

REPORT OF FOCUS GROUP RESEARCH FOR THE PROJECT 'WISE' LATVIA

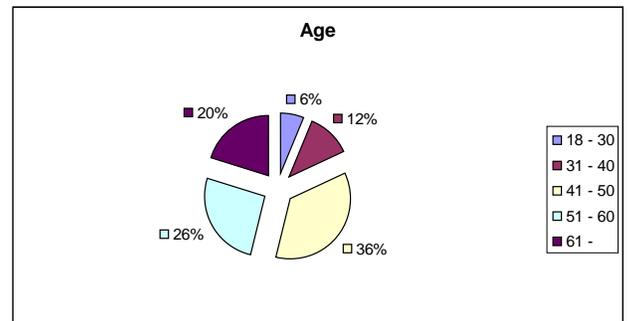
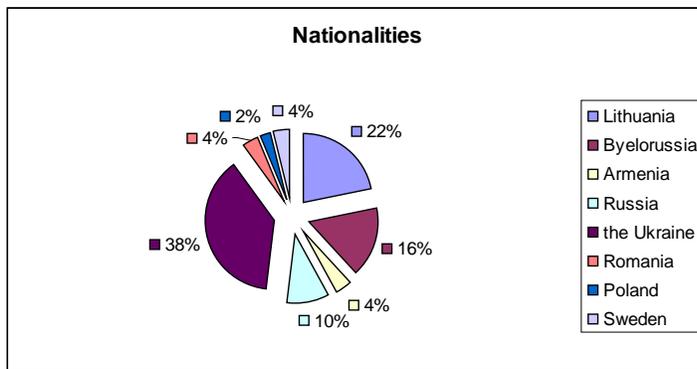
There were two focus group research held in Bauska District, Latvia:

- 1) Foreigners living in Bauska District,
- 2) Latvians – locals.

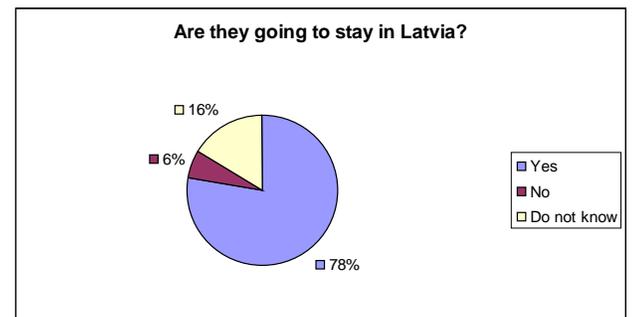
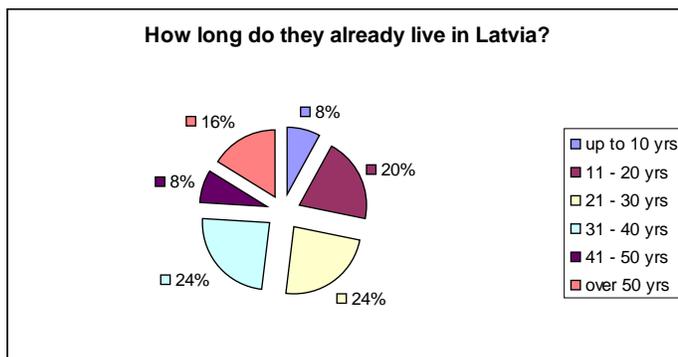
Research was prepared as a questionnaire and 50 persons from each focus group (totally 100 people) were interviewed. Below there are main findings of the research.

1. Foreigners living in Bauska District which is a peripheral area being on the border of the Lithuania Republic.

Focus group no1 characteristics



The inquiry was carried out with the aim to interview people of different nationalities. Taking into account the geographical situation of Bauska District, majority of foreigners are from Lithuania because of the very close border. The other biggest group are people from the Ukraine: these people live in Latvia since times of collective farms when a lot of people from the Ukraine, Byelorussia, and Moldavia came for work.



As the chart shows, the focus group representatives have different experiences of living in Latvia. Asked about their plans to stay or to leave Latvia mainly people replied that they are going to stay for rest of their lives.

INQUIRY RESULTS

Are you familiar with the meaning “socio culture”?

58% of responders acknowledged that they have never heard such a term but 42% were familiar with the meaning of socio culture.

Have you ever - as a foreigner- been in unpleasant situations caused by cultural diversity?

Majority of responders or 68% said that they have never felt any discomfort. 22 % acknowledged that they have been in such situations but mainly they were caused by institutions not local inhabitants. Rest of responders could not answer to the question.

How could you assess your knowledge about Latvian culture, traditions, social life?

The greatest number of persons or 60% assessed their knowledge as “good” and 22% - as “satisfactory”. 12% of responders assessed their knowledge as “very well” and just 6% said – “poor”.

Do you think you have adapted to the local society?

Majority or 90% acknowledged that they have, just 10% said – they have not.

Have you by now searched for information about Latvian traditions, culture historical heritage etc. with the aim to make sense of the local community and to integrate in it successfully?

Majority of responders said that they have never searched themselves for such information (54%). Those who said they have searched, as the mainly used source was mentioned **newspapers** and **dialogs with local inhabitants**. The Internet sources were mentioned as very convenient and also quite often used information tool. Just one person has received this information in the state institution (Migration Department) and two persons said that they like reading booklets and brochures.

Do you think the information about the local socio culture is easily available and sufficient?

Mainly responders agreed with that, however almost a half of the focus group representatives said that it is not so. Four people hesitated to give an answer.

Are the local inhabitants interested in your country’s socio culture?

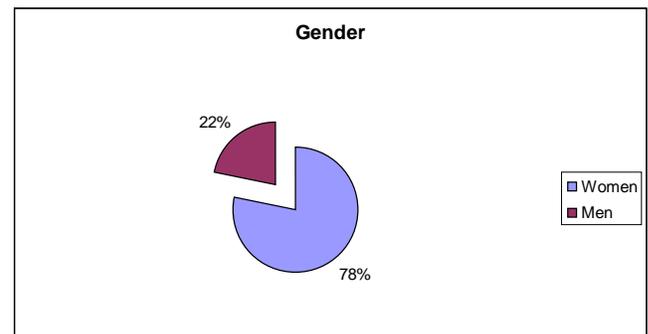
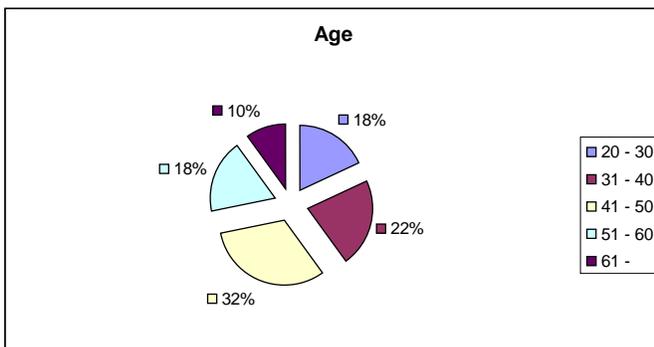
Almost 50/50 responders answered “yes” and “no”. That half which answered “yes” added that mainly national festivals is the subject matter locals are interested in. Then - cuisine that seems interesting for the locals. Less interesting are language and national handicrafts. Just one person told about the locals’ interest regarding the living standards in his country (Byelorussia).

Would you like to know more about the Latvian culture, traditions, etc? Which could be the most effective channels to acquaint with the local socio culture?

78% of responders acknowledged that they would like, but the others were not interested in that. As the most effective ways people acknowledged **special events/thematic workshops/ parties**. Many responders said that very effective could be also **description articles in the local newspaper** or magazine. 7 people acknowledged that it could be good to prepare a special web site (like www.latinst.lv), four people said the special handbook could be useful, and 2 persons *voted* for special excursions around the country or teach cultures at school.

2. Local inhabitants – Latvians

Focus group no2 characteristics



Locals' focus group was formed from different social groups, like entrepreneurs, teachers, social workers, museum employees, workers - with the aim to get essentially different viewpoints.

INQUIRY RESULTS

Are you familiar with the meaning “socio culture”?

Almost 50/50 of the responders acknowledged that either they are or they are not familiar with the meaning and nature of the socio culture.

What is your attitude to immigrants?

Majority of responders (74%) replied that it is neutral. 18% think very positive and just 6% have negative attitude. One person could not formulate his answer.

Do you have direct contacts with immigrants in your every day's life?

60% responded that they have not, but 40% have. Mainly these contacts are at working place and in the community. Four persons have immigrants in their families. Few persons said they have direct contacts with foreigners during some family celebrations or other public festivities.

Have you ever felt discomfort caused by culture diversity?

Majority or 66% said that they have never felt. However, 34% acknowledged they had and more often it was caused by the locals' unresponsiveness.

Do you think foreigners who are going to stay in Latvia are enough well-informed in issues about Latvian culture, traditions, etc?

The greatest number of responders (36) answered that they are not knowledgeable in this point. Almost equally the rest of responders replied that they are or they do not, actually, know.

Do you think the foreigners should know more about Latvia and its socio cultural environment?

Almost all the responders (96%) acknowledged that they should. Just two persons were not sure.

Have the foreigners ever asked you about Latvian culture, traditions, etc?

Most of responders (56%) disclaimed, however 42% said that foreigners have shown an interest about the Latvian culture and traditions. Mainly the people are interested in Latvian festivities and celebrations and Latvian national cuisine. Some people acknowledged that foreigners are also interested in Latvian language. Two persons mentioned Latvian handicrafts as a matter of interest, as well as communication and recreation opportunities.

Are you interested in socio culture of minorities living in Latvia?

Mainly responders (78%) said that they are interested in different cultures: they would like to know more about the countries, their traditions, cuisine, etc. The others – were not interested.

How do you think which could be the most effective way to realise socio cultural education?

The greatest number of responders acknowledged that that could be **special events/thematic parties/festivities**. A **special website** and **description articles in the local newspaper** or magazine could be very useful too. Some people mentioned also the specially prepared **handbook**, **cook shows** for preparation of national dishes, jointly **celebrated national festivals, excursions, summer camps** for children (as local as foreign), **experience exchange trips**.

CONCLUSION

As the most effective ways of teaching/learning socio culture the both focus groups acknowledged:

- **special events/thematic workshops/ common parties;**
- **description articles in the local newspaper or magazine;**
- **special website.**

Other activities the focus groups mentioned are:

- **handbook;**
- **cook shows;**
- **celebrated national festivals;**
- **excursions;**
- **summer camps;**
- **experience exchange trips.**