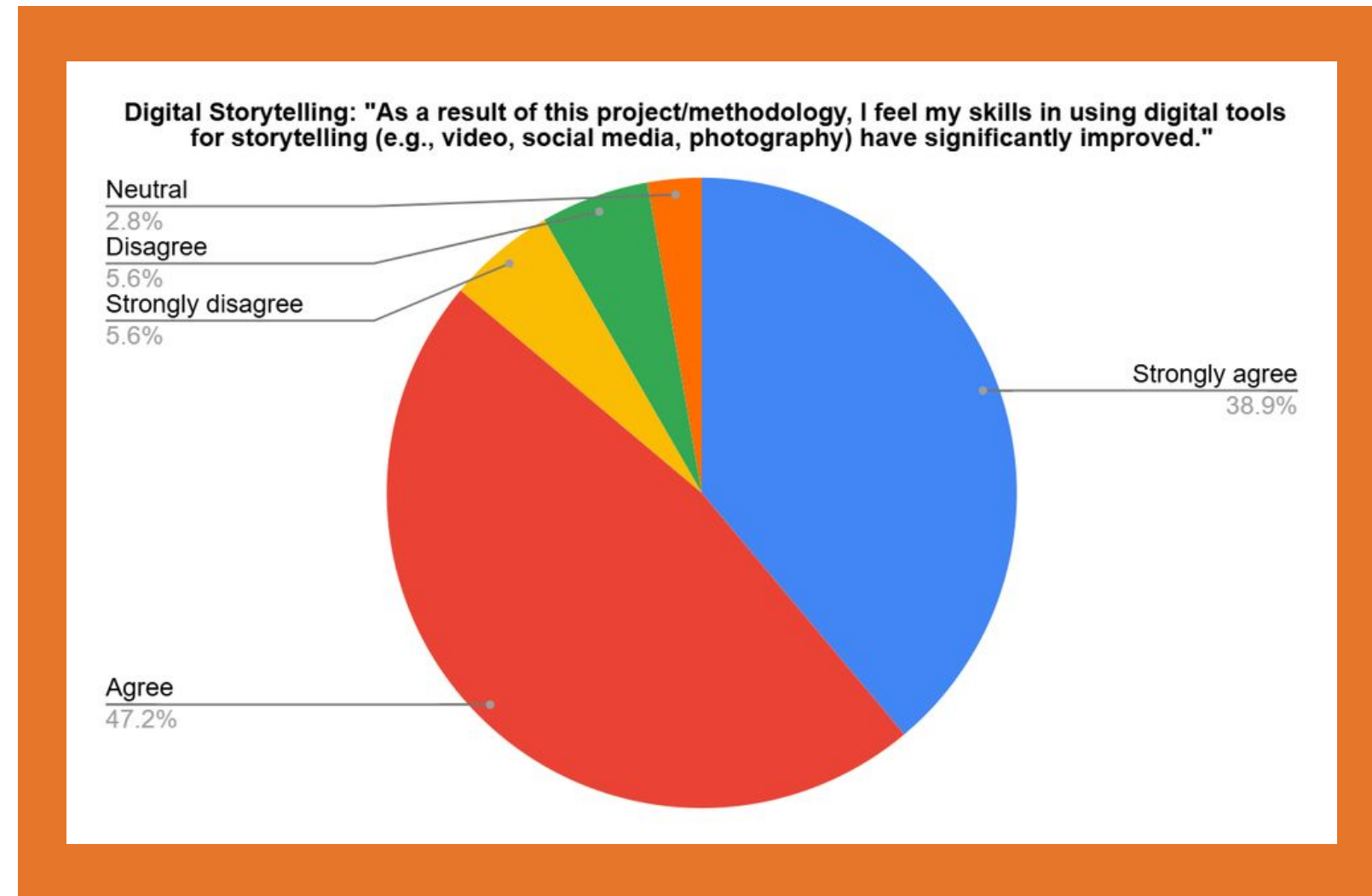
satisfaction → almost all participants found the experience engaging and meaningful through non-formal education



What the research shows:

87.5%

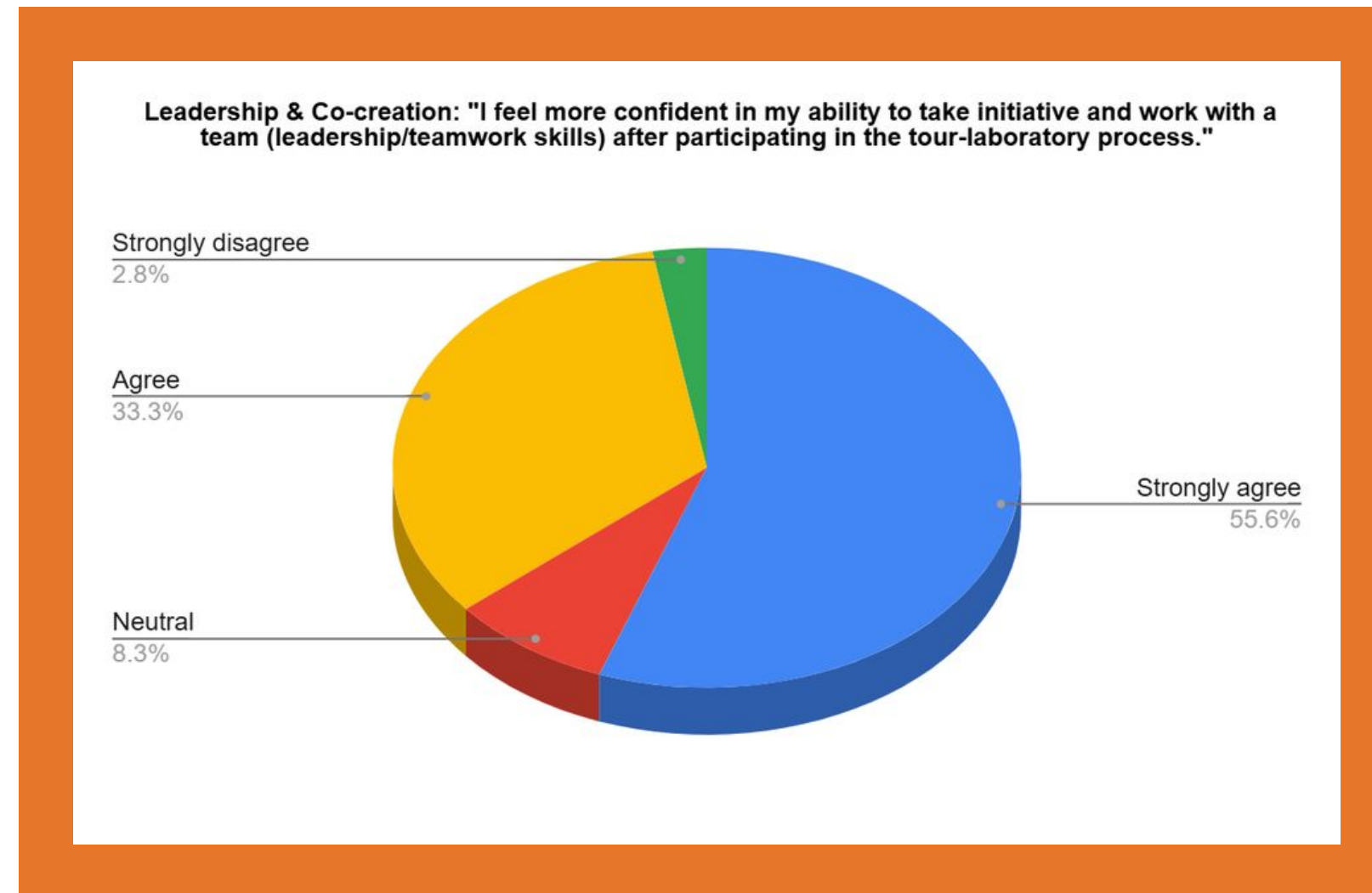
improved digital storytelling → stronger skills in creating and sharing content



What the research shows:

70%

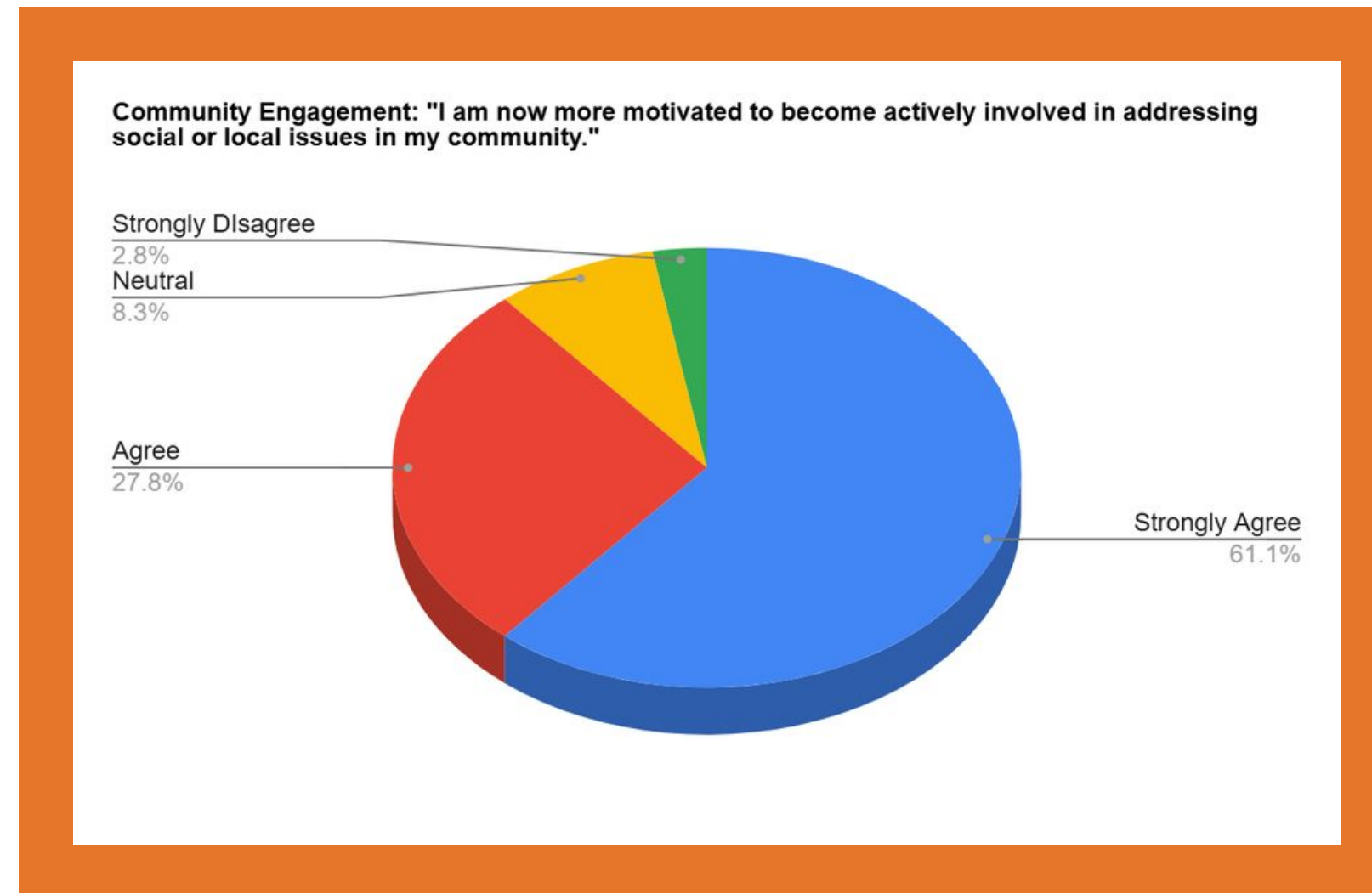
leadership & teamwork → better collaboration and group dynamics



What the research shows:

88.9%

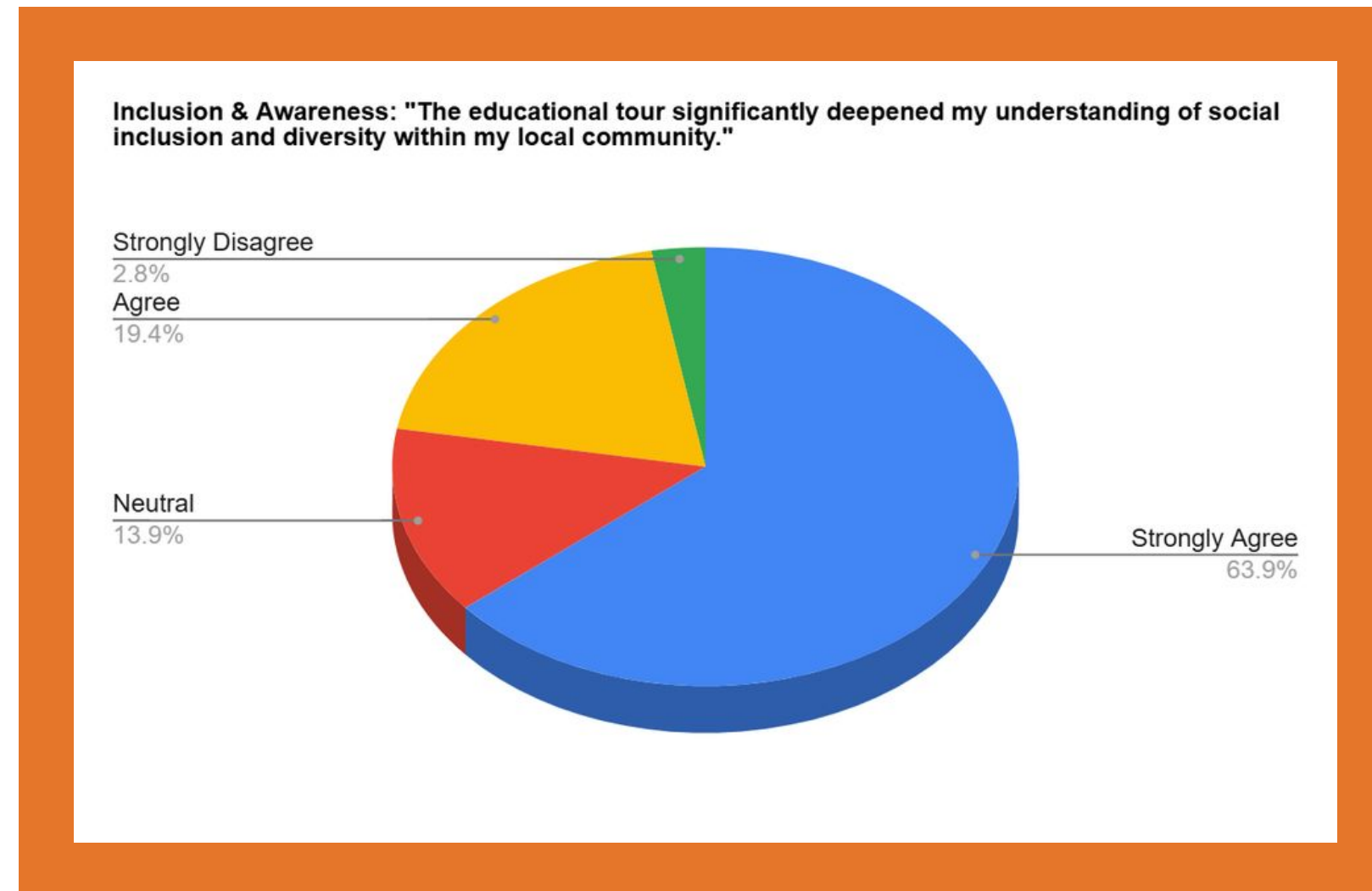
of participants reported increased motivation to engage in their local communities



What the research shows:

+ 80%

developed a deeper understanding of inclusion and diversity

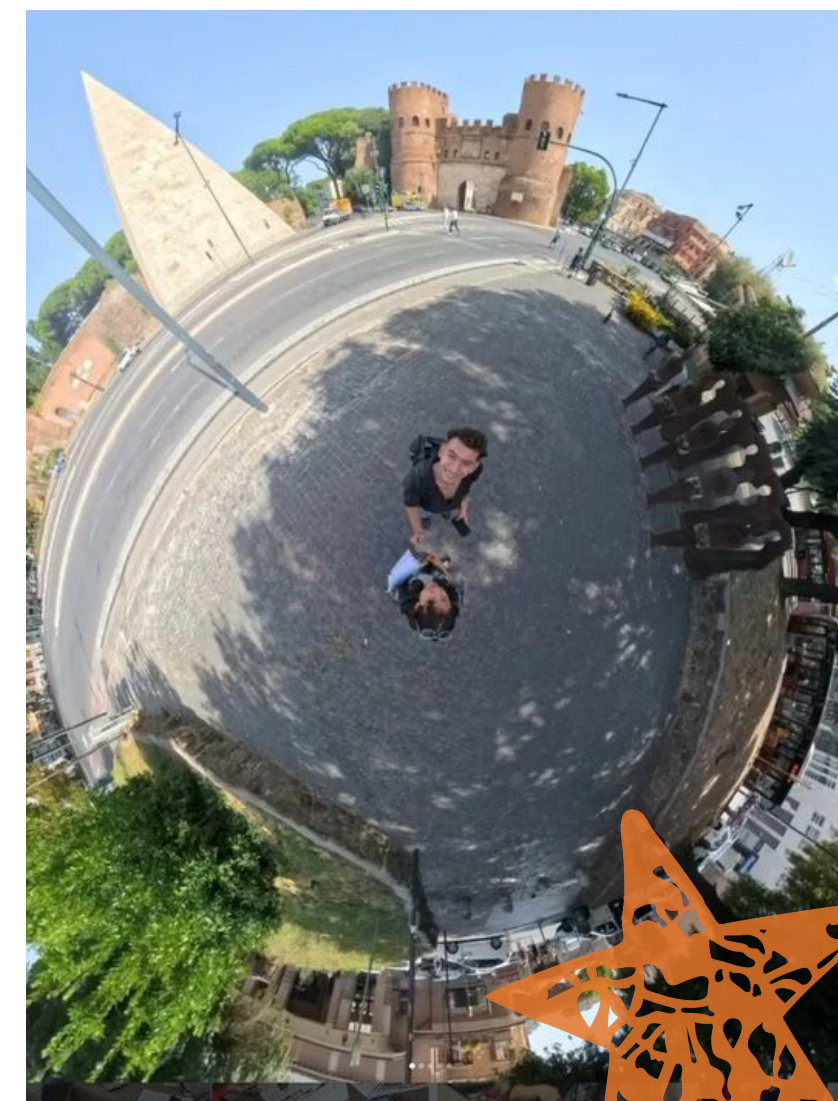




Impact & Key Conclusions

Educational Walking tours impact **Young People** through:

- increasing their motivation to engage in local social issues
- developing leadership, communication, and critical thinking skills
- improving their ability to understand social inclusion and diversity
- strengthening empathy and awareness of real-life challenges
- shifting from theoretical learning to real-world understanding





Impact & Key Conclusions

Why Educational Walking Tour (EWT)?

- Transform cities into spaces for learning, dialogue, and reflection
- Engage young people as active creators, not passive learners
- Connect learning with real community experiences and social issues
- Combine experiential learning, storytelling, and digital tools
- Help young people develop skills, awareness, and community

connections



Educational Walking Tours

Already function as public instruments without public infrastructure. They empower youth, activate communities, preserve heritage, foster inclusion, contribute to employability and cultivate civic participation

Key Recommendations

Formal recognition

- Recognise Educational Walking Tours as a youth work and educational methodology within national and local policy frameworks

Cross-sector integration

- Integrate EWT into youth, education, cultural, and local development policies

Sustainable financing

- Shift from short-term projects to stable public funding and programme-level support

Quality & professional frameworks

- Develop standards, training pathways, and validation systems for implementation

Community & youth empowerment

- Support youth-led initiatives and community-based approaches

