

# The art of storytelling is reborn in libraries in Panevėžys County.

Report from the closing conference 31 May 2022



On initiative of the Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė Public Library of Panevėžys County, the art of storytelling is being reborn in libraries, and a network of storytelling libraries is being created. There are 24 libraries in the Panevėžys region, a community of 40 librarians, 5 new educational programs for children, youth and adults. All this has been achieved with the Swedish and Norwegian partners Nordic Storytelling Centre in Skellefteå and Fortellerhuset in Oslo. The process and implementation of the project “Development of a Narrative Art and Method Model for Lithuanian Libraries”, the activities and results of this project were discussed at an international closing conference in Panevėžys.

“Storytelling is a great way for libraries to connect with local communities. Narrative-based educational activities engage, open up the imagination, create a safe space for self-expression. By listening to stories we get to know literature, the world and ourselves, we learn. I hope that our project will continue - it will open many new beginnings, and the emerging network of storytelling libraries will strengthen and expand throughout the country,” says Jurgita Bugailiškienė, Director of Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė Public Library.

“The idea of the project was to increase the quality and diversity of education by using literature in libraries. The art of storytelling, although as old as the world itself, is little known in Lithuania, therefore we used partners from the Nordic countries. Of particular importance was the libraries’ interest in this initiative. I’m glad it

succeeded. The librarians participating in the project have acquired the necessary competencies and have already completed 100 programs. The success of the project is evidenced by the good feedback from libraries and Swedish and Norwegian partners,"says Laima Butkūnienė, project coordinator of the Strategic Development Division of the Regional Libraries.

## The partnership

**Nordic Storytelling Centre in Skellefteå, Rose-Marie Lindfors Storyteller** and trainer. In the project I represent the Nordic Storytelling Centre in Skellefteå, Sweden. For the last 35 years I have been working with Storytelling, drama, creative arts and development processes in schools, libraries, art clubs, festivals, learning centers and Universities. I have a large collection of stories from the whole world, which I can tell. I facilitate workshops and trainings in:

- Storytelling and drama as performing art
- Applied storytelling – as a tool for learning, social inclusion and sustainability.
- Innovation and entrepreneurship.

I run my own company where I inspire, develop, educate and teach. I am a dedicated networker and work both nationally and internationally. Interested in intercultural development and diversity in society.

**Fortellerhuset Oslo Tiril Bryn Storyteller:** Through the art of storytelling I ask questions about: Our relation to nature, identity, cultural heritage, indigenous traditions, science and mythology. What kind of stories are important in our time? My work as a storyteller is about producing and touring with storytelling performances, cooperation with artists from different fields and storytelling workshops - about improving storytelling skills or about creating new stories. I work with projects outdoors - urban nature and sustainability. In my experience stories and the way we tell them can change and adjust the way we experience life and how we deal with challenges. I have studied storytelling at OsloMet, have a masters degree in cultural heritage where I compared Japanese and Norwegian fairy tales from University in Oslo and have previously worked as a journalist. Member of Fortellerhuset, a group of storytellers in Norway.



**The method** used during the 5 day workshop. The competence model Storytelling in 8 colours that gave everyone a good practical and theoretical base that was useful during the process.

We wanted to share the competences that Storytellers use. This is the competence model, that gives a good picture of what competences you need as a Storyteller. You can find more information on this model at: <https://fest-network.eu/research/a-competence-model-for-oral-storytelling/>

## COMPETENCES FOR THE STORYTELLING FIELD – OVERVIEW

RESEARCH competences 'Researcher'	CRAFTSMANSHIP competences 'Craftsman'	ART competences 'Artist'	PERFORMANCE competences 'Performer'	TRAINING competences 'Trainer'	APPLIED STORYTELLING competences 'Applier'	TRADITION competences 'Tradition bearer'	ENTREPRENEURSHIP competences 'Entrepreneur'
Search and find story material	(Re)construct and adapt story material	Express personal drive	Master a repertoire	Define training levels and learning outcomes	Define target groups, needs and goals	Gather traditional stories	Explore the market
Research background of stories and oral storytelling	Master body and voice	Empathise	Compose performances	Develop and run oral storytelling training programs	Develop and run applied storytelling projects	Record traditional stories	Promote own business
Explore other techniques and practices	Master narrative and language	Experiment	Prepare and (keep) focus	Guide storytelling exercises and assignments	Master applied storytelling techniques	Archive traditional stories	Manage own administration
Observe and analyse others work	Master oral storytelling techniques	Create	Deal with technical conditions, available space and time	Encourage individual or group learning processes	Support group dynamics and processes	Keep alive traditional stories	Organise activities
Reflect on own work and development	Develop a working method and attitude	Find personal expression and style	Connect with story and audience	Evaluate oral storytelling training results	Evaluate applied storytelling project results	Pass on traditional stories	Search for innovation












**NOTA BENE:**  
 The four first competence domains RESEARCHER – CRAFTSMAN – ARTIST – PERFORMER are the main domains.  
 • Every performative storyteller, amateur or professional, should become proficient in this on a lower or higher EQF-level.  
 The four last competence domains TRAINER – APPLIER – TRADITION BEARER – ENTREPRENEUR are the additional domains.  
 • Not every performative storyteller has to be all of this. It depends on the choice, the need, the nature, the tradition of the storyteller.



We also provided the competences for applied storytelling:

- Master storytelling techniques
- Define target groups, needs and goals
- Supporting group dynamics and learning process
- Evaluate projects

**We presented the idea of creating 5 BOXES**

Box nr 1 Folktale + Life story

Box nr 2 Folktale outside

Box nr 3 Create a new story together

Box nr 4 Folktale + rhythm, songs ...

Box nr 5 Silent Books - find the stories from the books

**Day 1 and 2:** everyone worked together as one big group, each participant got everything they needed, all exercises had a connection to what they were going to do during day 3 and 4, theory and practice, hand in hand.

**Day 3 and 4** participants working in 5 groups, working on their own, to create a storytelling program, and fill the box.

Presentation of the 5 programs in the evening of day 4

**Day 5** summarizing, reflections, evaluation and questions.

Tiril and Rose-Marie were tutoring and guiding each group during the process making sure participants could find their own way of presenting the programs. Every person had their own unique program. Every person was prepared to present their program during the last evening, we had a lottery and 5 people were selected to show their program.

We celebrated everyone, as they had all done a great job, and were all winners.

A new journey had started in Panevezys ....

Then Tiril and Rose-Marie went back to Norway and Sweden and the librarians started to work on their programs and the boxes were created by Neringa Minkevičienė.



## Visit to Skellefteå on 16–19 May, 2022



The Story boxes and the method was presented for librarians in the Region of Västerbotten, libraries in Skellefteå and for the Nordic Storytelling Centre during 4 days in May. The 5 boxes, filled with inspiring material and props was in the room, and it was like Christmas when the boxes were opened. The smell of wood, seeds and flowers. The soft touch of stones, flutes and clay birds. The surprise when a yellow bag became the illustration from a Silent Book. The rich content of the boxes and the possibilities that is hidden inside them, that you can create so much from them. So many stories can be told from them.

There were programs in the new library at Sara Culture House and in Jörn. I am so grateful to be a part of the creation of these stories and boxes.



## What is the *vision* for expanding the network of storytelling libraries in Lithuania

- New projects in cooperation with foreign partners, new activities, tools, methods
- Ensuring accessibility for all audiences (children, adults, teachers ...)
- Space for meetings, contacts, experience sharing
- Attributes - logo, certificates
- A festival of storytelling families in the Aukštaitija region, where folk customs and traditions would be revived due to the storytelling
- Invite to periodically share experience, involving other regions of Lithuania
- To set a mobile storytelling café for young people
- A network of storytelling libraries would make sense if it contributed to community building, reading promotion, meaningful time spending, and children's storytelling skills
- To expand the network including other libraries in the region
- Clear network structure
- Create a publicly accessible database of educators
- Learn new storytelling techniques
- Adapt stories to audiences of all ages
- Stay in touch with storytelling libraries
- Traditional meetings of storytellers+ performances for inspiration.
- Competitions, festivals for different audiences.
- International, local annual seminars to share experiences.
- Learning foreign languages, developing partnerships.
- Performances without words, bilingual performances.
- The network as an organization is evolving. Involve youth, musicians, writers.



# Spreading the results to European Storytellers

On June 4, G. Petkevičaitė-Bitė Public Library presented the results of the project to the international community of storytellers in the FEST conference in Vilnius. The participants of the FEST conference heard about the network of storytelling libraries being developed in the Panevėžys region, and good practices was shared.

<https://fest-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Programme-Booklet.pdf> "It is an honor and a responsibility to talk about what we have created in a traditional international event with professional storytellers from all over Europe. We are happy and proud, we hope to go further, so perhaps participating in the FEST conference, where the art of storytelling can be experienced live, will inspire us to even bolder challenges," says Virginija Švedienė, Coordinator of Adult Education Activities in the Readers' Service Department.



Tiril, Virginija and Rose-Marie had a workshop presenting the boxes and how they were created, sharing the method and the process.

Greta told about applied storytelling as a strategic method in the library service

## 19.

### Storytelling Libraries in Lithuania (LT, SE, NO) Workshop

A workshop on the development of a Storytelling art and method model for Lithuanian Libraries, in which thirteen libraries of Panevėžys region participated. A Nordic Culture Point project, a partnership between Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. Trainers Rose Marie Lindfors from the Nordic Storytelling Center (Sweden) and Tiril Bryn (Norway). In the workshop Virginija Švedienė and Rose-Marie Lindfors will present why the project started, the training process inspired of the competence model for oral storytelling and the outcomes. They will also show the Storyboxes that were created by the artist Neringa Minkevičienė.

## 8.

### The storytelling method in library services. The case of public libraries in Panevėžys region (LT)

#### Workshop

Library is the only one of the Lithuanian county libraries to develop storytelling at the strategic level. The goal is - reviewing the living tradition of oral teaching, introducing applied storytelling methods into library services and creating narrative-based educational models for children, youth and adult audiences.

Panevėžys County Gėrėnė Petkevičaitė-Bitė Public Library is implementing several international projects related to the storytelling, so we want to share our experience:

- Storytelling for the Audiences of Lithuanian Libraries. Partners: The Land of Legends (Sweden), Jelgava City Library (Latvia). 3 storytelling tours created during the projects are presented to library visitors as new services.
- Development of Storytelling Art and Method Model for Lithuanian Libraries

Partners:  
-storyteller, educator, project manager Rose-Marie Lindfors (Nordic Storytelling Center, Sweden);

-storyteller, artist Tiril Bryn. She focuses on cultural heritage and storytelling in nature.

During the project, a methodological publication "How to Tell Stories: A Beginner's Guide" and narrative educations was created.

• International Qualifications for Innovative Library Ideas, 3.5-day courses at The Village Storytelling Training Center (Scotland) for 5 members of library.

Library is a member of the newly established Nordic-Baltic storytelling network and participates in the networking project as a partner.

• Nordic-Baltic Storytelling Network. Project leader: The Land of Legends (Berntsmåzet Kronoberg - Sagabygden), Sweden.

Project partners: The Hilmar Alexandersen Foundation (Stiftning Hilmar Alexandersen), Norway; Storytellers' Association of Latvia, Latvia;

Library 2020 started to organize International Storytelling Festival SEKAS. It is also planned for 2022 and will be ongoing. Through various activities, the library purposefully seeks to create a network of storytelling libraries in its region, to unite 13 storytelling libraries. We aim to involve as many professional European narrators and organizations as possible in the project activities, invite them to the library and to learn from them.

We also aim to get to know the widest possible range of high-quality storytelling methodologies. So in 3 year period, we had a lot of workshops for librarians, educations for target groups, storytelling tours, events for our community, we visited Glasgow storytelling village, our partners in Latvia and Sweden. We even published a methodological material for everyone, who wants to be a storyteller (it's 90 pages story of our story).



#### BIO

Greta Kėvalaitienė, 31 years old, a storytelling network coordinator in Panevėžys region. She is a historian, working as Head of the Cultural Heritage Research and Digitization department.

Information Rose-Marie Lindfors [rose-marie.lindfors@vasterbottensteatern.se](mailto:rose-marie.lindfors@vasterbottensteatern.se)