

ICH NORTH

Passing on Our Musical Heritage

*A report on the Interreg Aurora-funded project
“ICH North – passing on our musical heritage”
– why it was done, how it was done, and what came out of it*



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North

Passing on our musical heritage

CH North

Building bridges between institutions, educational organizations and heritage communities

Photo: Sara Käll-Fröjdö



Table of contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Table of contents | 3 |
| Why ICH North? | 5 |
| Activities and outputs of ICH North – passing on our musical heritage | 8 |
| ICH in Numbers | 19 |
| Partner organizations | 20 |
| Collaborating organizations | 21 |
| Funding | 22 |
| What came out of ICH North? | 22 |
| Challenges along the way | 26 |
| On the importance of musical heritage in the Aurora area | 27 |
| Finally, Thank you | 31 |

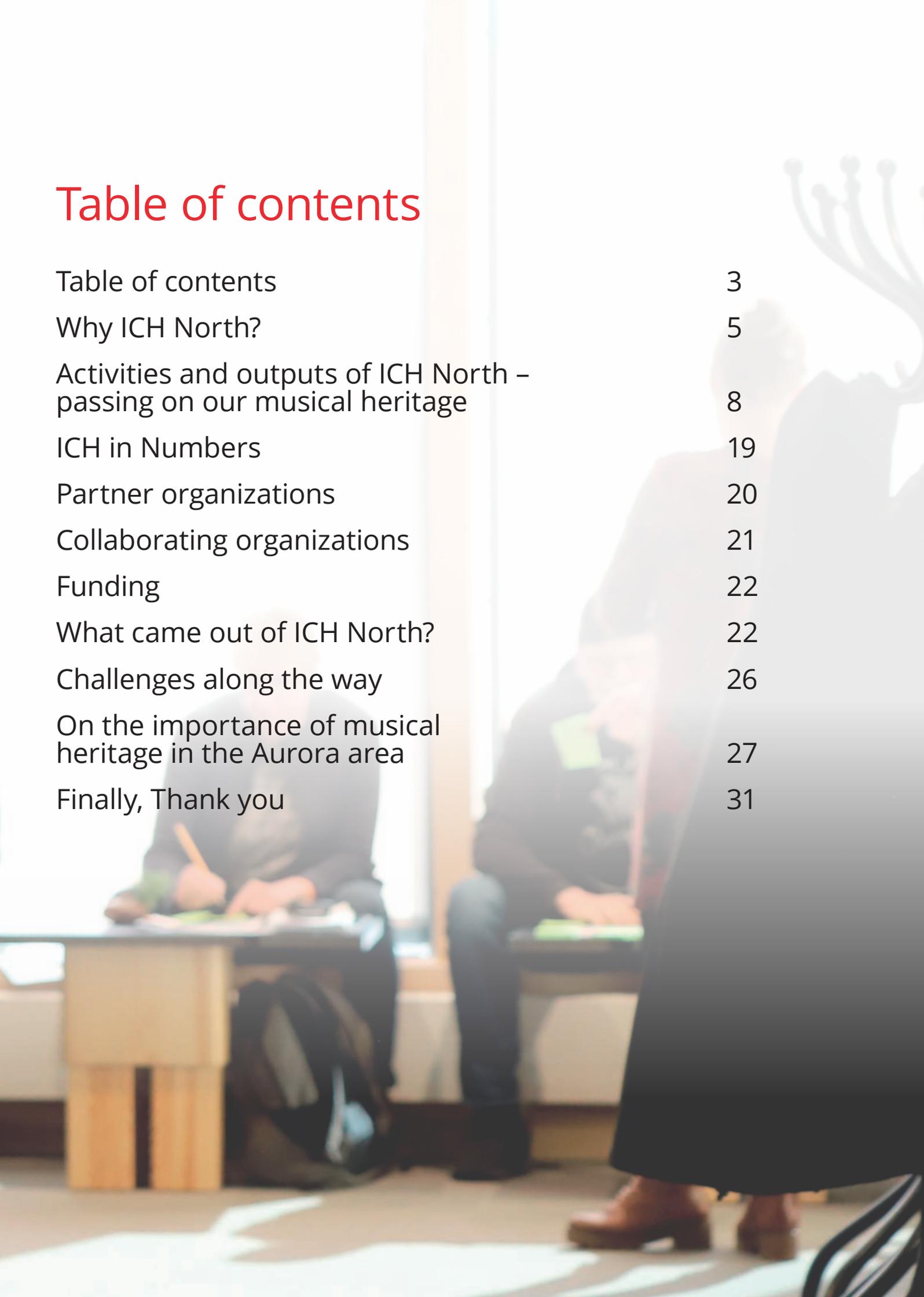




Photo: Sara Kåll-Fröjdö

Why ICH North?

Sara Kåll-Fröjdö, Centria University of Applied Sciences

ICH is an abbreviation for *intangible cultural heritage*, also known as *living heritage*. Living heritage includes oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive elements, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and the knowledge and skills related to craftsmanship. *Musical heritage* is also included.

Musical heritage as a concept might be strongly connected with folk music, but there are also a lot of other vocal and instrumental traditions that can be seen as musical heritage, as well as for example the knowledge on how to build instruments. Following UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO 2025), any living musical tradition, or a related skill that a community or individual consider important to pass on to following generations, could be seen as musical heritage.

ICH North is the name of a Nordic cross-border project carried out between 1 February 2023 and 31 December 2025 and funded by Interreg Aurora¹. Interreg Aurora is a program in the European Interreg community for cross-border co-operation. The program area consists of the northern parts of Norway, Sweden, and Finland, including Sápmi. The activities within ICH North were planned through a preparatory project with the same name, funded by Interreg Nord, an Interreg program active before Interreg Aurora.

Why was ICH North needed, then? Firstly, you can conclude that the Aurora area² has a very rich and distinctive immaterial cultural heritage in the form of music. The musical heritage in the Aurora area has both similarities and distinct local and regional differences and includes heritage of minorities and immigrants. The landscape might look different in different parts of the area, but we share some important features – the area is sparsely inhabited with long distances.

Musical heritage is something you learn from others and, in turn, pass on. In today's society, it is not certain that the transmission of musical heritage to new practitioners will happen, though. The causes might be migration, urbanization, social distancing between age groups, low media visibility/low interest due to lack of information, networks, or good safeguarding practices. This leads to a loss of traditional knowledge.

Traditional music in Nordic countries has very limited human and financial resources, across the board. Cultural cross-border partnerships, networks, and joint development and implementation of actions through the project have strengthened the sector and promoted transmission. Musical heritage, and communities upholding it, cross all administrative borders: music knows no borders. Music has always crossed borders with its practitioners throughout history and will continue to do so.

¹Want more details on the budget and funding of ICH North? Check out "Funding" later on in the report.

²The Interreg Aurora programme area covers regions in the northernmost parts of Finland, Norway and Sweden, including Sápmi.



Photo: Sara Käll-Fröjdö

Through ICH North, a number of organizations in Norway, Sweden, and Finland joined forces to tackle the common challenges. Some of these organizations were proper partners in the project with a budget and project staff, some other organizations were so called “associated partners”³, which means they supported the project and took part in the activities according to their own possibilities and resources.

An important aspect of the ICH North project was the bottom-up approach. All activities were community-based, aligning with the principles of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003). Co-creation with heritage communities and practitioners was prioritized whenever possible. The issue of representation was a continuous theme throughout the project.

In ICH North, we carried out a number of actions that deal with different aspects on how to promote the transmission of musical heritage in the Aurora area. If you read on, you’ll find more information on what the actions were and what came out of them.

³*Have a look at the list of collaborating organizations later on in the material.*

Therése Hugosson

**Svenska Folkdansringen/
Kulturens Bildningsverksamhet**

What do I think the Aurora area has gained from ICH North

ICH North has increased awareness and visibility of northern Sweden within a national context often dominated by the south. On an operational level, it has provided courses and hands-on learning. On an organizational level, it has built capacity and stability for local stakeholders and initiated long-term collaborations that strengthen tradition bearers. On a strategic level, it has fostered cross-sector collaboration and stronger inclusion of ICH in education, archives, and cultural policy within different organizations.

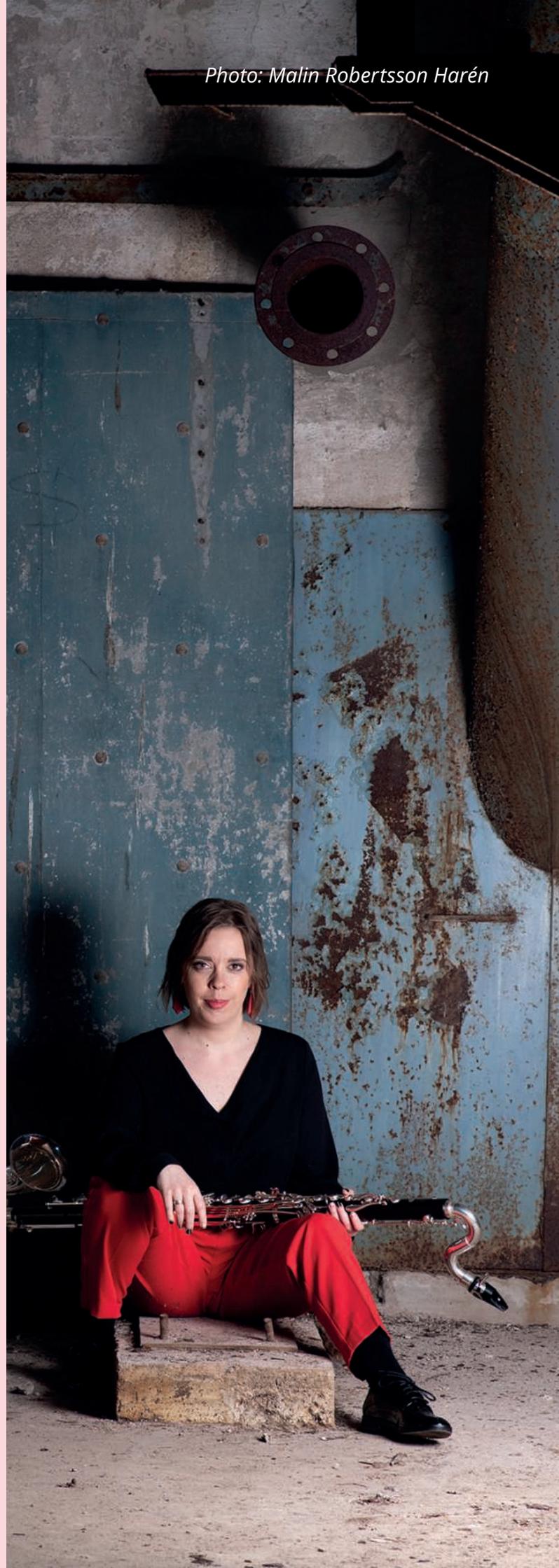
What has my organization gained from ICH North

We have gained new contacts and partners. In this context, our non-governmental and non-profit organization with a strong grassroots focus is a small player compared to large institutional organizations. Yet, and precisely because of this, we have contributed that perspective among the bigger institutions, ensuring that smaller and non-profit voices are more clearly represented in the project and that the grassroots level is strengthened. This has been an important insight for our organization: that it is indeed possible to influence and collaborate with larger stakeholders in order to safeguard and reinforce what takes place at the grassroots level and within the civil society sector. Because of the operational, organizational, and strategic levels, our organization has also gained greater added value to offer its member associations within the Aurora region.

What have I personally gained from ICH North

I had no personal expectations, but the project has given me much more than I imagined: new colleagues, networks, knowledge, and new perspectives on traditional music and ICH. It has also provided me with a new language to describe my professional work as a tradition bearer and teacher in music and ICH. Importantly, it revealed the gap between ICH policy and traditional music education in Sweden. This insight led me to pursue a Master's in Educational Work, specialising in traditional music and ICH, in order to help reduce this gap within the education sector over the long term — something I would not have chosen without ICH North.

Photo: Malin Robertsson Harén



Activities and outputs of ICH North – passing on our musical heritage

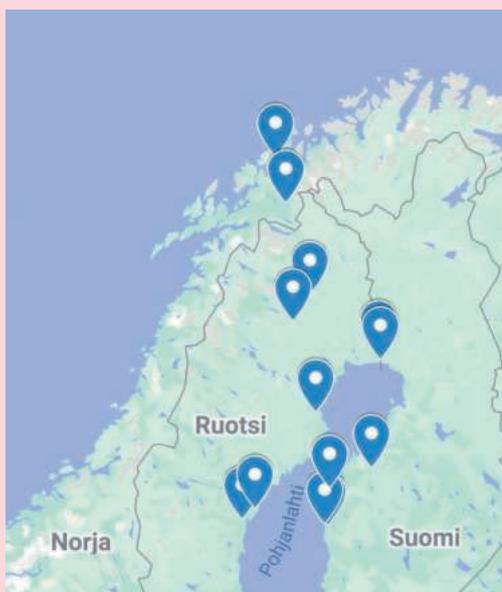
Sara Käll-Fröjdö, Centria University of Applied Sciences

When running a three-year cross-border project with many different organizations involved, you need a framework for the collaboration. In our case, it's been monthly online meetings for the Project Working Group, in all 32 meetings over the years. The Project Working Group consisted of project staff, working in project partner organizations. To stay on track and document discussions and progress over the years, we have consistently used meeting agendas and minutes as part of our standard routine.

Additionally, the Project Working Group has met physically on nine occasions over the years. When deciding where to meet, we've had the following criteria:

- As good a distribution as possible throughout the Interreg Aurora-area
- If possible, in conjunction with existing events, where practitioners and heritage communities attend.

We have aimed to include workshops and presentations in our physical meetings and have also used these events for discussions and for collecting and recording material. If needed, we've tried to support the various local and regional events and the organizations behind them in various ways. Many of the organizations involved in the events are so-called associated partners of the project.



Physical meetings for the Project working group:

- Skellefteå (Folk & Världsmusikgalan), April 2023
- Lappfjärd & Kristinestad (Lafolk), August 2023
- Vasa, November 2023
- Kukkolaforsen & Haparanda (Gränslös folkmusik), May 2024
- Tromsø & Målselv (Kalottspel), August 2024
- Sundsvall (Samspel i Sundsvall), October 2024
- Gällivare & Jokkmokk (Jokkmokks marknad), February 2025
- Kaustinen (Kaustinen Folk Music Festival), July 2025
- Härnösand (Final seminar of the project), November 2025

The Project Working Group has had meetings with the Advisory Board of ICH North twice a year, six times in all. The Advisory Board was set up to consist of experts in the field of living heritage and folk music, active within different kinds of organizations. The meetings were held as discussions and were as such very valuable for evaluating and developing the activities of the project. The Advisory Board also enlarged the network around ICH North, reaching out to even more organizations and other initiatives.



Photo: Sara Kåll-Fröjdö

The activities of the project were divided into five different themes, so-called work packages. The responsibility of the work packages was divided between the project partners. The work packages were designed to address common challenges in different ways.

The outputs of ICH North are the following:

A Massive Open Online Course (MOOC): Passing on Living Musical Heritage in the Northernmost Part of Europe and Sápmi

Annika Mylläri, Centria University of Applied Sciences & Michael Strobel, The Arctic University of Norway UiT

The subject of the course is safeguarding of musical heritage in the north of Finland, Sweden, and Norway, including Sápmi. Anyone can attend and the course material is open source.

In the course, you will gain insight into musical communities and their practices of engaging with tradition, transmitting and renewing it. Together we will explore a multitude of examples from the northernmost part of Europe and Sápmi, showing how communities celebrate their musical heritage in a variety of situations and contexts. We also want to encourage you to reflect on your own musical culture and heritage in the light of ideas and concepts that you encounter on this course.

This course is based on the idea that living musical heritage gives meaning to our lives, strengthens resilience, and contributes to our well-being. At the same time, it is not always a given that musical heritage is acknowledged and appreciated by the wider society in a way

“Through the project, we have gained access to inspiring webinars, lectures, and learning materials that have brought new perspectives into our teaching.”

Annika Mylläri

Centria University of Applied Sciences

What do I think the Aurora area has gained from ICH North

Through the Aurora area, ICH North has built a strong cross-border network of dedicated people — practitioners, communities, educators, and institutions — all connected by a shared interest in the region’s musical heritage. These connections will continue beyond the project, planting seeds for future co-operation and understanding. There is now a stronger awareness of what ICH means, how it can be safeguarded, and the shared responsibility that communities and practitioners hold in keeping living traditions alive. It has been inspiring to see how participation and collaboration can bring new energy to intangible cultural heritage in the northernmost part of Europe.

What has my organization gained from ICH North

At Centria University of Applied Sciences, where we offer a bachelor’s program in folk music pedagogy, ICH North has provided valuable opportunities for both students and staff. Through the project, we have gained access to inspiring webinars, lectures, and learning materials that have brought new perspectives into our teaching. Students have been able to observe how practitioners and educators work with living traditions in practice, which has sparked meaningful discussions within the music pedagogy program.

The project has deepened our understanding of living traditions, cultural sustainability,

and UNESCO’s frameworks on culture and heritage. We now reflect more consciously on resilience, belonging, and cultural citizenship in our teaching and collaboration. Intangible cultural heritage and community-based approaches have also been included in Centria’s new strategy for 2025-2028, showing how the project’s impact extends beyond individual activities.

What have I personally gained from ICH North

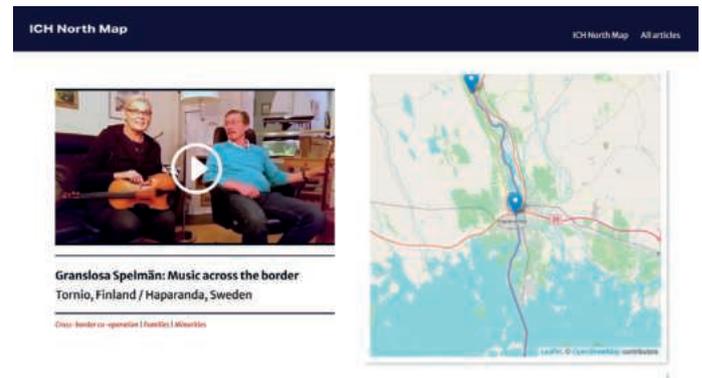
On a personal level, ICH North has been an enriching experience. As a Ph.D. researcher in Music Education at the University of Jyväskylä, the project has influenced how I think about participation, collaboration, and belonging — key themes in my research. Working with project partners and tradition bearers across the Aurora area has shown what these concepts mean in practice, where everyone’s contribution is valued and respected.

Through the project, I have learned about the diverse musical heritages of the region and had the chance to meet and collaborate with many inspiring practitioners and communities, including tradition bearers of Sámi music and culture. My professional network has grown significantly, and I feel better prepared to take part in future international collaborations. ICH North has strengthened my professional path and deepened my understanding of cultural collaboration. It has also inspired me to continue developing inclusive approaches and renewed my motivation for future research and international projects.

Photo: Ulla Nisonen



that is in line with the respective musical communities' way of thinking. We therefore place special importance on the music of indigenous peoples, minorities, and immigrant communities, as well as on ways to safeguard their practices. Our understanding of cultural safeguarding is based on/informed by UNESCO's Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 2003.



Screenshots of the MOOC and the digital map.

ICH North Map – A digital map of musical communities practicing and transmitting their musical heritage in the Aurora area

Lauri Oino, Kansanmusiikki-instituutti / the Finnish Folk Music Institute

The digital map shows around 40 videos where representatives of different musical heritages and musical heritage communities of the Interreg Aurora region describe how they pass on their musical heritage. The content is co-created with communities throughout the Aurora area. The videos are indexed with keywords of important issues and themes of transmitting musical heritage.

The map was originally planned to showcase the musical heritage and musical heritage communities of the region, and their ways of transmitting their heritage, in a compact and accessible format. The technical development process included finding and testing a suitable web platform and planning and implementing the webpage structure and visual design. The original concept included for every presented musical community a music sample, a presentation text, a more precise map showing the living area of the practitioners or the area of the musical heritage covered, and a short video talk.

However, during the project this concept was found too complicated for several reasons. The project group also found it necessary to further reflect on the purpose, possible uses, target groups, and usability of the digital map. Thus, the concept was simplified, and other elements than the video talk (with a sample of music included) were left out. The basic idea of the map was also refocused on sharing quite practical good examples of keeping viable and transmitting musical heritages, shared by active key persons, such as music group leaders, event organizers, pedagogues, individual enthusiasts, etc.

The videos were partly shot by the practitioners themselves and partly by project personnel; participating in different folk music events was a very effective way of reaching people.

The map videos can also be used as examples or inspirational material at the MOOC produced by the project. Link to the material: <https://kansanmusiikki-instituutti.fi/ichnorthmap/>.

The Work Package leader was the Finnish Folk Music Institute, with Västernorrlands museum as partner. The work was carried out with help from the other project partners and the associate partners.

Lauri Oino

**Kansanmusiikki-instituutti/
the Finnish Folk Music Institute**

What do I think the Aurora area has gained from ICH North

Through i.a. Unesco Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, what was previously regarded as “only” traditions, stable remnants of the past, is today seen as crucially relevant parts of societies’ quality of life, coherence, resilience, and sustainable development. The project has reached both practitioners and their communities, as well as other stakeholders, such as museums, archives, educational institutions, and businesses. This has contributed to an important recognition of musical heritage of the project region as living and socially relevant phenomenon that is important for the quality of life and development of the region in the future. The project has created innovative ways to support the viability of these communities, their authority over their heritage, and the means to strengthen their position and significance in society. The project has fruitfully brought together different stakeholders, and this has already created new co-operation among them also outside the project.

What have my organization gained from ICH North

The project has offered us resources and an ideal platform to put to practice and share our expertise in intangible cultural heritage and working with grassroots heritage communities, to develop and test practices, methods and ideas, and to learn from other participants. The project has offered us a scale of impact that we wouldn’t have been able to reach alone. The fluent cross-border co-operation between very different partners, from big educational institutions with their resources and expertise to smaller NGO-based organizations with their grassroots-level contacts and expertise, has been both basis for the success of the project and a success as a project design model. Our project capacities have risen to a new level, and we have already benefited from this experience as participants of other planned or actualized projects. Our networks have increased significantly, and our co-operation with most, if not even all, partners, many associate partners, and many communities met through this project will continue in the future.



Photo: Ulla Nisonen

What have I personally gained from ICH North

My professional skills have grown in many aspects: i.e. in project design, management and administration, in cross-border multi-partner co-operation, and in project activities implementation. My professional and community contacts on the region have increased, and my general view of the scene of musical heritage and musical heritage communities on the region and their circumstances and social contexts has both widened and deepened. At a personal level, I have found the project very motivating and even enjoyable.

From Tune to Togetherness – an Educational Material for Inclusive Folk Music

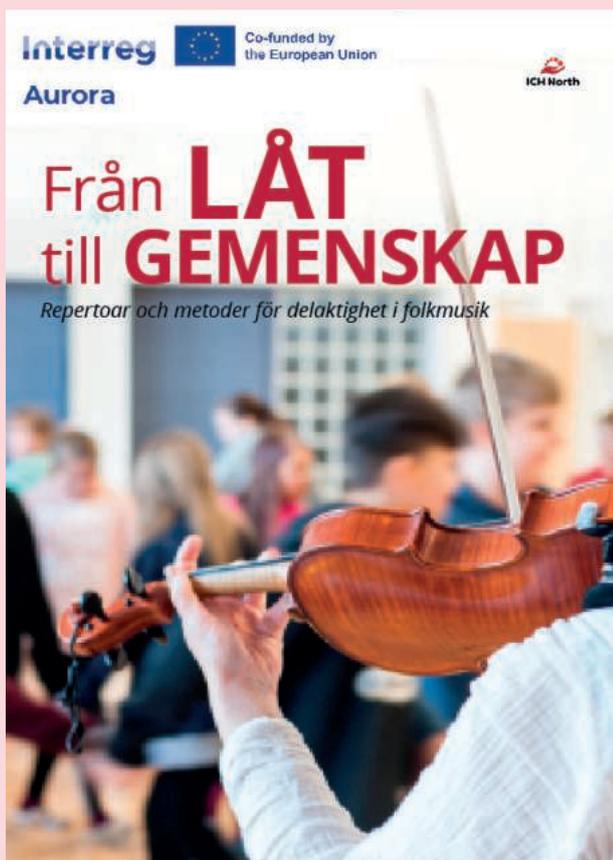
Eva-Marie Backnäs, KulturÖsterbotten & Therése Hugosson, Svenska Folkdansringen

The goal for this theme was to use social innovations in order to promote the transmission of knowledge on intangible cultural heritage and enhance participation and inclusion. The end result theme was to create educational material for teachers of music in non-formal education, to give them tools to work more inclusively with diverse groups of learners.

In order to collect data and information for the material, we arranged several workshops (both physical and digital) with music pedagogues, observed and interviewed musical leaders, and collected tunes from folk music archives in the Aurora area. We also conducted a pilot study on how social inclusion can be furthered through traditional music. The pilot, called the Musical Living Room, was arranged in the city of Jakobstad in two phases, January to March and May to August 2025. The aim of the pilot was to give people a possibility to meet through traditional music, both teaching and learning from each other. Insights from the pilot are included in the educational material.

The main insights gained from working with the material are:

- There is a vast amount of knowledge related to teaching traditional music within the Aurora area.
- The infrastructure for sharing knowledge and experiences among musical leaders has significant potential for improvement, in order to ensure effective transfer of knowledge to a wider group of leaders and to support the education of new ones.
- There remains a strong need for support structures dedicated to niche instruments, genres, and the traditional music of Indigenous and minority groups, to ensure that these forms of intangible cultural heritage continue to be safeguarded.
- A wealth of traditional music from Sweden and Swedish-speaking Finland is available online, while Norwegian traditional music is much more difficult to find.
- Representation of Indigenous peoples and minorities presents a challenge in a project of this kind.
- Jam sessions with low thresholds make it easier for participants from different parts of the world and different walks of life to feel welcome to participate.
- Teachers express a strong demand for pedagogical guidance materials.
- Teachers also request practical methods and approaches for working with musical inclusion and thereby foster social inclusion.



Published material: The educational material *Folk Music and Ensemble Playing. From Tune to Togetherness* is available in five languages (English, Swedish, Finnish, Norwegian and North Sámi).

4 Musical heritage, entrepreneurship and cultural tourism

- promoted through cultural innovations, tandem meetings for musicians and entrepreneurs and a community.

This work package will focus on **branding and promoting local cultural and musical heritage** with possible products and innovations for cultural tourism.



Photo: Sara Käll-Fröjdö

Heritage in harmony – Weaving together music, tourism, and entrepreneurship

Anna Lisa Hellqvist, Västernorrlands Museum & Mats Granfors, Novia UAS

This work package explored how musical heritage can interact with tourism and entrepreneurship, seeking new ways to connect living traditions with local development and place identity. The focus was on creating collaborations that make musical heritage visible, relevant, and in some ways economically sustainable, without losing its authenticity or community ownership.

Through meetings, collaborations, and pilot ideas, the work highlighted the potential of cross-sector partnerships and collaborations between musicians, local community, and tourism actors. Several ideas were also developed to demonstrate how musical heritage can strengthen a sense of place – such as “Musikminnen från Svartvik” concept, which explores how local stories and sounds can enhance visitor experiences, and a place branding sound bank in collaboration with a destination in Västernorrland. There have also been three arranged webinars for concert organizers to provide a platform for sharing experiences, discussing challenges, and talking about ways to strengthen and promote events related to musical heritage throughout the Aurora region.

Complementary concepts like a trivia game prototype and curated digital playlists further illustrate innovative ways to share and experience musical heritage. Together, these initiatives show how living traditions can inspire new forms of collaboration, visibility, and *sustainable cultural growth* across the region.

Photo: Johanna Björkholm



Johanna Björkholm

**Finlands svenska folkmusikinstitut/
Svenska litteratursällskapet**

What do I think the Aurora area has gained from ICH North

Jag upplever att ICH North har lyft och stärkt nätverken i norra Norden. Den här regionen upplevs och framstår ofta som avsidat, och en satsning som denna - där fokus riktas just mot norr - har stor betydelse för självbild och resurser. Det har varit fantastiskt att se mångfalden och likheterna i den traditionella musiken och dansen i norr genom projektverksamheten! Jag tror att Auroraområdet framför allt har haft nytta av breda satsningar på tryggnade av immateriellt kulturarv, samt av att folkmusik och traditionell kultur i stort har lyfts fram som en resurs.

What has my organization gained from ICH North

Min organisation har etablerat kontakter och nätverk till flera organisationer och nätverk. Projektet har visat att vi alla jobbar med närbesläktade frågor och problematiker, och genom att samarbeta får vi mycket mera tillstånd. Tryggnade av immateriellt kulturarv och levande traditioner är ett område där det finns utmärkta samarbets- och utvecklingsmöjligheter. Genom att bygga upp starka, internationella, nätverk förbättrar vi våra gemensamma möjligheter att åstadkomma genomgripande resultat inom området.

What have I personally gained from ICH North

Personligen har min horisont vidgats. Som boende invid Auroraområdets sydgräns är det ingen självklarhet att delta i projektsamarbeten som blickar norrut - men oj så givande det har varit! Som finlandssvensk har det också varit mycket intressant att få erfarenheter från andra områden där flera parallella språk är ett historiskt etablerat faktum. Det har varit mycket givande för mig personligen att få vara med och utveckla nya verktyg och arbetsmetoder med syftet att trygga folkmusik som levande tradition. Att få ingå i en så dynamisk och kunnsig projektgrupp har varit en ynnest!

“Folkmusik och traditionell kultur i stort har lyfts fram som en resurs.”



Photo: Sara Kåll-Fröjdö



Photo: Jessica Lindgren

Eva-Marie Backnäs

KulturÖsterbotten

What do I think the Aurora area has gained from ICH North?

I believe the greatest benefit for the Aurora area is that so many organizations and people have come together to increase the visibility of traditional music. The Aurora area has a rich and vibrant music scene, not least in folk and traditional music, and this project has brought together musicians from different countries, regions, and musical traditions. The project outputs (the MOOC, the educational material, the digital map, etc.) will benefit the Aurora area long after the end of the project.

What has my organization gained from ICH North?

For KulturÖsterbotten, this project has been a possibility to engage with other organizations that promote and work with intangible cultural heritage. We have had the opportunity to learn from other organizations, not just concerning traditional music, but also regarding the safeguarding and transmission of intangible cultural heritage. Through the project, we have gained and been able to spread materials and other information concerning traditional music to our local and regional partners. We have provided visibility to traditional music in our region, and visibility for our musical traditions in the Aurora area.

What have I personally gained from ICH North?

I came into this project at a late stage, and I also have no background in music (traditional or otherwise), so this has been a steep learning curve for me! I have gained a lot of insights into traditional music and the transmission of intangible cultural heritage, which has been a great experience. I have also had the opportunity to meet new people and broaden my own network of culture heritage enthusiasts in the Aurora area.

“Through the project, we have gained and been able to spread materials and other information concerning traditional music to our local and regional partners.”

ICH in Numbers

| | |
|---|-------------------|
| • Number of Project Working Group meetings / agendas / minutes of meeting | 32 |
| • Number of personnel in ICH North | 19 |
| • Number of Partner organizations | 8 |
| • Number of Associated partners | 25 |
| • Number of members in Advisory Group | 11 |
| • Number of Advisory Group meetings / agendas /minutes of meeting | 6 |
| • Number of monthly Newsletters | 30 |
| • Number of times Newsletter has been opened | 8133 ⁴ |
| • Number of Newsletter subscribers | 109 ⁴ |
| • Number of followers on FB | 257 ⁴ |
| • Number of followers on Instagram | 232 ⁴ |
| • Number of followers on LinkedIn | 137 ⁴ |
| • Number of views of Deutsche Welle clip on YouTube in English | > 17 600 |
| • Number of views of Deutsche Welle clip on YouTube in German | > 11 700 |
| • Number of views of Deutsche Welle clip on YouTube in Spanish | > 31 200 |
| • Number of physical meetings for the Project Working Group | 9 |
| • Number of co-funding organizations | 5 |
| • Number of pilot actions implemented | 11 |
| • Number of strategies/road map elaborated in the project | 1 |

⁴As of 15th of November 2025

⁵until 30.4.2024

Photo: Sara Kåll-Fröjdö



Partner organizations

- Centria University of Applied Sciences (Lead partner, EU)
- Kulturens Bildningsverksamhet⁵
- KulturÖsterbotten
- Novia University of Applied Sciences
- Svenska Folkdansringen⁶
- The Arctic University of Norway UiT (Lead partner, Norway)
- The Finnish Folk Music Institute
- Västernorrland County Museum

Kulturens Bildningsverksamhet was one of the original Project partners, but they had to run down their organization in 2024 due to diminished state support for cultural organizations. Svenska Folkdansringen was added as a new Project partner and the remains of the budget for Kulturens was transferred to Svenska Folkdansringen on 1 May 2024.

⁵until 30.4.2024

⁶from 1.5.2024



Photo: Sara Käll-Fröjdö



Collaborating organizations

These organizations signed a Letter of Intent for the project application (in alphabetical order):

- Burträsksvängen (SE)
- Finlands Svenska spelmansförbund (FI)
- Folk You (SE)
- Folkemusikk Nord (NO)
- Folkmusiksällskapet (FI)
- Härnösands folkhögskola (SE)
- Härnösands kommun (SE)
- Jamtli (SE)
- Kalottspel (NO)
- Kulturskolan i Sundsvall (SE)
- Lappfjärds folkhögskola (FI)
- Medelpads folkmusikförbund (SE)
- Musik i Västernorrland (SE)
- Måselv Spelmannslag (NO)
- Niklas Roswall, riksspelman (SE)
- Norrbottens Spelmansförbund (SE)
- Riksförbundet för Folkmusik och Dans (SE)
- Saamelaisarkisto / Sami arkiiva (FI)
- Studieförbundet Bilda Nord (SE)
- Suomen Kansanmusiikkiliitto (FI)
- Svenska Folkdansringen (SE)
- Svenska litteratursällskapet i Finland / arkivet (FI)
- Sveriges Spelmäns Riksförbund (SE)
- Västerbottens Spelmansförbund (SE)
- Örebro Universitet (SE)

Funding

Sara Kåll-Fröjdö, Centria University of Applied Sciences

The main funder of ICH North was Interreg Aurora. The EU-funding through Interreg Aurora was 65 % of the budget of the EU-partners (684 038 €) and the Interreg funding 50 % of the Norwegian partner budget (59 423 €).

There was also national co-funding from Lapin Liitto for the Finnish partners, from Region Västernorrland for the County Museum of Västernorrland, and from Troms fylkeskommune for the Arctic University of Norway UiT. Additionally, the County Museum of Västernorrland and the Arctic University of Norway UiT had funding from Nordisk Kulturfond and KulturÖsterbotten had funding from Svenska Kulturfonden. The rest of the funding was the partner organization's own funding.

The total budget of the project: 1 171 212 €

What came out of ICH North?

Sara Kåll-Fröjdö, Centria University of Applied Sciences

The results of the project reflect the large interest for the project. As there has not been such a large project in this field (living heritage/musical heritage) in the North before, you could sense the eagerness to get as much done as possible during the project time.

New interesting topics kept surfacing throughout the work, and you could tell that ICH North has given inspiration to a lot of new initiatives in various parts of the Aurora region, with actions snowballing in all directions. It is difficult to document all the indirect results of the project – but there seem to be a lot of threads and cross-border collaborations starting off in different directions parallel to the main project.

With a helicopter perspective, you can see that ICH North have managed to link different organizations and groups together, forming connections that are highly likely to live on after the project. In many cases, just putting organizations and people in contact with each other seems to have resulted in collaborations and ICH North has functioned as an inspiration and “igniter”.

Throughout ICH North we have done our best to engage all stakeholders and work together, using a combination of collaborative strategy and interdisciplinary knowledge. The work throughout the project could be described as process based. The many discussions on, for example, concepts and terminology, questions of representation, the role of communities, minority languages, and the UNESCO framework and its implications have been important along the way. New interesting topics have arisen throughout the discussions, things that we did not think of during the planning process.

Bengt Wittgren

Västernorrlands Museum/
Västernorrland County Museum

What do I think the Aurora area has gained from ICH North

Många musiker – traditionsbärare – i Auroraramrådet har tagit till sig Unesco-konventionen för immateriellt kulturarv och stoltheten och självkänslan har ökat för de lokala traditionerna.

Many musicians – tradition bearers – in the Aurora area have embraced the UNESCO Convention for Intangible Cultural Heritage, and pride and self-esteem have increased for local traditions.

What have my organization gained from ICH North

Nya dokumentationer till museets samlingar, de speglar delar av regionens musikliv idag och kompletterar äldre samlingar. Vi har även i praxis fått testa hur ICH-konventionen kan tillämpas i museer.

New documentation for the museum's collections, reflecting parts of the region's musical life today and complementing older collections. We have also been able to test in practice how the ICH convention can be applied in museums.

What have I personally gained from ICH North

Min lärdom är att kulturarvsinstitutionerna är fast i sina gamla roller och uppdrag. De ligger långt efter de förändringar som sker på forskningsfältet och styrs hellre av politiska uppdrag än att vara en aktiv part tillsammans med forskarsamhället.

My lesson is that cultural heritage institutions are stuck in their old roles and missions. They are far behind the changes taking place in the research field and are driven by political mandates rather than being an active partner with the research community.



Photo: Lennar Jonsson



Photo: Daniel Fröjdö

Sara Käll-Fröjdö

Centria University of Applied Sciences

What do I think the Aurora area has gained from ICH North

I think that we have shown that development can be driven from the North and from a bottom-up perspective. There is great strength in working together for a common goal, even when individual organizations and communities are small. Pooling resources and joining forces do make a difference.

What has my organization gained from ICH North

I think Centria UAS has earned trust as a reliable project partner, and we have shown that we can take on the responsibility of leading an international project in the field of living heritage. Our own network has expanded, and we've been able to connect different networks through the project.

What have I personally gained from ICH North

I have learned a lot from both the project team and from all the different stakeholders we've been working with. Over the years, I've had new insights into the project's themes, and new interesting aspects and questions have continued to pop up. Working in a creative atmosphere with creative people has been rewarding, fueling my motivation to work with the sometimes-tough admin work of a large project. As a people person at heart, the most meaningful part for me has been the many direct encounters with people all over the Aurora area: practitioners and tradition bearers, community members and others involved in various ways.

The tangible outcome of the project is of course the outputs of the project activities, in the format of digitally published material, available for all interested and open access. The project partners will maintain the material and keep it online. Hope you will have time to explore it – and if you find it useful, please share it onwards!

We chose to invest a lot of time in communication. Since so many organizations and communities have been involved in the project and this was the first project in musical heritage with such a large budget in the area, transparency was very important. In a project with bottom-up approach, it is important to communicate how the project funds have been used in order to reach the goals.

The project monthly Newsletter was published 30 times and opened in total 8133 times. The newsletter has been a way of spreading project updates, such as activities in the project and published material – but also spreading news on events, ideas, and good practices from music communities as well as seminars, courses, and research in the field of intangible cultural heritage. We encouraged actors and stakeholders in the field to let us know if they had content for the Newsletter.

Last but not least, a new project called ICH EDU North was initiated during the final phase of ICH North. ICH EDU North will continue the work done in ICH North with a slightly changed composition of project partners and with a focus on education and lifelong learning. For ICH North, this means that we will be able to spread the outputs and results also through the new projects and that new activities can build on what we have achieved so far.



Photo: Sara Käll-Fröjdö

Challenges along the way

Sara Käll-Fröjdö, Centria University of Applied Sciences

The question of which language(s) to use proved to be a challenge along the way. English might make a project sounding distant and bureaucratic but communicating everything every time in several different languages makes things clumsy and time consuming. Is there a way of avoiding having to choose between only English and all languages of a region? Should the communication be in several languages, or in English, which might not be the mother tongue of anybody in the project working group or in the target group? This aspect was especially important in ICH North, as minority languages and dialects are closely tied to musical heritage and identity. There are up to 14 languages spoken in the Aurora area, not to mention all those that have no official status but are used in the homes of many families with backgrounds in other parts of the world.

The Project Working Group spent a lot of time discussing the matter and did not come to a single conclusion. We applied a hybrid solution, doing the best of the challenge. In video recordings with tradition bearers, the tradition bearers speak their own language and their

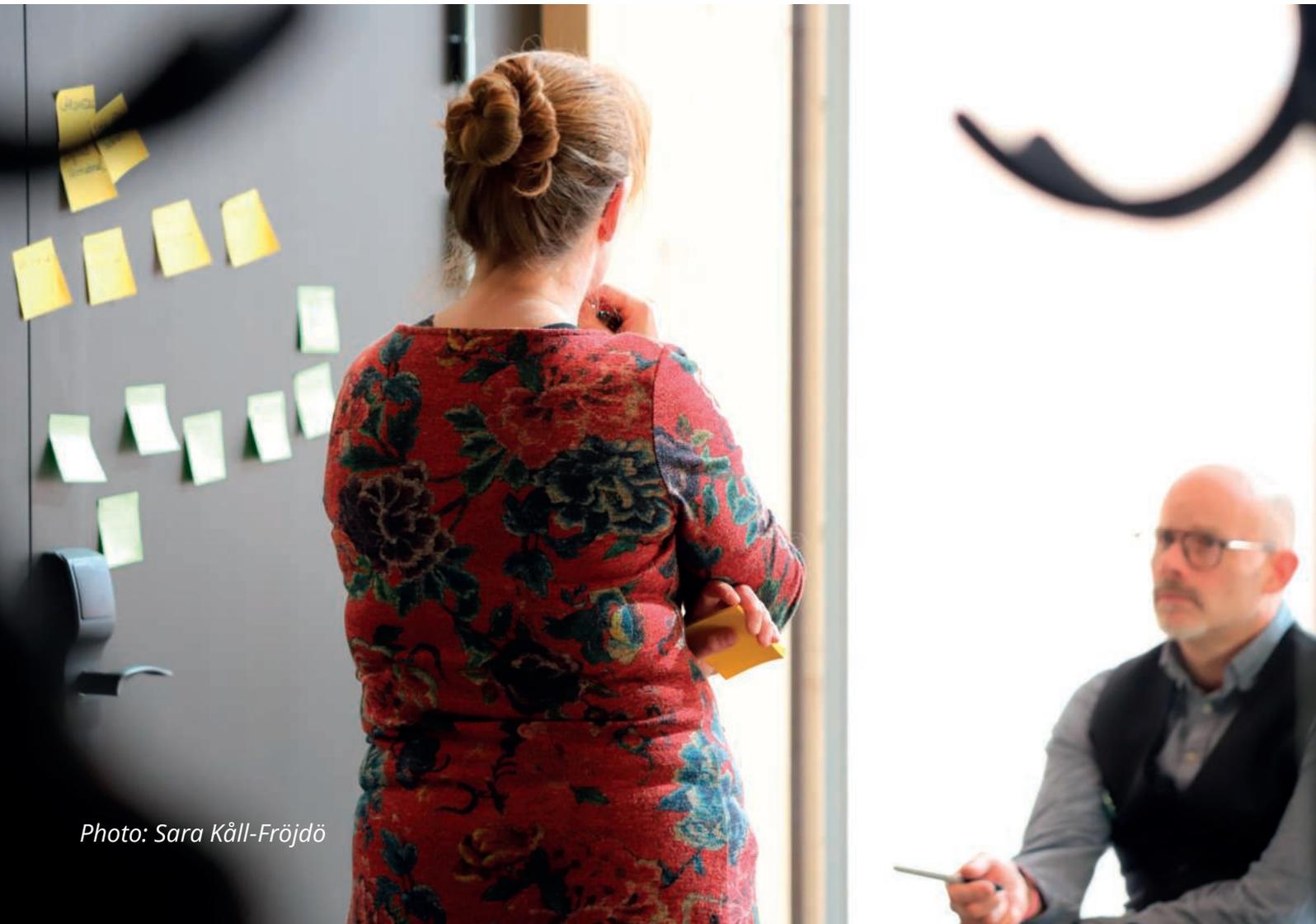
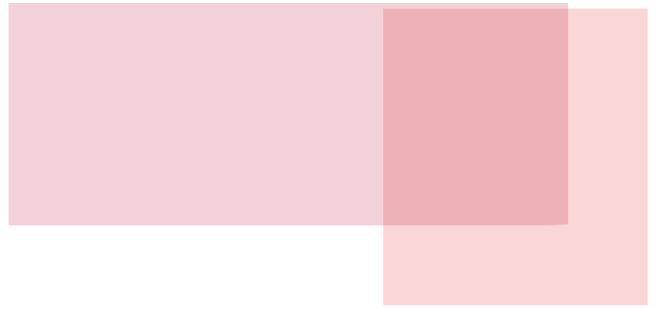


Photo: Sara Käll-Fröjdö



own dialect. The videos are subtitled and used both on the digital map and in the MOOC. The MOOC itself is produced in English, since it opens up for a global target group interested in the musical heritage of the North. The educational material aimed at informal education was translated into several of the languages of the project area. Some of the workshops dealing with cultural tourism and musical heritage were kept in Finnish, some in Swedish. The work on the joint strategy for community involvement in safeguarding musical heritage for archives in the Aurora area was made in both English (webinars and elaboration of strategy) and regional languages (workshops with communities and archives).

We actively communicated the possibility to talk in one's own language during online events and provided translation if needed.

Read more on the subject in the text *A reflection on the use of languages in cross-border projects*, published digitally in Centria Bulletin (Hyvönen & Kåll-Fröjdö 2023).

On the importance of musical heritage in the Aurora area

Sara Kåll-Fröjdö, Centria University of Applied Sciences

This text is based on discussions on musical heritage throughout the project.

The value created by musical heritage for the region has not been measured – the topic would demand a project of its own – but it's safe to say that the musical heritage is a vital part of our society. It is important in terms of resilience, inclusion, identity, wellbeing and health, local branding as well as cultural products, and tourism.

You could calculate the economic value of the various events and festivals, including the money visitors spend locally and the added value brought to local entrepreneurs. Many of the festivals are located in small municipalities and the increased turnover will form a yearly peak in the region around them. Local musical traditions could play an important role in branding in the tourism and hospitality sectors. When using storytelling and looking for uniqueness, there is much to be found in local musical heritage. Tourism professionals use the term USP (unique selling point), meaning a feature that distinguishes your product or destination from others. Look for the living heritage that already exists and thrives – could there be win-win situations, where both local communities and entrepreneurs could benefit from collaborating, and local musical heritage could gain more visibility?

Living heritage is based on human knowledge and skills; it is by definition intangible. There is a sustainability aspect to developing products and innovations based on knowledge and skills, instead of physical (raw) materials. As Mats Granfors at Novia UAS put it in an ICH North workshop in Jokkmokk in 2025: living heritage is a resource that grows the more you practice it.

Another economic aspect is the savings in health and social care costs followed by the health promoting effects of playing music together. The feeling of belonging and togetherness that could come out of music heritage is not to be underestimated – and the joy of playing together is something universally human. (Björkholm 2024.) A social inclusion pilot carried out in the project shows that the potential for using a so-called Musical Livingroom for inclusion is huge. We were only able to test the concept in the form of a pilot, and a longer implementation period would be needed in order to fully evaluate the impact. Yet, we hope that others will be inspired by the Musical Livingroom and implement the idea in different ways.

If you look for other values than the economic ones, the social value of musical heritage in the Aurora area is important in terms of, for example, resilience, identity, inclusion, and cohesion. In a world where social gaps are increasing and there is a rapid polarization between groups, playing music together has a large potential to act as a cohesive factor. Music is something that unites humankind, and you don't need a common language or a common cultural background to play, sing, or dance together. Events, such as a festival or community evening in a small municipality, will also act as a cohesive factor.

Culture in general and living heritage in particular is an important factor in building resilience. When faced with difficulties and crisis, whether on a personal level or in society at large, the comfort in practicing living heritage can function as a buffer. Living heritage does implement that you are part of a long chain, together with those before you and those coming after you. As living heritage is not static, but evolves with its practitioners, you can leave your imprint as the present link in the chain. The feeling of continuation and, at the same time, the freedom to develop and implement the living heritage you practice in your own way could be a strong empowering force.

Last but not least, musical heritage is important for identity, closely connected to language and dialect. The perspective from a minority's point of view is different from the perspective from a majority's point of view. You might also have a background in two or more different minorities, or in a minority within a minority. Music is a way of exploring and expressing your identity, bringing empowerment.

Questions about ownership and representation are important issues and especially vital for minorities. Who is making the decisions on what to record for archives? Who has ownership of material already in the archives? A dialogue between tradition bearers, practitioners, heritage communities, and archive professionals opens a paradigm shift in the way material is collected, archived, and used. This will also enhance the transmission of musical heritage.

Finally, it is important to understand that musical heritage is not a single, homogenous form of heritage, but all kinds of musical expressions that an individual or community wants to transmit to new generations. The diversity itself is a true richness of the Aurora area.



“Minun elämänfilosofian mukaisesti elävä kulttuuri muuttuu, eikä voi lähteä siitä, että se on samanlainen kuin eilen. Se ei edes saa olla samanlainen kuin eilen. Jos kulttuuri elää, sen täytyy koko ajan muuttua ja tuoda mukanaan uusia materiaaleja ja tapoja sekä käyttää niitä niin, että ne sopivat jokapäiväiseen elämään.”

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (Helander & Kailo 1999)

Eng. translation:

“According to my life philosophy, a living culture changes, and you cannot assume that it will be the same as it was yesterday. It must not even be the same as it was yesterday. If culture is alive, it must constantly change and bring with it new materials and methods and use them in ways that fit everyday life.”

Nils-Aslak Valkeapää (translation by Sara Kåll-Fröjdö) (Helander & Kailo 1999)

Photo: Sara Kåll-Fröjdö



A group of seven people, four men and three women, are standing outdoors in a scenic area. In the background, there is a large, dark metal sculpture of a hand holding a staff. The setting appears to be a riverbank with a flowing river and some buildings in the distance. The people are dressed in casual, outdoor-appropriate clothing. The overall atmosphere is bright and sunny.

Finally, Thank you

to all the tradition bearers across the Aurora area, whether you were born here or have your roots in other parts of the world. Your work not only safeguards heritage but also inspires others to learn, engage, and carry it forward.

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ICH North

Newsletter
5/2023 out!

Why is musical tradition important?

Part of everything

It is life

Beauty
Familiarity
Joy

Unites people of different ages, and people that might not have anything in common

OPEN INFORMATION EVENT IN ZOOM
4.4.2024

The project ICH NORTH:
**WHAT DO WE DO?
HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?**

interreg Aurora Co-funded by the European Union

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The ICH North project supports the Sustainable Development Goals

interreg Aurora Co-funded by the European Union

ICH North

Help us with your **Tips & Thoughts** of intangible cultural heritage!

Click the QR code to find a questionnaire to share your ideas about ICH with the ICH North project working group.

interreg Aurora Co-funded by the European Union

FOLK MUSIC PEDAGOGY
18.4.2024

WEBINAR WITH: Siw Burman (musiklärare, folk music teacher)
Anni Järvelä (folklärares, folk musician)

ICH North

Newsletter May/2024 is out!

Passing on our musical heritage

interreg Aurora Co-funded by the European Union

JOIN US!
4.11.2024

UIT - Musikkonservatoriet Tromsø
"Make head arrangement for traditional music"

What kind of traditions would you like to pass on yourself?

Dance Songs
Handcrafts and recipes

Playing music

Using folk costume
Holiday traditions

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WEBINAR WEBINAR
14.11.2024
14:00 (UTC +2)

Community Involvement in Documentation

SAVE THE DATE!

interreg Aurora Co-funded by the European Union

The role of social value in strategic decisions about events

23.1.2025

Measuring the unmeasurable

WEBINAR WITH MARTIN WALLSTAM

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ICH North

"Recordings - how can they be preserved and displayed?"

Jojk-workshop med JÖRGEN STENBERG från Malå Skogssameby

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TEMA: MARKNADSFÖRING – BLI MER SYNLIG OCH LOCKA NYA MÅLGGRUPPER

29.9.2025

DIGITALA ARRANGÖRSTRÄFFAR I AURORA-OMRÅDET

What do musical traditions and culture mean to you?

Connection with my roots and family

Identity

Part of life Creativity
Unity Community
Freedom Passion

The songs, rhymes and spells of my grandma

Joy

interreg Aurora Co-funded by the European Union

FOLK LIKE A LOCAL

Ångermanland-Medelpad

LYSSNA PÅ LOKAL FOLKMUSIK

JOIN OUR

MUSICAL LIVING ROOM!

Mondays 17.30-20.00
Musikcafé After Eight
Storgatan/Isokatu 6
Jakobstad/Pietarsaari

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ICH North

"We need to reduce the distance between archives and practitioners."

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ICH NORTH:
FINAL SEMINAR
19.11.2025

Västernorrlands museum

interreg Aurora Co-funded by the European Union

The ICH North Spotify playlist

Can you help us with adding music?