



Restory in order to Restore



Final Report D5.1

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Final report

This project, first and foremost, came into existence for minorities and Indigenous peoples. For them, we wanted to implement restorying to challenge the dominant narratives we live our lives by and the stories told about us. Restorying is the idea of reimagining and reshaping the stories of yesterday and today and by doing so changing the narratives we tell ourselves and the society around us. According to Harald Gaski, professor in Sámi and Indigenous Cultures and Literatures and Indigenous methodologies, the underlying idea behind what might at first sight be interpreted as a playing of words and concepts, is a recognition of how important stories and storytelling are for our understanding of ourselves and for building up a strong development of our own identity. For that reason, innovative telling and performing of traditional stories in new formats and through new media, gives the stories new energy and a new life. It contributes to a revitalization of tales, myths and songs, which in its essence is a re-storying of the past intended to create a renewed interest for traditional views and values, expressed through new ways of performances.

This final report is to analyse and evaluate all the work done in the projects, the events and workshops that were organised, how it has affected our target audience, and things that we would like for the future.

1 Workshops and Events

Local workshops

In Hungary, half of the 12 participants in the workshops (aged 16-30 years) were unfamiliar with the collected Roma stories and tales. As we wished to represent both totally different languages, Romani and Boyash, we had to find two language experts and contributors to the artistic field. The first two workshop days were focused on choosing the stories they wanted to restory and learning about the different aspects of the restorying process. The second two workshop days were spent on creating their own outputs and performances.



© Gábor F. Tóth. Restorying workshop at Independent Theatre Hungary, Budapest.

Fryslân held an introductory workshop on Frisian folktales, with experts who went through their own restorying process. The further workshop series was held in secondary schools, where an artistic leader and a teacher worked with the pupils (around 15/16 years of age) on restorying in three sessions. The language was not a key focus point, and a mix of Dutch and Frisian was used according to the skills of the pupils in the different schools where the workshops were held. The experts found this the best way to work with the pupils in an area where the language is reasonably established, and while the source material was Frisian, Dutch was also used for better accessibility to the other key elements in the stories. The Fryske Akademy worked with Keunstryk, a project on cultural heritage in secondary education, to bring Lingotell and the participants together.



© Fryske Akademy. Restorying workshop at Tresoar, Leeuwarden.



© Nadjia Grundström.
*Participants restorying
a tale during the short
workshop.*

In **Norway**, the expert was a professor in Indigenous literature who acted mostly as an advisor on the idea of restorying. Because South Sámi covers a very big area, participants (young people between 15-17 years of age) had to travel far to meet up and work on restorying. Most participants were new to expressing themselves through music, lyrics, and joik, and needed to find the confidence to do so. It was decided to focus on the musical element of the joik, which was an interesting point of departure due to the discussion it created among the young participants about both the content of the joik but also the societal changes and cultural and historical issues.

Local Events

In Fryslân, Lingotell joined the *Fierder mei Frysk* (Further with Frisian, an annual conference for Frisian teachers in secondary education) event on October 24th 2025 to reach as large an audience as possible in the most relevant target audience for the Frisian region, and to simultaneously inform them about methods of restorying and show them the outcomes already achieved. The event hosted several speakers, a book presentation, and workshops to be followed. One of the workshops was dedicated to Lingotell, with an introduction from the Mercator team, a reflection on the method from the artists and teacher who worked with it at their schools, and a restoried play by the students.

There were a total of 60 participants at the event, and 18 who followed the Lingotell workshop. These 18 were all people working in the field of education, be it as a teacher or otherwise related to education. Some were teachers in a different field, but acted as Frisian language ambassadors at their schools and were looking for ways to incorporate more Frisian into their lessons, or to stimulate students to learn more about the language.

The Hungarian regional *Lingotell event* took place in Budapest on May 26, 2024, showcasing the creative outputs of the Hungarian team as part of the international Lingotell project. The event was the culmination of a series of workshops where young participants engaged in the restorying process to reinterpret and present cultural elements in Romani and Boyash.

Ten distinct performances and productions were presented, showcasing a variety of genres. These works reflected a diverse range of inspirations, including traditional folktales, modern-day interviews, and participant-driven ideas. Performances integrated Hungarian, Romani, and Boyash languages.

There were five events in **Norway**: One digital, where the youth, project leader and creative leader hosted a release event for the song and joik “Tundra over hundra” that was the end result of the youth workshops. The youth were very proud of their end result, and happy about the process at the workshops.

Then there were public events on art and restoring in four municipalities together with the Sami library bus Julla Maja. About seventy participants joined these events. Lingotell also had a place at the Nordic conference on Sámi Intangible Cultural Heritage which was held in Trondheim 3-4 November 2022, by the Sami Parliament and Nordic Arts Council, where Josefina Skerk was invited to speak specifically about Lingotell on the second day, for an estimated 100 participants.

Joint workshop

The *LINGOTELL international meetup* took place in Budapest on October 21-22, 2024, with two full days for the discussions, live event, and a showcasing of project outputs.



© Dömötör Csaba. *Lingotell International Meetup in Budapest.*

During the exchange of experiences and discussions among the scientific observers, it became evident that one of the most significant outcomes in all three countries was the positive identity-building among the young participants. This included a stronger sense of belonging to their community and increased self-confidence. These were achieved by allowing the participants, with the support of experts, to reassess and retell their own cultural stories in modern formats and popular genres.

The joint workshop included the recording of two podcast episodes and a panel discussion, both can be found on our [website](#).

Discussed subjects are the needs that prompted the project and the method of restorying, the project design, cultural representation and heritage, youth engagement and impact, sustainability and a vision for the future.



© Dömötör Csaba. Lingotell International Meetup in Budapest.

Analysis

We used a specific approach in each separate region, in consultation with local experts, and tailored to our target groups. In total, we had over 500 participants joining our workshops and events and learning about the restorying method.

One of the key pieces of feedback we received after the workshops was that participants developed a stronger sense of belonging within their community and gained more confidence in their cultural identity and personal abilities. This was true in all three regions, but it was especially significant for the Sámi community, where many community members live far apart from each other and have limited opportunities to meet. What also came to the forefront was that this method was an effective way to learn more about the language in a playful, immersive way.

Using various methods of expression allowed participants to think beyond the traditional structures in which these stories are typically told within their respective regions and communities. Even very old stories have relevance in today's society, and an important aspect of restorying is uncovering those connections. Personal connection is, therefore, key to this process, as young people discover that traditional stories encompass themes and ideas that resonate with them today. To nurture the process of restorying, participants need a safe space and the freedom to experiment and express themselves in their own ways.

If there was anything we'd wish to change for a future project, it would be to take more time for the workshops. The feedback we received from workshop leaders working on restorying with the youth, was that the students would have liked more time to immerse themselves in the stories and to finalise their restoried work.

Participants also expressed a desire to learn more about their international peers involved in the project. They were curious about shared experiences of living in minoritised contexts and eager for more opportunities to exchange ideas and explore the creative outputs produced in the partner countries. A future edition should perhaps allow more space for cross-cultural engagement.

2 Results

Collecting and Restorying

The process of story collection went somewhat differently in each separate region, tailored to the target group.

For the Frisian participants in the first introductory workshop, the organisation provided one main story, and two other stories as an example. The main story was a story that the workshop leaders had a personal connection to, and that they had examples of restorying from. The other two stories were used as an example of Frisian folktales and the morality that is often depicted in them, and as an example of how these stories have been collected in the past. For the workshops in schools we provided a list of Frisian stories and tales to choose from. This worked very well, because these stories provided enough inspiration for inexperienced restoriers to draw from, and they weren't too difficult for pupils less knowledgeable with regards to Frisian language and culture.

In Hungary, the stories, myths, songs and interviews were collected by language experts, translated from Romani and Boyash into Hungarian to make them accessible for all participants, and curated for the restorying process with the help of the Independent Theater Hungary. This worked very well to bridge the existing cultural and language gap between participants.

In Norway, Sijti Jarngje worked with language experts and academics to modernize the South Sámi language in stories written down by Ignacz Halasz in 1887. The stories were also translated into English and Norwegian. The youth were free to bring their own stories to the workshops, but they chose to work on the two selected stories.

The participants were introduced to the linguistic and cultural significance of the local language. Besides, an introduction to folktales and traditional stories in general was given. In Fryslân, artists with experience in restorying were invited to introduce participants to the seemingly endless possibilities of restorying formats.

The participants were guided through the selected materials by examining what they might mean both in terms of morality and in regional identity and significance. Working in small groups or individually, the participants were introduced to a particular story, orally or in written form, to examine their meaning and reimagine the stories.

What we found was that, usually, a personal connection to the story or some other driving factor to reimagine the story (such as to battle stereotypes) was key to successful restorying. ProProgressione found that their participants, in particular, felt deeply engaged in the creative process of restorying because they could see themselves reflected in the stories.

The process of restorying also brought up questions of what is “allowed” to do with a traditional story. The workshop leaders already experienced in restorying were there to guide the participants through that: how to find a balance between the message and values that the traditional story contains, and your reimagination and cultural changes. How to appreciate tradition but also modernize a story using new techniques and your own views. In essence, this also keeps the stories alive.

In all regions, the creative process ignited or rekindled a love for the local language. Interactivity was also mentioned: the participants could use the stories and restorying process in other aspects of their (professional) lives.

Outputs



© Firda. Restoried work from the Frisian workshops.



In **Fryslân**, 152 students restoried over 20 Frisian folktales, of which five were presented in the local event, and five more at a later event organised by the students from the teacher training programme at NHL-Stenden.

In **Hungary**, 10 Boyash and 10 Romani tales were collected or recorded altogether and were then restoried into 12 performances by the 12 workshop participants. Ten of the 12 creative outputs were published on our website. Two outputs are being finalised and produced professionally under the mentorship of Independent Theatre Hungary (a ballad, and the song “My Own Way”).



© Gábor F. Tóth. Public performance at Independent Theatre Hungary, Budapest.

In **Norway**, six young people restoried a South Sámi tale into a modern version of the joik. At a second workshop with younger children, they restoried another tale into visual art.



© Sara Ajnnak. Producer Fred Endresen at regional workshop in Mussere/Mosjøen with participants.

3 The facts

Numbers

42 folk tales have been collected and restoried through the project, by over 300 participants in our workshops. The audience we reached through the project with our events (including open calls and public performances) and events organised by others that involved Lingo-tell is even larger.

Participants say that they experienced being part of a community and gained more confidence in their cultural identity, but also in themselves in general. Participants also indicated that they enjoyed this way of learning more about their language and culture as part of a minorit(y)(ised) language group, and that they wish they could have had more time in the workshops to work on their restoring.

Key factors

The project offered valuable insights into overcoming identity challenges faced by those living in minoritised contexts while preserving their language and culture. We truly all found, from youths themselves to scientific experts, that it had been a wonderful way to dive into traditions, language, identity and allowing a space for visions of the future.

Participants experienced being part of a community and gained more confidence in their cultural identity; this was found in all communities, but was especially significant for the Sámi community, where many community members live so far from each other that they rarely have the chance to be among other community members.

In all communities, it was found that stories are told about them: the community members are taught about themselves by others. Restorying is a way to reimagine and reshape the stories into something relevant for today and tomorrow. The stories contain a kind of roadmap for life and ways of living, about history and culture, and important places. Using various methods of expression was also a way to think outside the usual structure that these stories traditionally come in, in their own respective regions and communities.

Even very old stories have links to today's society and can be used for the restorying process by finding that link. Personal connection is key. Young people discover that there is much going on in old stories that is still relevant to them today. There must be something of cultural reflection that is so important and worthwhile that we want to keep it alive: we tell and retell the story, looking at the future to create strong Indigenous communities, essentially through storytelling.

To nurture the process of restorying, the participants need a safe space and the freedom to experiment and use their own expressions.

Points of improvement

Something that we would have wished for ourselves, but also heard from our participants: we would like more time. More time to set up our communication with the target groups, to organise the workshops and events, and for the restorying. More time for word of mouth about the project to spread, because this is something that definitely happened after we organised the events and were able to show the process of restorying and the restored results.

In addition, where applicable, we would like to place more focus on returning to the informants or storytellers who provided the original

material, and on expanding the process of collecting both old and new narratives. We should also consider involving participants earlier in the story collection and research phase. Strengthening the connection between participants and the original storytellers - and the immersive act of collecting itself - would further enrich the process. Ideally, the storytellers could also be more involved in the presentation of the final outputs, which, due to limited resources, we were unable to fully accomplish in this edition. Involving them in dissemination events and sharing the results of their contributions would not only honour their role in the project but also deepen the impact and sense of ownership on all sides.

Something else we would have liked is for our regional target audiences to be able to interact with and learn from each other.

For the future of the project, another thing we would want to see is cooperation between younger people and the elder community members. Traditional values and languages are being lost, and this co-production of restored traditional tales could really revitalize them.

4 The Future

Throughout working on Lingotell, we've encountered a great desire to both apply this project in other minority language regions, and to continue the project in the future. From ourselves and from the testimonials we've received.

To be able to apply the project in other regions, we've identified four key factors.



1. Community

Identify the target audience and find an access point through schools, youth workers, or artistic groups. Involve artistic leaders who can create a sense of community among participants while guiding them through the creative process.

2. Personal Connection

Start by finding the story that speaks to you. Across all regions where this project took place, a personal connection to the story proved to

be a key motivator. This connection might come from the language in which the story is originally told, the identity or experiences of its characters, or themes that resonate with the participants' own lives. These links not only enhance engagement, but also help participants take ownership of the creative process and discover their own preferred medium for restorying.

3. Freedom

Allow the restoried story to be the restorier's own. Creative freedom and safe spaces are an absolute must for the restorying process. There are no fixed rules as to what is or isn't allowed – the act of restorying becomes most powerful when individuals feel free to reimagine, challenge, and reshape narratives in a way that reflects their own voice and perspective.

4. Revitalisation

Restorying can lead to the revitalisation of many aspects of cultural life – language, community, and traditions – so visualise your end goal to make the process truly successful.

In the future, we would like for the Lingotell project to take the shape of greater international cooperation. To start with international exchanges between our workshop participants to learn from each other and to share their experience, both in their cultural identity as in the restorying process.

Allowing ourselves to dream bigger, we would like to take this further and organise creative international meetings, where the participants can immerse themselves in local folk tales and restorying work in inspiring environments. All culminating in a cultural festival where the restoriers take ownership of their language and identity. Of their stories to tell.



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