

Issue 1 – October 2021

CultSense Insights

Sensitizing young travellers for local cultures



Image by @anniespratt retrieved from Unsplash

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BACKGROUND

AIM

CULTSENSE aims to develop tools for sensitizing young travellers to understand and respect better the local norms, values, beliefs and cultures of the places they visit.

WHY?

CULTSENSE aims to address the issues of increased mobility pressures, and tensions and conflicts between locals and travellers.

HOW?

Creating a specialised educational approach to developing more understanding attitudes towards other cultures.

Providing tools to HE students and HE teaching staff.

Focusing on Tourism, Leisure and Culture (TLC) programs first, aiming at inspiring other programs and organisations.

WHEN?

September, 2020 August, 2023

CULTSENSE PARTNERS

Erasmus University Rotterdam
(Netherlands)



Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo
(Portugal)



Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu
(Romania)



Novia University of Applied Sciences
(Finland)



University of Girona
(Spain)



ASSOCIATE PARTNERS

ATLAS – Association for Tourism and Leisure Education
and Research



WYSE Travel Confederation



Welcome to CultSense Insights

With the increase in mobility overall, and of tourism in particular, many places have been feeling increased visitor pressure. This has led to complaints from local residents in places that experience overcrowding. Since the number of visitors to many places is increasing, learning how to be a traveller can be part of the solution. By working directly with young travellers, CULTSENSE aims at contributing to sensitise travellers to the importance of responsible and respectful behaviour towards local communities.

CULTSENSE aims to address the issues of increased mobility pressures, and tensions and conflicts between locals and travellers. By creating a specialised educational approach to developing more understanding attitudes towards other cultures, CULTSENSE aims at providing tools to HE students (who account for the biggest share of young travellers) and HE teaching staff. By focusing on Tourism, Leisure and Culture (TLC) programs, the project aims to provide support tools and disseminate them widely through different channels and networks.

We believe that education plays a major role in addressing the challenges of mobility which are also related to citizenship. By sensitizing young travellers to local cultures, the project aims at contributing to better quality of life for locals, more meaningful experiences for travellers and an overall better understanding of European values and identity.

The partnership is composed by the following organisations: Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands (lead partner); University of Girona, Spain; NOVA University of Applied Sciences, Finland; Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, Portugal; Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania; together with associated partners WYSE Travel Confederation and the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education.

We are happy to present you the CultSense Insights. The CultSense Insights issues will feature the news of the partnership, to keep our audience up-to-date with the developments of the project and highlight relevant articles.

Enjoy your reading!

NEWS FROM THE CULTSENSE PROJECT

Transnational project meetings

The Transnational Project Meetings are regular moments for deep discussions of issues, decisions, and tasks within the project. The first meeting, in September 2020, was hybrid. Due to COVID-19, the other meetings were fully online.

The first face-to-face meeting of the project was held in Girona on 23rd and 24th September 2021.

Key issues were discussed on how to sensitise young travellers for local cultures involving students. We were also organizing staff training sessions and multiplier events.

In-between the Transnational Project Meetings, and particularly due to the pandemic, the consortium decided to have at least monthly online meetings for updates, discussion, and decision-making on the next steps.

In December 2021, the Staff Training activities are planned to start in Sibiu, in Romania.



CultSense meeting in Girona, September 2021

CultSense student interactive webinar

On the 23rd March 2021, five second year Bachelor's Business Administration students at NOVIA University of Applied Sciences in Turku (Finland) organised an interactive webinar on the platform SpatialChat. Students from partners organisations and interns were invited.



So now we share with you the five students' perspective on the webinar, its organisation and feedback:

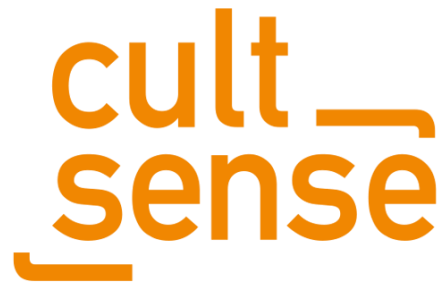
We are five second year Bachelor's Business Administration students at Novia University of Applied Sciences in Finland. The majority of the courses at Novia are project-based, which means that we gain theoretical knowledge that we practice in a project. This spring we participated in a course called Event Management, where we were given the opportunity to organize a webinar for CultSense on the forum SpatialChat.

Arranging the CultSense webinar was a perfect opportunity for us to use our theoretical knowledge in a practical way. Planning a regular event during Covid-19 seemed challenging, and at first, we were unsure how to plan a webinar, but we tried out ideas among us that in the end led to this webinar. We invited students from the CultSense partner institutions, and we had a mix of Portuguese, Spanish, Romanian, one Iranian student as well as Finnish students attending. Project leader Lénia Marques opened the webinar and after that the participants mingled freely in the space, asking each other about positive and negative travel experiences. After the warm-up, the participants were divided into groups and moved between different stations, where they discussed food, spirituality and religion, how to be hospitable and body language in their respective countries. We acted as facilitators at the different tables. We were happy to see that there was a genuine interest to learn about other cultures. For us it was amazing to see that what we had planned in theory worked out well in practice.

Some feedback that we received from the participants was: 'I really enjoyed the experience', 'I liked the atmosphere', 'interesting and well-structured', 'the fact that it was interactive was good' felt rewarding to hear since we had been feeling more nervous as the webinar approached. We think that the last quote sums up the aim of the webinar well: 'These kinds of events reinforce the importance of intercultural awareness to

CultSense student interactive webinar

avoid misunderstandings arising when people of different cultures communicate'. We will hopefully remember this when we go travelling abroad again. In the end, we learned, not only about planning and realizing a webinar, but also about different cultural aspects that the other students presented. We would gladly do something similar again, either as organizers or participants. We want to thank CultSense and our teacher Maria Engberg for this opportunity and the experience.



Authored by William Kemetter, Marija Pettersson, Andreas Ernvall, Filip Fagerström and Mikael Sandholm



Pilot Experiment

By working directly with students/young travellers, the CULTSENSE project aims at developing long-term solutions supporting more locally-sensitive travel practices that are mindful and respectful of the local customs and ways of life.

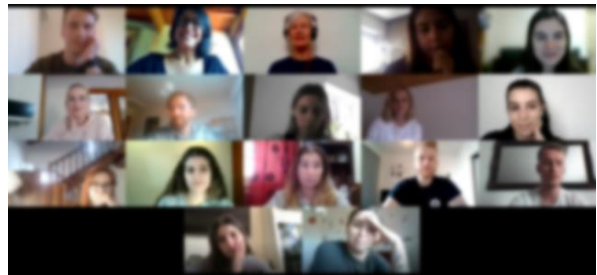
With this purpose and that of creating interesting classes for students, two of the partners of the CultSense project, i.e. Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo (Portugal) and NOVIA University of Applied Sciences in Turku (Finland), decided to carry out a pilot experiment - class exchanges.

The first session was held on April 6th, 2021. Dr. Goretti Silva, Tourism Degree Coordinator at Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo (IPVC), presented the cultural perceptions about the Alto Minho region (Portugal).



On April 22nd, Maria Engberg and three bachelor students (Jonas Lehtinen, Wilperi

Jalonen, Fredrik Ulfstedt) of Business Administration at Novia University of Applied Sciences, who participated in several tourism courses at Novia during the academic year 2020-2021, carried out an online presentation about Finland for final-year students of the IPVC Tourism degree. NOVIA students showed the video they created, which explains in-depth the Finnish sauna, the right to access public or privately owned land, and sports fishing in the Finnish archipelago.



This exchange between classes and materials was also part of an experimental design to evaluate the tools of the project. Results of the research are being analysed and should be published in the future.

It was very interesting how students reacted and responded to our challenge!

Pilot Experiment (Testimonials)

“

I find a very interesting project especially the development of knowledge about Portugal. This has changed remarkably through the Portuguese guest lecture which was also noticeable through the survey that was filled out at the beginning and at the end. I find it very interesting how everyone has a different image of a culture and how you get to know the culture on vacation because it is often not the real culture of the country. To get to know the real culture you have to get in contact with the locals, visit non-touristy places, eat in regional restaurants and much more. Through this guest lecture, it became clear to me once again that I will pay more attention in my upcoming vacations to get to know the right culture and to get to know the people better to simply understand more of their culture and to become even more tolerant of foreign cultures.

”

“

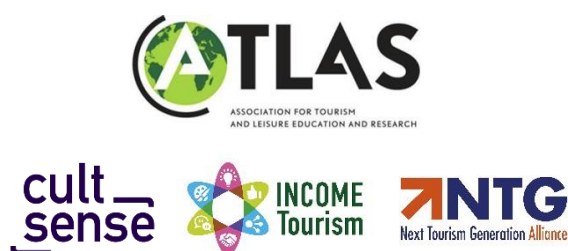
I liked the CultSense project the most. I found it interesting to see how the project is developing and that we could continue to be a part of it. Here, I also see a connection to cultural identity. Because this is exactly what the stories of CultSense reflect. Through this project I have become aware that I have already encountered many cultural identities and should be able to tell many stories about them. But I never kept a diary and wrote down all the remarkable traditions. Because of this, a lot of remarks were forgotten. The project showed me personally that in the future I should write down the peculiarities of a culture. I also think that it will be very interesting to read for my friends and family.

”

ATLAS Annual Conference 2021

Special Track 6: Challenges and New Solutions for Tourism Education

CultSense co-organised special track 6 of the ATLAS Annual conference, virtually hosted by AMBIS, in Prague, on 7-10 September 2021. Stimulated by the ATLAS Special Interest Group on Business Tourism, and in cooperation with the projects [INCOME Tourism](#) and [Next Tourism Generation \(NTG\)](#), we offered a panel discussion and a workshop on the theme “Challenges and new solutions in tourism and leisure education”.



This special track was meant for teachers in tourism, hospitality, event and leisure management and researchers with an interest in pedagogy and curriculum design, as well as for practitioners from the industry with an interest in developing education. In the special track delegates discussed what to consider when designing education in a post-pandemic situation. Key themes include sustainability, employability, resilience, innovation and digital adoption.

The session started with a panel discussion, followed by an overview of

recent insights by the above mentioned projects. The session was collaborative and included a workshop that required active participation. The purpose was to work together and identify the future skillset needed in a changing operational tourism and leisure environment.

The participants were invited to share best practices in curriculum design and in teaching in tourism and leisure degree programs.

Special Interest Group (SIG) for Tourism Education

The Special Interest Group (SIG) for Tourism Education, newly established through ATLAS at the conference, held its first meeting after the Special Track 6 presentations. The group will act as a platform to discuss and critique key challenges, issues, values, processes and practices in tourism education and training. Importantly the Group will identify and share effective teaching practice which supports tourism employability and the longevity of careers for a sustainable tourism industry. The new group was welcomed by delegates.

For more information about the Special Interest Group (SIG) for Tourism Education, please click on the link: http://www.atlas-euro.org/sig_tourismeducation.aspx

Publications & Conferences

The first CultSense paper is out! A commentary by Lénia Marques, in open access in the Journal of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events.

“Why call it tourist season if we can't shoot them?” – Towards the Utopian sensitized tourist.

The paper can be accessed [here](#).

There was a strong presence of CultSense in the ATLAS Annual Conference, with 3 CultSense presentations, of which one in the ATLAS special track on Tourism Education, which CultSense (under IPVC) is co-organiser.

Towards the sensitive traveller: CultSense, an educational project

Lénia Marques, Siri Driessen, Fianne Konings and Silvia Aulet

This presentation aimed to present and discuss the CultSense project. In the presentation, the aims of the project, as well as the tools and materials under development, were presented and discussed.

Our participation in the ATLAS conference served two purposes: to critically engage in a discussion about the aims, strategies, and tools under development; and to gather a critical mass of other interested parties who would like to become more involved in understanding how more sensitive practices in tourism can be implemented.

Sensitizing for local cultures through tourism

Silvia Aulet, Lénia Marques

The first findings from the research being done with CultSense project. The paper investigates how local cultures are experienced by young travellers. This was based on nearly 900 survey responses from 5 countries (Portugal, Spain, Romania, Finland and The Netherlands). We are open to collaborate and extend the scope of these findings! Curious? Just contact us at cultsense@eshcc.eur.nl!



Sensitive encounters in war tourism

Siri Driessen

In this paper, Siri Driessen critically reflected on the potential and limitations of veteran return trips to Bosnia. Specifically, she analysed the sensitivities of the encounters between Dutch veterans and local citizens. The analysis was based on ethnographic data obtained during return trips, interviews, focus groups and secondary data.

Social Media

CultSense project updates can be followed on the website – www.cultsense.com – but also on the project's social media channels.

We invite you to follow us where you are most comfortable and where you would like to stay connected, engage and be updated.

- **Instagram:** @cultsense_project
- **Twitter:** @Cultsense1
- **LinkedIn:** @Cultsense
- **Facebook:** @cultsense

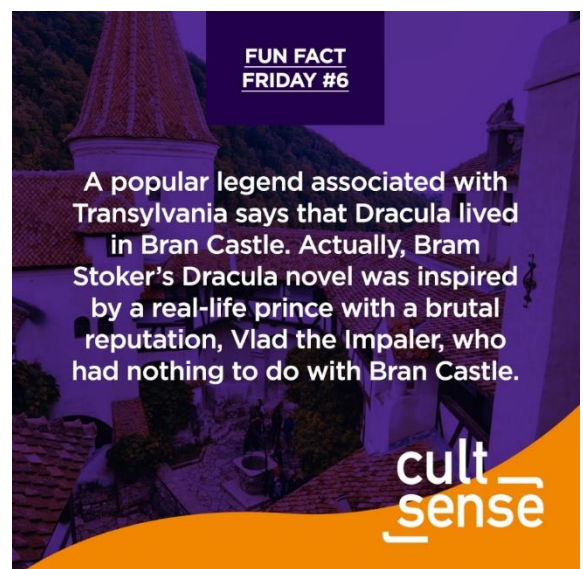
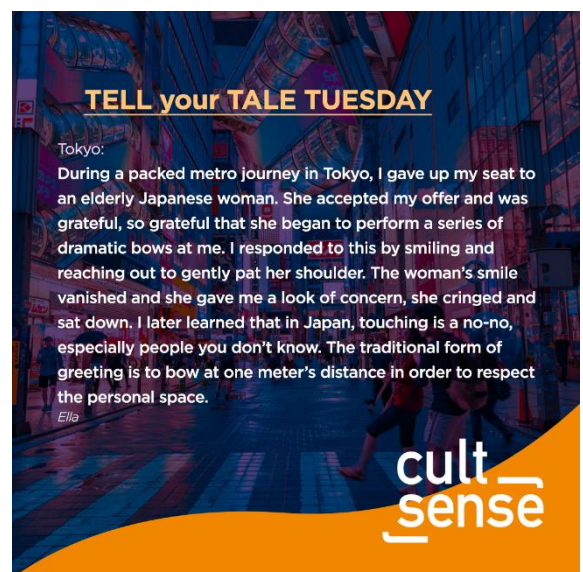
How to be a part of CultSense?

- Collaborate in the research and creating pedagogical materials
- Send us any tips, stories, fun facts, pictures that we could use in our Instagram and Facebook page (you can be anonymous)
- You can run an Instagram take-over
- You can do your internship with us and be part of the CultSense team!

Meet our interns on the next page:

- Amalia Ene (Romania)
- Oana Rus (Romania)
- Golnaz Haghdadi (Iran / Spain)
- Catarina Ferreira (Portugal)
- Mariana Oliveira (Portugal)

Keep updated and share your thoughts with us!



CultSense Interns

In the second semester of 2020, CultSense interns have taken over the project's Instagram page. We believe to be important for young people to have a voice in what concerns the social media content in our page. For them to give an input and share with the followers what they consider to be relevant information gives them room to grow and discover or improve skills they already have.

The first intern doing so was Amalia Ene, a Romanian student from Lucia Blaga University of Sibiu, studying Business Management. She finds this internship to be a great opportunity to develop her digital skills as well as to take a stand in the importance of understanding and respecting another's culture, values, and traditions.

Next, Golnaz took over. She is originally from Iran and now living in Spain. She is doing a master in Tourism Management and Planning at University of Girona. For Golnaz, being a part of the CultSense Project will help her find ways to aware travellers about their behaviors. For her, local people play a very important role to what regards the interaction with tourists.

The third to take over the account was Mariana. She has a degree in Tourism from Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo and is now collaborating with the Portuguese project team. In her eyes, the CultSense project has become even more relevant with the pandemic crisis the world faces today. Higher education as well as the Tourism sector need

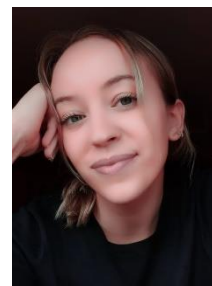
to prepare for the future and, through this project, graduates and teaching staff can be more prepared. Sensitizing young travellers to respect the places they visit is the key to improve locals' quality of life as well as their experiences.

Then it was the time of Oana, a Master's student in Business Management at Faculty of Economics, Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu (Romania). She was born in Transylvania, Romania. She finds this internship to be a great opportunity to learn more about different cultures while putting her skills into practice.

And, finally, me. My name is Catarina, I'm from Guimarães, Portugal. I have a degree in Tourism by the Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo and currently taking a Master in Tourism, Innovation and Development. I enrolled in the CultSense Project as an intern and I am thrilled to be a part of the team.

Stay tuned with our Instagram account to see what new content is shared by the interns.

Authored by Catarina Ferreira



CultSense Talks! - an Interview series

We are proud to announce our project own interview series! Every month, you can find a short interview with a tourist, a traveller, a local, a student, a professor,...

We welcome you to the [first episode](#) of CultSense Talks! with Dr Silvia Aulet, from the University of Girona, Spain. Dr Aulet explains a bit about the CultSense project while unveiling why partners want to participate. You can know more about the work being developed at the University of Girona, as well as within our project.

In the good collaborative spirit of this project, the interview was conceived and recorded by Golnaz Haghdadi, Master student at the University of Girona, and edited by Fernanda Rodríguez, from the Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

The [second episode](#) is an interview between Amalia Ene, student from Lucia Blaga University of Sibiu (Romania), and a traveller - Emiliano, originally from Mexico and currently based in Poland, about living in another country.

This second interview was conceived and recorded by Amalia Ene, Business Management student at Lucia Blaga University of Sibiu, and edited by Fernanda Rodríguez, from the Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands.

Upcoming for our third episode, an interview with Dr. Amilcar Vargas, Responsible of World Heritage at the beautiful Casa Batlló in Barcelona.

Curious to know more? Let us know what you think about the CultSense Talks!



Webinar “Fostering culturally-sensitive practices in Tourism”

Did you ever think how great it would be if all tourists would know a bit more about these wonderful cultures they visit? And this would include the ones just around the corner. Every city is a mix of cultures, and we can surely be "tourists in our own city". Home or abroad, sustainable and respectful practices are increasingly important. The role of the tourism and culture professionals is fundamental in this process. We all live somewhere, and most of us like visiting places. Cultural sensitivity is a competence which can be nurtured and cherished.

The webinar entitled "Fostering culturally-sensitive practices in tourism", co-organised by the projects CultSense and ARCTISEN (<https://sensitivetourism.interreg-npa.eu/>), with the support of ATLAS (<http://www.atlas-euro.org/>), took place on 7th October 2021. Both these projects aim at increasing awareness and contribute to best practices in regards to cultural sensitivity, understanding that we all have our role to make travelling the world a richer experience by valuing the culture around us - our own and that of others.

The webinar took the debate on cultural sensitivity forward by presenting research, industry insights, and by highlighting the critical role of tourism professionals in more sustainable and responsible tourism around the world. Practical examples were shared of how cultural sensitivity can be nurtured and enhanced, leading to a real intercultural dialogue about respecting local cultures and traditions.

You can still review the webinar [here](#).



FREE WEBINAR:
FOSTERING CULTURALLY-SENSITIVE PRACTICES IN TOURISM

OCTOBER 7 2021

MODERATOR: MELANIE SMITH Budapest Metropolitan University, Hungary

PROGRAM

TIME:
 9-11 EST
 11-13 WGST
 15-17 CEST
 16-18 EEST

15h00 - Welcoming & Introduction to ARCTISEN and CultSense
 László Marquardt, CultSense / Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Netherlands
 Monika Juthé, ARCTISEN/ University of Jyväskylä, Finland

15h15 - Ethics of travel photography
 Monika Juthé & Emily Hockett / ARCTISEN/ University of Jyväskylä, Finland

15h35 - Cultural sensitivity and Cultural empowerment in education
 Milla Auer, Universidad de Jaén, Spain
 Constança Silva, Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, Portugal

16h00 - Empowering local people through labels and certificates
 Cecilia de Brébant, M&S Systems, Breda, Sweden

16h20 - A real case from Colombia
 Diana Marín, Zuluaga Gómez, Co-Founder, Bogotá, Colombia

16h30 - Community guidelines for considerate visitors
 Edda Færø, Communications Manager, Association of Arctic Expedition Cruise Operators (AECO), Norway

16h40 - Open discussion

16h55 - Closing

Link to the registration form:
<https://forms.gle/w1te7QVBWjDKS5cdA>



Upcoming Events

CultSense Talks!

Staff Training

Sibiu, Romania

December 6-10, 2021

ATLAS Gastronomy and Tourism Research Group Meeting

Girona, Spain

February 16-19, 2022

<http://www.atlas-euro.org/Default.aspx?TabID=398>



Image by @_tristanpineda retrieved from Unsplash

FEATURED ARTICLES

Our Project Year with CultSense

Travel can be a perfect opportunity for cultural education and can at best increase understanding between travellers and the local population at a destination. The goal of the Erasmus+ project CultSense is to address issues of increased mobility pressures and even conflicts between locals at a tourism destination and travellers. The partnership is composed of the following organisations: Erasmus University Rotterdam, the Netherlands (lead part), University of Girona, Spain; Novia University of Applied Sciences, Finland; Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo, Portugal; Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu, Romania. The associated partners WYSE Travel Confederation and the Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) will provide important channels to disseminate the results of the project. Below follows a short account of three students' experiences working within the project.

We are three Bachelor's students of Business Administration at Novia University of Applied Sciences, who participated in several tourism courses at Novia during the academic year 2020-2021. Thanks to Novia's involvement in CultSense, most of the tourism courses were in one way or the other connected to the project. We got immersed into the project and the more we learnt and experienced, the more we became interested in the topic. The project was launched in September 2020, and we plunged into a first activity of participating in a competition among the students at the partner universities and designed a

suggestion for a logo for the project. At that time, we had little understanding and it was unclear to us what the purpose of the project was but as the semester progressed, our understanding and interest grew.

The most exciting CultSense project for us was probably creating a video set in the Finnish archipelago. The archipelago for all three of us is a place where we grew up and where we nowadays spend part of our free time. In the film project we worked together with two German exchange students and showing them a family summer cottage, our best fishing spots and the secrets of Finnish sauna-bathing made us realize that what is everyday life to us can be a unique tourism experience for a nature-loving traveller. Planning, filming and editing the video in co-creation brought us closer to one another. Not only did we get to know new, awesome people, but we also learnt about cultural differences as well as how cultures can be brought together in a practical way through project work. The project has challenged us to take a deeper look into not only other cultures but also our own. There was a continuous discussion in the tourism courses about cultures and how to develop our awareness and understanding. We were also invited to participate in an online presentation about Finland for tourism students at Instituto Politécnico de Viana do Castelo in Portugal. We showed them our video and told them more in-depth about the Finnish sauna, everyman's right to roam freely in nature as well as sports fishing in the archipelago.

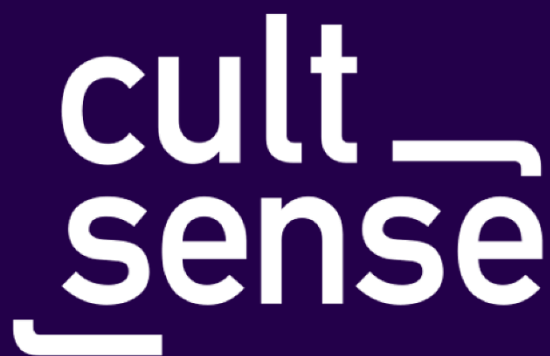
Our Project Year with CultSense



The Portuguese students showed an interest in hearing our stories. What we thought would be, yet another ‘school presentation’, came alive in the session and we felt proud of who we are and what we represent. CultSense has taught us valuable lessons on how important cultural awareness is in order to understand and appreciate differences and similarities around the world.

One thing is certain, working with CultSense has changed our perception of culture and once the pandemic is over, we will be travelling with this in our mind. We will pay more attention to details in local cultures and be more aware of possible impacts of our actions. We will remember that **our travel destination is the home of local people.**

Authored by Jonas Lehtinen, Wilperi Jalonen, Fredrik Ulfstedt. This article was originally published in the NOVIA website. Access the article [here](#).



www.cultsense.com



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