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Introduction:

This document provides a comprehensive overview of the "local tour-laboratories" initiative, a collaborative, cross-border project where young people and youth workers co-created immersive educational walking tours. Serving as dynamic testing grounds across countries like Jordan, Serbia, Italy, Spain, Macedonia, and Albania, these laboratories applied and adapted the STAR toolkit to uncover hidden community narratives, document oral histories, and explore complex social themes such as migration, gentrification, and activism. The following report outlines the flexible methodologies employed, the tangible results and youth learning experiences achieved, constructive feedback on the toolkit's application, and strategic recommendations for sustaining and expanding youth-led educational tours.



Methodologies

The local tour-laboratories were conceived as adaptable hubs where young people and youth workers co-created educational walking tours. The methodology was deliberately flexible, shaped by youth conversations, local contexts, and creative experimentation. Colleagues from Spain and Serbia concluded that mapping people's stories into a single universal format was not realistic, and that the form of the tour must remain open to change. This flexibility allowed laboratories to respond to local needs and preserve narratives that might otherwise be lost, and it has served as a baseline for exploring the digital tours conducted within the project's scope.

- **SSD Jordan's** experience offers an alternative perspective on the city. It moves far beyond mainstream tourism to uncover the hidden stories, daily struggles, and cultural achievements that have shaped local communities.

- **VCV Serbia:** volunteers mapped existing tours in Novi Sad, Subotica, and Belgrade, noting sustainability gaps, and organised thematic tours such as *From Forest to Fence*.
- **SCI Catalunya** created a new tour about objects that tell stories and took us around to meet small businesses that are focusing on intersecting support for people with fewer opportunities, migration, and fast fashion issues.
- **SCI Italy** shared some best practices and created a guided tour of gentrification and war and created a queer educational guide in southern Rome
- **CID Macedonia** shared an exploration of the spaces for community and history
- **PVN Albania** guided us with a silent tour and introduced us to the different perspectives of history in Tirana

The local tour-laboratories were practical spaces where partners applied the toolkits and guidelines developed during WP3. These toolkits provided structured steps, defining purpose, scripting, testing routes, and planning for accessibility while still leaving room for creativity and adaptation. The laboratories became testing grounds where these methods were put into practice and reshaped by local realities.

- **Toolkit application:** Partners used the STAR Educational Walking Tour Toolkit to script tours, define objectives, and plan accessibility. Narrative structures and emotional hooks from the storytelling toolkit were integrated into the design.
- **Digital documentation:** 360° cameras, Google Maps, and phone recordings were employed to capture routes and stories, ensuring tours could be shared virtually.
- **Oral history collection:** SSD partners focused on documenting local oral stories, transforming them into accessible digital content.
- **Murals as methodology:** Novi Sad's laboratory used mural art as a lens for storytelling, mapping them digitally and embedding historical and activist narratives.
- **Community engagement formats:** Group discussions, interactive games, and collective activities were used to strengthen youth participation and ownership.
- **Border reflection tours:** VCV Serbia organised thematic walks (*From Forest to Fence*) that combined historical analysis with contemporary migration issues, using the toolkit's reflection prompts to guide discussion.



Reporting

Reporting on the local tour-laboratories was primarily internal and reflective, because each organisation approached the process differently according to its needs. It was difficult to map out a single reporting format, so partners relied on monthly meetings to share challenges, progress, and evolving concepts. These meetings became the main arena for collective reflection, where the most significant elements were discussed openly.

A questionnaire was also created to examine the process and outputs together, allowing partners to compare experiences and identify common lessons. This tool helped structure feedback across diverse contexts, even when the tours themselves were highly flexible and locally specific.

SSD Jordan and VCV Serbia went further: both partners decided to implement educational walking tours as part of their long-term organisational programs, embedding the methodology beyond the project's immediate scope. This decision demonstrates the sustainability potential of the laboratories when they are integrated into ongoing youth work.

- Public reporting was conducted only when tours were held, focusing on final outcomes and documentation.
- Between months 14 and 23, each partner established a local tour-laboratory, providing space, youth worker facilitation, and opportunities for young people to design and test tours
- 12 in-person tours were created, each tailored to local contexts and themes.
- 6 virtual tours were uploaded for wider dissemination, ensuring accessibility beyond physical borders.
- Documentation included short videos, digital maps, and partner reflections.

The laboratories became the testing ground where theory met practice, and where the toolkit was not only applied but also reshaped by local realities.



Results

The local tour-laboratories produced both tangible outputs and deeper impacts. They were not only spaces for creating tours but also for testing the STAR toolkit and refining WP3's educational tour framework. The outcomes demonstrated how theory could be translated into practice, while also revealing the challenges of sustainability and adaptation.

Young participants gained new competences: they learned how to tell stories, document them digitally, and facilitate group activities. Communities contributed their own knowledge, hospitality, and lived experiences, strengthening social cohesion and making the tours authentic. The STAR toolkit and guidelines were updated based on this feedback to ensure greater clarity on accessibility and multilingual adaptation.

At the same time, partners observed that local stories sometimes lack long-term sustainability. While they contribute to exclusivity and uniqueness, they risk disappearing if not carefully mapped and archived. This insight mirrors the concept of migrant tours, but adapted to local contexts and needs, showing that WP3's educational tour framework can be both practical and transformative.

- Youth skills developed: storytelling, digital documentation, facilitation, teamwork.
- Community contributions: oral histories, hospitality, local knowledge.
- Toolkit refinement: clearer guidance on accessibility and multilingual use.
- Sustainability challenge: local stories require archiving to avoid loss.
- Conceptual insight: exclusivity of local narratives is valuable, but must be balanced with methods for preservation.

The laboratories thus became both creative spaces and testing grounds, proving that educational walking tours can empower youth, engage communities, and reshape methodologies when grounded in flexible, co-created formats.



Learning experiences

Participants consistently reported strong emotional connections to the places and stories encountered. In SSD's tours, youth discovered the richness of oral histories and expressed surprise at narratives that had never been documented before. In Novi Sad, mural-based tours allowed young people to interpret public art as a living archive of activism and resilience. VCV Serbia's *From Forest to Fence* tour provided powerful spaces for reflection on migration, politics, and solidarity, linking historical settlement patterns with contemporary struggles at the Serbia-Hungary frontier.

With having a common approach to history and spaces, all partners reported that:

- Youth ownership was evident through direct involvement in decision-making, storytelling, documentation, and tour design.
- Community pride grew as local heritage was recognised and valued, while youth gained confidence and critical awareness.
- Experiential learning allowed participants to connect historical narratives with contemporary issues, making abstract concepts tangible.
- The toolkit application supported a structured approach, but its flexibility ensured that tours reflected local realities and voices.



Feedback on testing the toolkit

Testing the STAR toolkit revealed both strengths and limitations.

- Narrative structures, scriptwriting, and 360° documentation enhanced engagement and accessibility.
- Partners noted that the toolkit could not fully capture the diversity of local stories, and that applying a single format risked oversimplification, but it served as a great base for starting and understanding these concepts.

- Feedback emphasised the need for flexibility: tours must adapt to local contexts, and materials and guidelines should remain open to revision.
- Participants highlighted challenges such as managing time and pace, ensuring inclusion, and sustaining community interest.

The Novi Sad team concluded that engagement could be significantly increased if tour-laboratories were opened as open calls or if tours with important messages were recorded and shared. They also noted that this approach would require more time and resources, which partners plan to explore in future iterations.



Recommendations for future activities

Future tour-laboratories should build directly on the lessons learned, ensuring that the STAR toolkit and WP3 framework continue to evolve as living resources. The laboratories have shown that walking tours can empower youth and communities, but they have also revealed the need for deeper preparation, stronger structures, and more sustainable practices.

A central priority is to **deepen youth leadership roles**. Young participants should take on greater responsibility in planning, facilitation, and evaluation. However, this must be accompanied by supervision and tailored training to prepare them for the challenges of approaching sensitive political and societal topics. Skills such as conducting interviews, maintaining safe environments, understanding legislative backgrounds, and assessing route feasibility are essential. These elements should be embedded in future iterations of the toolkit to ensure that youth are supported as they exercise leadership.

Other recommendations include:

- **Expanding digital storytelling tools** to strengthen virtual tours and ensure wider dissemination. This will allow tours to reach audiences beyond their immediate localities and preserve narratives in accessible formats.
- **Engaging schools and local policymakers** to broaden the social impact and embed tours into educational frameworks, ensuring that the methodology is not only community-based but also institutionally recognised.
- **Prioritising sustainability** by training youth workers and building partnerships with local institutions, so that tours continue beyond the project's duration.
- **Exploring methods for mapping and archiving local stories**, balancing exclusivity with accessibility, and creating living archives that preserve narratives while remaining adaptable to evolving contexts.
- **Opening laboratories through public calls and recording tours with significant messages** to increase engagement. The Novi Sad team concluded that this approach could significantly enhance participation, though it requires more time and resources. Future activities should therefore allocate additional capacity to support this process.

