

Issue 6 – August 2023

CultSense Insights

Sensitizing young travellers for local cultures



June 2023 – Final Conference (Rotterdam, the Netherlands)

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CultSense Insights: The Final Issue

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the sixth and final issue of CultSense Insights!

The CultSense project believes that education plays a key role in making future tourism more sustainable, as well as an enriching experience for all involved, visitors and hosts alike. By working directly with young travellers, CultSense aims to raise awareness of the importance of responsible and respectful behaviour towards local communities.

All of CultSense's actions aim to contribute to a specialized educational approach that develops more understanding attitudes towards other cultures. To achieve this, we have developed various tools to sensitize young travellers and help them better understand and respect the local norms, values, beliefs, and cultures of the places they visit.

Our resources include an eBook titled [Creating Cultural Understanding Through Travel - CultSense Case Collection](#), which presents a series of case studies on cultural sensitivity in travel. We also developed five [Learning Modules](#) covering different themes, a [pedagogical toolkit](#) for teaching staff, and [Quality Tools](#) and [CultSense Edu](#) series. All these resources, along with further information about our project, can be found on our website. All our tools are in open access.

Furthermore, we invite you to explore our YouTube channel, where you'll find the "[CultSense talks!](#)" and "[CultSense Presents...](#)" series, as well as review the webinar series.

The CultSense Insights issues feature the news from the partnership to keep our audience up to date with project developments.

In this issue, we are excited to share some of our project's activities and resources with you. We will also let you know about our final conference and video competition!

This marks the end of the CultSense Insights as our project comes to a close. Although it passed by quickly, we look forward to future collaborations.

Are you curious? Then dive into this final issue and enjoy your reading!

NEWS FROM THE CULTSENSE PROJECT

MEETING IN LINDOSO

A Project Meeting took place in Lindoso (Portugal) on March 28-29, 2023, to discuss the project's progress and prepare the final conference. The meeting also addressed the significant role of tourism in boosting local economies, especially in low-density territories, as Lindoso faces challenges like depopulation and an ageing population.

At the end, the team had the opportunity

to participate in a workshop on baking local bread.

Involving local actors and valuing their knowledge and traditions in tourism strategies is crucial for the development of rural areas. By embracing sustainable practices and appreciating local culture, we can create a thriving and authentic tourism experience that benefits both visitors and local communities.



WEBINAR SERIES

The CultSense webinar series was organized in the first quarter of 2023 to engage the academic community in discussions about cultural sensitivity in travel and raise awareness among young travellers.

In the last newsletter, you could read about our first two webinars. However, we would like to remind you of the topics and in case you missed any of these webinars or would like to review them, you can watch [here](#).

1. Tools for teaching culture sensitivity

17 January 2023

The first webinar featured professionals who presented their projects and created a discussion about the tools we have today for cultural sensitivity.

2. Travelling with a sensitive mind: Students experiences

15 February 2023

In the second webinar, incoming and outgoing students from each university participated actively in the discussion, sharing their experiences as Erasmus students.

3. Cultural Awareness Research in Tourism

15 March 2023

The third and final webinar of our webinar series was moderated by **Siri Driessen** and had the following guests, who shared their

experiences, knowledge and information about projects:

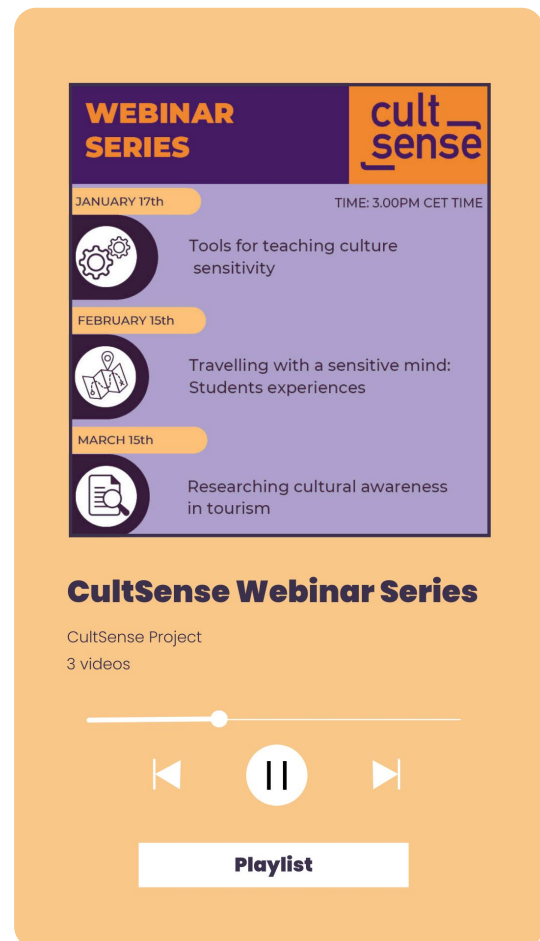
Prof Greg Richards, Tilburg University/BUAS

Albert Tarragó, [Migrantour Barcelona](#)

Oscar Gussinyer, [Resilience Earth](#)

Dr. K. Doreen MacAulay, University of South Florida

The CultSense team is grateful to all the moderators and speakers for their valuable contributions, enriching the discussions with diverse perspectives.



CONFERENCE BRIDGING CULTURES THROUGH TRAVEL

CultSense, in collaboration with ATLAS SIG Cultural Tourism, hosted an event that brought together many of the project stakeholders. The conference took place on June 14-15, 2023, at the Erasmus University Rotterdam (the Netherlands), gathering over 90 participants from 27 countries, from Brazil to New Zealand.

The conference was opened with a flute piece interpreted by **Marisa Ponce de Léon** and welcoming words by the project coordinator, **Lénia Marques**, from ESHCC. This was followed by a variety of speakers and sessions, including keynote talks by **Wil Munsters** and **Emily Höckert** on the topic of animals in tourism as bridging cultures, as well as posthumanist approaches to cultural sensitivity. Discussions were moderated by experts in cultural tourism: **Melanie Smith** and **Greg Richards**. We were also very honoured to have **Joël Ferdinandus** from Rotterdam Partners welcoming our guests to the vibrant city of Rotterdam.

Other sessions included presentations by special guests: **David Chapman** (WYSE Travel Confederation), **Magnus Emmendoerfer** (European launch of the UNESCO Chair on Cultural Policies and Creative Economy), and **Meghann Ormond** (Migrantour Utrecht).

Throughout the conference, we witnessed captivating talks, engaging discussions, an inspiring student-led workshop, a musical moment, and the announcement of the winner of the video competition. Students organized a session that integrated games to stimulate self-reflection among the

audience. There were many discussions about cultural sensitivity from different perspectives, and this conference showed the diversity of angles on this complex topic.

Reflections and Insights (by Siri Driessen)

This conference prompted self-reflection, reminding us that tourism is not only about (educating) the Other but also about educating ourselves and reflecting on our role and the effect of our presence on local communities (and tourists).

Tourism is about encounters, which hold greater value when tourists and hosts can reflect on themselves and others, in particular when there are major cultural differences. We have seen a wide range of educational tools showcased to enhance this thinking - from placemaking to online interactions through COIL, as well as videos and games created by students.

We have seen inspiring examples of strategies to enhance students' engagement and develop their cultural sensitivity. Co-creation with students and local communities was strongly emphasised, both online and offline, in collaborations with companies and residents. Ethical questions regarding tourism-host relationships were also raised.

We have seen different ways of developing students' intercultural competencies, including challenge-based learning, tailored strategies for students with diverse backgrounds, and collaborations



across universities.

Thank you to all participants in our conference! We are immensely grateful to everyone involved in making this conference a remarkable success. A particular word of thanks to our partner ATLAS! May the knowledge and connections gained during this event continue to inspire positive transformations!

Here is a glimpse of the event!
Watch the video



*Video composed by Mariana Oliveira
with photos from Fernanda Rodríguez*

SENSITIZING YOUNG TRAVELLERS THOROUGH IMAGES – Video Competition

A video competition was held for young people (18-29 years old) under the theme “Sensitizing Young Travelers Through Images.” The winner received a prize. And the winner, announced during the final conference, is... *drum roll...*

...the “**Culture hunters**” team!



Within the theme of “Tourism encounters and emotions”, the winning team titled their video “**Togetherness through cultural experiences**”



The team aimed to showcase the concept of tourism encounters and the emotions that are related to them. The team interviewed two foreigners, one from Greece and one from Bangladesh, to show how tourism can play an important role in creating long-lasting memories and cultural ties.

The video takes us on a journey from the serene rural areas, representing customs, nature, and tranquillity, to the vibrant urban landscape, symbolizing interaction, dynamism, and diversity.

“ The first interview was more of an experiment to see what kind of reactions and feelings experiencing the old traditional Romanian village life would seem to an outsider for the first time. We went to the Ethnographic Park of Transylvania, which resembles a 19th-century village. It definitely generated a spiritual surprise for our interviewee, as he mentioned... The second part of the video depicts the whole city of Cluj along with its stunningly colourful buildings. Our second interview, which was held on a high hill, focused on the interactions between tourists, as well as the culturally intertwined experiences...To conclude, the relationships stranger-to-stranger and individual-to-place in a foreign country are a hundred per cent worth living at least once in a lifetime by everyone. That sense of togetherness is what makes us humans feel alive!”

Congratulations **Ana-Maria Bradatan** and **Vlad Grozav** for winning the video competition! We also applaud the creativity and effort put forth by all the participants.

CultSense Quality Tools

The CultSense Quality Tools series aimed to share with a wider audience some of the tools used in our project. These are made simple to increase the easiness of use for any project.

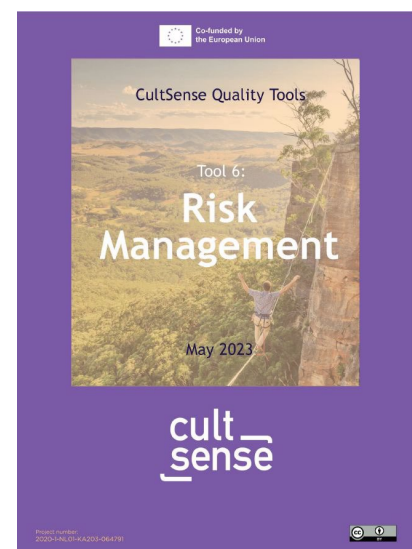
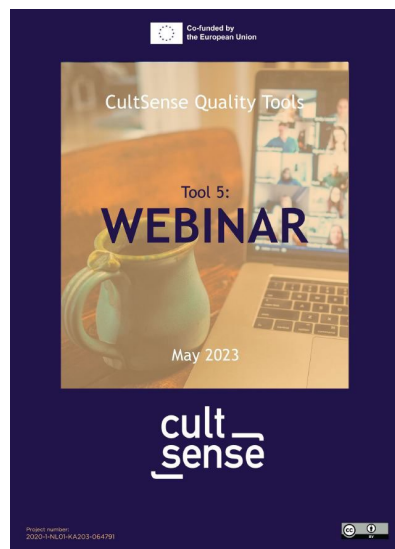
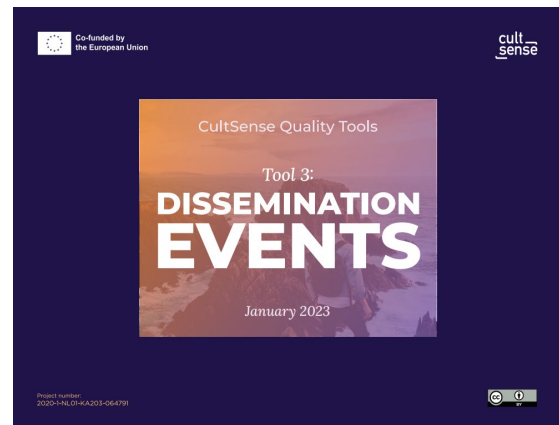
In the last few months, the team released three quality tools:

- [Tool 4 - Social Media Performance Indicators](#), with tips on effectively utilizing social media performance indicators.

- [Tool 5 – Webinar](#), for measuring the perceived quality of a webinar, with structured and not structured surveys.
- [Tool 6 – Risk Management](#), to discover how the CultSense project utilizes risk management to identify, evaluate, and mitigate potential risks.

All tools are available on our website. Check out them [here](#), or click directly on the tool to access them.

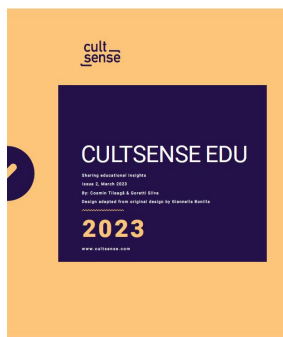
We hope you find these tools useful!



CultSense Edu – Sharing Educational Insights

Our aim with the CultSense Edu - Sharing Educational Insights was to share a reflection and insider's view on the processes more than on the outcomes in such a way that these insights can be used by other Higher Education professionals.

[CultSense Edu 1](#) – describes the CultSense Videos process, co-created with students from the participating organisations; the use of interactive webinars organised by students for students; and the development and implementation of staff trainings.



[CultSense Edu 2](#) – explores our [case studies collection](#) as an educational tool, approaching it from different angles as a teaching tool. The second part focuses on the CultSense Learning Modules and how they can be used in the classroom. Updates on the next activities are also provided as final notes.



[CultSense Edu 3](#) - explores the [CultSense Pedagogical Toolkit](#).

If you feel inspired and would like to share your insights, or would like to know more, please don't hesitate to contact the CultSense team (cultsense@eshcc.eur.nl).

We will be happy to share and learn with you!

SOCIAL MEDIA NEWS

The CultSense project is about encouraging a deeper understanding of the relationship between cultural sensitivity and travel among young travellers. We believe that social media is a great way to reach them, so we have been using it to share interesting content about different cultures, traditions, and customs.

We produced three main types of audiovisual content for dissemination:

- **CultSense Presents:** These videos showcase a particular cultural phenomenon, tradition, custom, or concept pertinent to the project.
- **CultSense Talks:** These videos feature interviews with travelling enthusiasts or experts in the field of cultural sensitivity in tourism.
- **Travel Reels:** These short videos are designed to target more digitally engaged (millennials) travellers.

You can follow the CultSense project on social media:

Instagram: @cultsense_project

LinkedIn: @Cultsense

Facebook: @cultsense

Twitter: @Cultsense1

We also invite you to visit our website for more information about the project and all the resources created (www.cultsense.com), and explore our YouTube channel, where you'll find the “[CultSense talks!](#)” and “[CultSense Presents...](#)” series, as well as review the webinar series.

See our most watched Reel!



FEATURED ARTICLES

INSIGHTS INTO CO-CREATION AND CULTURAL SENSITIVITY IN EDUCATION

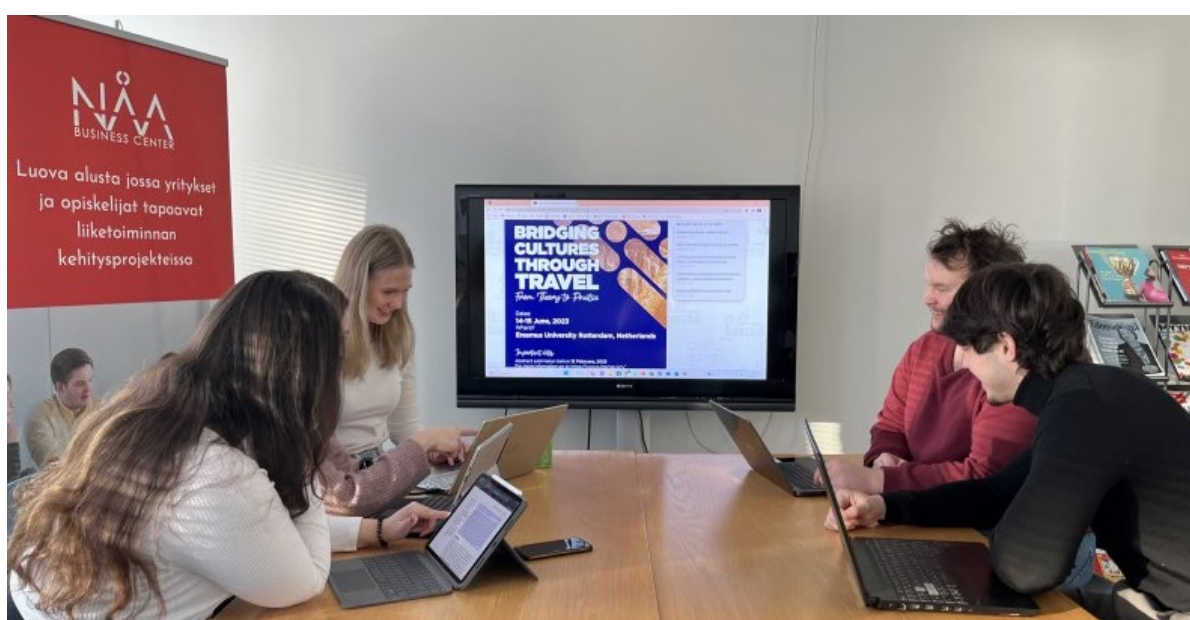
(...) co-creating assignments together with my students has developed me as an educator, and I want to believe that I have become a more culturally sensitive educator in the process. Co-creating with my students has helped me develop my own thinking patterns and has provided me with an understanding of cultural sensitivity, and a more in-depth approach on how to sensitize young people to local cultures. The more co-creative discussions I had with my students, the better I was able to connect different cultural viewpoints into an entity that shapes and develops my worldview. This deepened understanding will with time be translated into courses on the topic.

It was easy to build an amicable teaching environment where students felt committed and involved. The Finnish students had their own travel experiences, and the Erasmus exchange students were able to relate to their ongoing exchange in the discussions. I sometimes get valuable

feedback and one memorable note was from an Erasmus exchange student in her evaluation of a tourism course, where we had worked with material from the CultSense project. “Thank you, Ms. Engberg for helping me grow intellectually and see things from new perspectives.” The American travel writer Paul Theroux connects in one of his quotes to my student’s comment above. “Travel is an attitude, a state of mind. It is not residence, it is motion.”

Attitudes are not set in stone, but they mostly change gradually and slowly with new information. If I as an educator can make a tiny difference in the minds of my students and they communicate that to me, I feel that I have achieved something that makes it worthwhile for me to continue developing myself as an educator.

Authored by Maria Engberg. This article was originally published in the NOVIA website. Access the full article [here](#).



MY TRIP TO ROMANIA



As someone who visited the East-European nation for the first time in early June 2022, I will probably always bear with me the first impressions I got, including the silent pulse of the city of Sibiu at midnight when we arrived at our town-square side hotel with the soft yellow glow of the streetlights lighting up the concrete buildings. The next day, in broad daylight, I could certainly conclude that the houses all around the old part of Sibiu were cheery and brightly painted in different shades of red, yellow, blue, green and orange. What, however, was most intriguing about them, were the mighty arcades and archways leading the way inside, as well as the attic-windows crafted so as to seem like ever-watchful eyes and give you the uncanny sensation of being studied by their squinting gazes.

In short, Sibiu is very rich in history and culture. Our guided tour of the city gave us an eye-opening insight into many of the conflicts that Romania has had, the hardships the country has suffered, but also the way different folk groups have over time learned to live side by side in harmony (take for example the German-speaking schools for children). Nimble and sphinxlike stray-cats padding around the city looking for left-overs in the open-air cafés, pawing for the deliciously rich scraps of food that have deviated from their usual course of plate, to fork, to mouth. Because *delicious* is a particularly fitting word for the Romanian cuisine.

The country, having been inhabited by many different ethnic groups over the ages, has developed food that is both diverse and like no other. The Saxons, Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Ukrainians and many more who have lived in the area at some point or still reside there, as well as its geographical positioning, have all contributed to the nation's gastronomy. Nevertheless, all the different kinds of meat did get quite heavy and overwhelming after a couple days, so I took to eating merely small portions instead...

Sibiu, being one of Romania's wealthiest and affluent cities, showed us one part of the country, but passing into the Transylvanian countryside on winding, snake-like roads, showcased the way the farmers, shepherds and others in the small villages live. Clusters of colorful houses are built close together with courtyards and window shutters near the bases of hills.

With religion playing a big role in Romania, seeing as there is such a large number of people with different beliefs, there is almost certainly a church in every village, no matter how small (one only has 5 visitors per monthly service). On the hillside terraces great dogs bound after herds of sheep while the shepherd follows more slowly with a carved pole or walking stick. Many farmers cannot afford tractors, plows and harrows, so most of the harvesting is done by hand or with manual machines.

I was surprised to see how such grand churches arose near all those simple houses, and we even got to see the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the church in Biertan, where an American choir happened to be having a concert that same night. The songs definitely fit the holy atmosphere of the church and added a little extra layer of intrigue to the ancient place. The French renaissance-style Jidvei Castle was another formidable fortress we visited, originally built as a hunting lodge for a nobleman and his peers. The (very furry) trophy rugs, statues, furniture and other little details made it feel like actually stepping into the dwelling of a wealthy 1500s family despite them not being original pieces. In the basement, used both then and now to store rows upon rows of pickles, one can dine like a duchess and try different local and elsewhere produced wines. Because wine is what gets us to our next point. I had never associated Romania with the exquisite liquor and grape-growing business before traveling there, but after our tour of the Jidvei Winery, I certainly learned otherwise. Who would have thought that Romania is the thirteenth largest wine-

producing country in the world!

One thing that surprised me about the locals was how late they stay up, even on weeknights, including younger kids. The night we arrived on Sunday was the only time I saw the big square empty. But on the other hand, I can understand them, since it is more pleasant to be outdoors in the coolness of the temperate evenings than in the glaring blaze of the sun. Food is also clearly an important piece of the puzzle, as well as refreshments such as different juices (one was so good I named it liquid candy), lemonade, milkshakes and the native treat Socata. Sipping a drink like that on a day-to-day basis isn't all too common up North. Teenagers also moved in bigger groups than I'm used to. As a conclusion, spending a few days in Romania changed my perspective on the country for good, for from being one of those faceless countries in Eastern Europe that I only associated with Dracula and vampire tales, it is now a fully 3-dimensional state for me, with good and bad sides just like any other place. But one thing is for sure; Romania has some breathtaking sceneries like the Carpathians majestically rising in the distance while shrouded in mist, some ancient and historical buildings as well as absolutely delicious foods!

Authored by Linnea Engberg. The text written in 2022, when the author was 13 years old. Access the full article [here](#).

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)



Instituto Politécnico
de Viana do Castelo

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



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www.cultsense.com



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