# Impact Research Report (EU)

# 2025/2026 Results

# Theatre of Remembrance

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Theatre of Remembrance

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# GENERAL INFORMATION

### About Theatre of Remembrance

Theatre of Remembrance is a yearly theatrical manifestation that takes place on the 27th of January, International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Young people (assisted by professional directors) throughout Europe strengthen the significance of this day through commemoration performances. These performances are inspired by live discussions the youngsters have with eyewitnesses or second generations from the Second World War and by their research of the history of their neighbourhoods, towns or villages. The performances explore history and are, at the same time, a reflection of how that history continues to shape life and society today. The youngsters pass on tangible heritage of the past and, at the same time, reflect on the relevance of this history for today's and tomorrow's world. This event is part of a larger project organised by Theater Na de Dam. 2025 and 2026 were the 8th and 9th edition of Theatre of Remembrance.

### How It Started

Theatre of Remembrance was created by the Dutch organisation Theater Na de Dam. Every year on May 4th, the Netherlands commemorates the Second World War, with the largest ceremony held at De Dam in Amsterdam. Following this, theatres across the country host performances that give audiences a deeper understanding of this important day.

Theater Na de Dam began in 2010 with seven performances in Amsterdam. By May 2024, more than 140 performances took place across the Netherlands, with both well-known theatre companies and local groups taking part.

### Youth Projects

One of the key elements of Theater Na de Dam is its youth projects. On May 4th (and sometimes on the 5th and 6th), young people aged 12-20 perform in small theatre productions across the Netherlands. These projects may be on a small scale, but their impact is profound.

### From Amsterdam to Europe

Due to the great significance of these youth performances, Theater Na de Dam has expanded these activities internationally. Since 2018, young people across Europe have performed for International Holocaust Remembrance Day (January 27). This international initiative, called Theatre of Remembrance, has grown each year. In January 2025 and in January 2026, there were 10 projects in 8 countries.

### Reason for the impact study

To better understand and improve the impact of its youth projects, Theater na de Dam wanted to conduct an impact study focusing on young participants, elderly (eyewitnesses or surviving relatives) who were interviewed during the preparation of the performance, and the audience.

Theater na de Dam would like to know what participants have learned from their experience. Before and after the project, questions regarding 4 constructs (empathy, interest in local history, connectedness with the neighbourhood, communication skills) are presented to 2 of the 3 target groups: young people participating in the project

and the audience. Additionally, 4 supplementary open questions regarding what they have learned are presented to the 3 target groups (young people participating in the project, the audience, and elderly people participating in the project) after the project.

**Goal**

Theatre of Remembrance aims to keep the memory of the Holocaust and the Second World War alive and to promote civic engagement.

The primary goal of the impact study is multifaceted, namely to gain insight into (change in) the following indicators/constructs:

1. Empathy
2. Interest in local history
3. Connectedness with the neighbourhood
4. Communication skills

The secondary goal of the impact study is to gain insight into:

1. What participants learned about their neighbourhood/city/village during the Second World War
2. What participants learned from the project:
    a. What young people participating in the project learned about themselves from performing in a youth project by Theatre of Remembrance
    b. What elderly people participating in the project learned from the conversations with the young people
    c. What the audience learned from the performance
3. When did the Second World War end in their perception
4. What can we do to keep the peace

**Target groups**

In this study, we focus on young participants, elderly (eyewitnesses or surviving relatives) who were interviewed during the preparation of the performance, and the audience.

**Fieldwork period, response and breakdown**

In January 2025 and in January 2026, there were 10 projects in 8 countries:

1. Amsterdam (Netherlands), Nationaal Holocaust Museum
2. Assen / Hooghalen / Kamp Westerbork (Netherlands), Garage TDI
3. Berlin (Germany), Academy Bühnenkunstschule
4. Bratislava (Slovakia), Post Bellum (PBSK)
5. Budapest (Hungary), Itt es Most Tarsulat (IMTMA)
6. Goleniów (Poland), Teatr Brama
7. Prague (Czech Republic), Post Bellum (PB)
8. Torup (Denmark), Out Of Office

9. Turin (Italy), Fondazione Teatro Ragazzi e Giovani TRG
10. Warsaw (Poland), Stop-Klatka

In the period from September 2024 to March 2025 and in the period from September 2025 to February 2026, questions were presented to participants via an electronic questionnaire. Participants were encouraged to answer the questionnaires digitally, but when that was not possible (for the elderly, for instance), paper versions were made available.

The impact research questionnaire was shared twice with the young participants (once at registration and once the activities end), twice with the audience (before and after the performance) and once with the elderly people participating in the project (after the project).

In total 290 young participants, 104 elderly, and 4941 visitors have participated in the project.

The pre-measurement was fully completed by 917 participants: 254 young participants and 663 from the audience.

The post-measurement was completed in full by 831 participants: 191 young participants, 53 elderly (eyewitnesses or surviving relatives) who were interviewed during the preparation of the performance, and 587 from the audience.

480 people were matched 1 on 1 in the pre- and post-measurement: 134 young participants and 346 from the audience.

These are scientifically validated numbers. Based on these, statements can be made about the target groups and about differences between the pre- and post-measurements on the 4 constructs. The high response rate among young participants is striking. At the pre-measurement 254 out of 290 (88%) completed the questionnaire fully, and at the post-measurement 191 out of 290 (66%).

We also conducted qualitative research in the post-measurement with open questions to gain in-depth insights in civic engagement. These have been filled in by 580 participants: 148 young participants, 53 elderly (eyewitnesses or surviving relatives) who were interviewed during the preparation of the performance, and 379 from the audience.

The results from the impact study follow in the subsequent sections.

# RESULTS CONSTRUCTS THEATRE OF REMEMBRANCE 2026/2026

For Theater Na de Dam we explored to what extent there are significant differences between the pre- and post-measurements in the research conducted among young participants and visitors.

The following constructs were examined (for an explanation, see the Master's thesis “Historisch omgevingsonderwijs ter bevordering van burgerschap” from June 2020):

1. Empathy
2. Interest in local history
3. Connectedness with the neighbourhood
4. Communication skills

We explored this in 2 ways:

1. Analysis of the 480 people who match 1 on 1 in the pre- and post-measurement according to target group type (young participant, visitor). Analysis: significant differences between pre- and post-measurement for these 480 people (see graph 2).
2. Breakdown of total by target group type (young participant, visitor) for pre- and post-measurement. Analysis: significant differences between pre- and post-measurement total, significant differences between 2 target groups pre- and post-measurement (see graph 1).

In the graphs, significant differences are indicated with an asterisk (*).

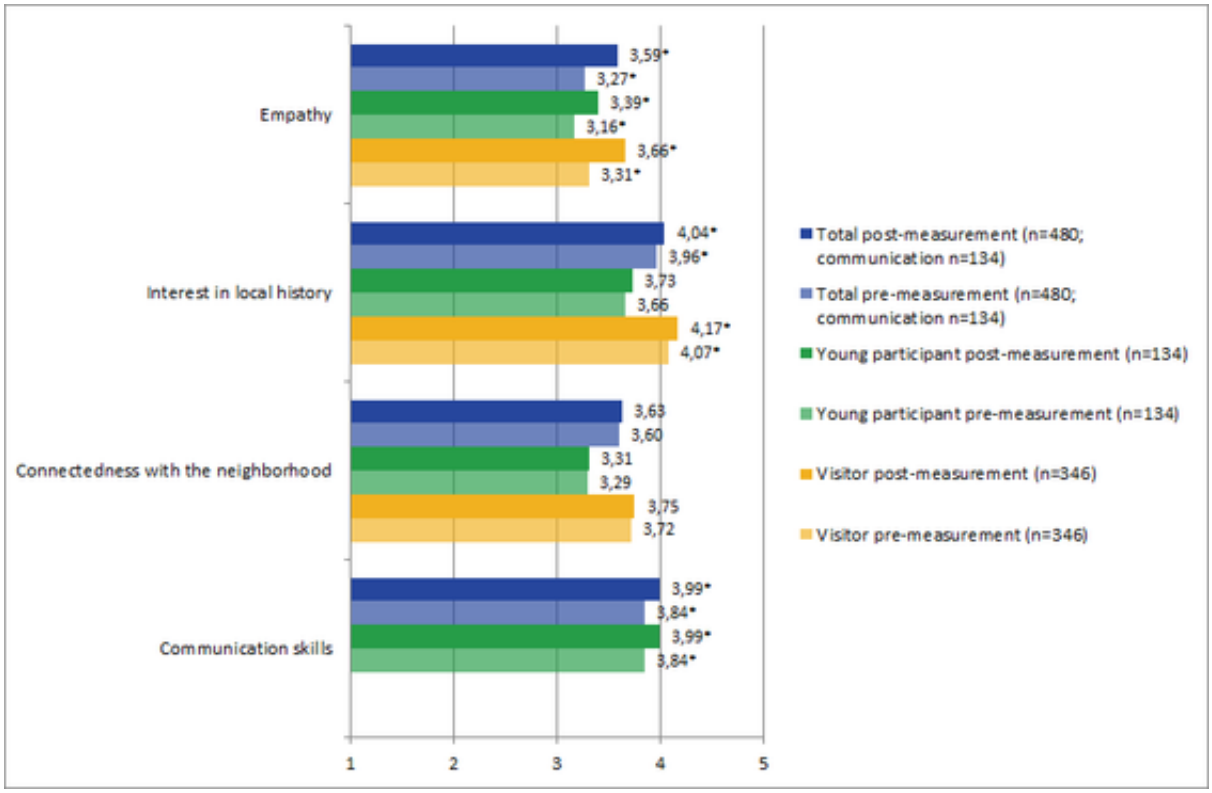
**Graph 1** shows that the total empathy has increased significantly from 3,27 to 3,59 (on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree) in the 480 people who match 1 to 1 in pre- and post-measurement. This has increased significantly among young participants from 3,16 to 3,39 and significantly increased among visitors from 3,31 to 3,66.

Interest in local history in total has increased significantly from 3,96 to 4,04. This has increased significantly visitors from 4,07 to 4,17.

Connection with the neighborhood has no (significant) increase.

Communcation skills have increased significantly among young participants from 3,84 to 3,99.

**Graph 1: Analysis of the 480 people who match 1 on 1 in the pre- and post-measurement according to target group type (young participant, visitor)**

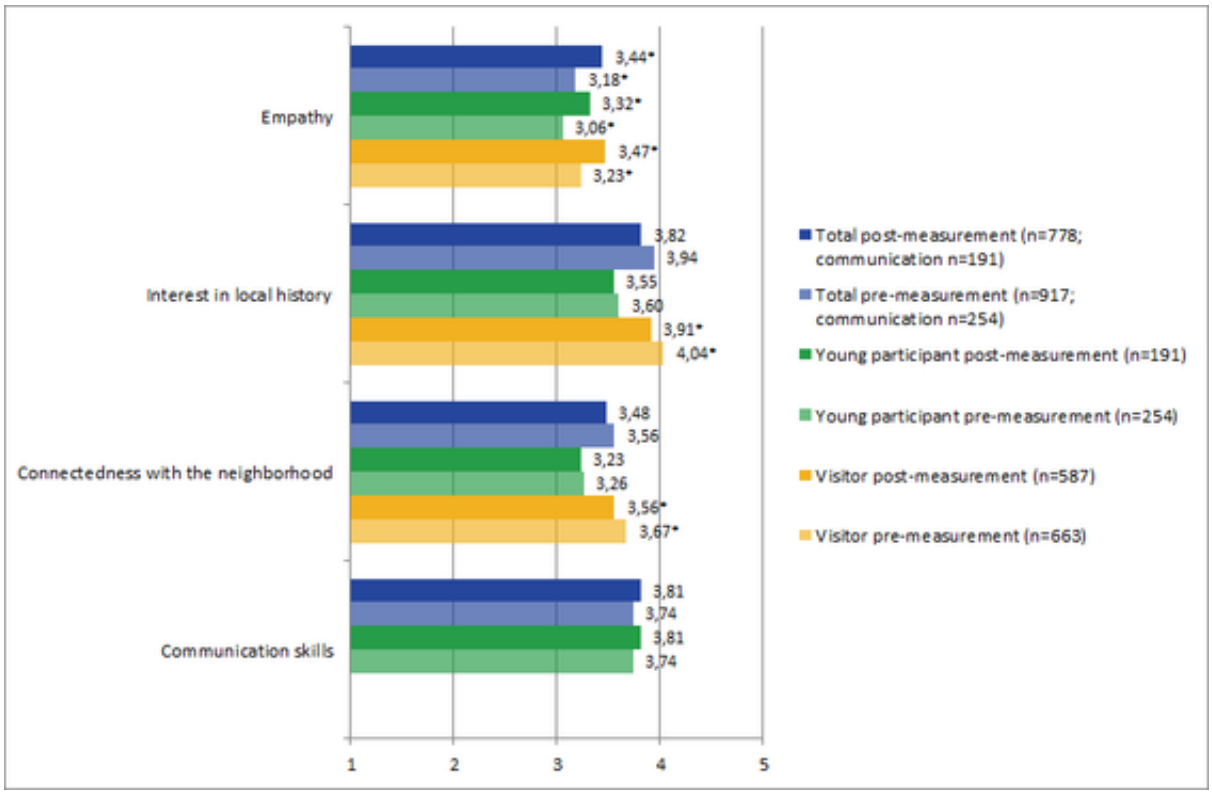


**Graph 2** shows that the total empathy has increased significantly from 3,18 to 3,44 (on a 5-point scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree). This has increased significantly among young participants from 3,06 to 3,32 and significantly increased among visitors from 3,23 to 3,47.

Interest in local history has declined significantly among visitors from 4,04 to 3,91. This is due to the visitors from Warsaw, who do not only have a low pre score, but also an even lower post score. We will discuss this in the next chapter.

Furthermore, the connection with the neighbourhood has declined significantly among visitors from 3,67 to 3,56. This is due to the visitors from Warsaw, who do not only have a low pre score, but also an even lower post score. We will discuss this in the next chapter.

**Graph 2: Breakdown of total by target group type (young participant, visitor) for pre- and post-measurement**



# RESULTS CLUSTER ANALYSES THEATRE OF REMEMBRANCE 2025/2026

Cluster analyses (see graph 3 and 4) show that locations group into structurally low, medium, and high performance clusters, with “construct 1. Empathy” making the difference.

We distinguish 6 clusters (3 cluster pre and 3 clusters post) for each target group (young participants, visitors).

Cluster 1 has a high pre-level, these are strong starting locations.

Cluster 2 has a moderate/mediocre pre-level (“construct 1. Empathy” lags behind), these are locations with room for improvement.

Cluster 3 has a low pre-level, these are weak starting locations.

Cluster 4 has a high post-level, this is a top performer / best practice.

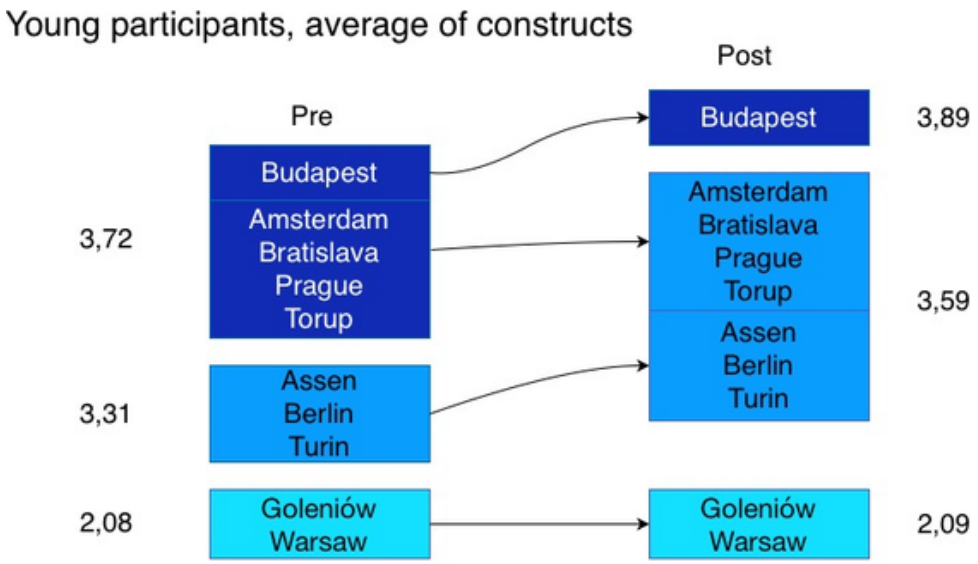
Cluster 5 has a stable high-middle level, this is a large converging middle group.

Cluster 6 has a low post-level, these are laggards.

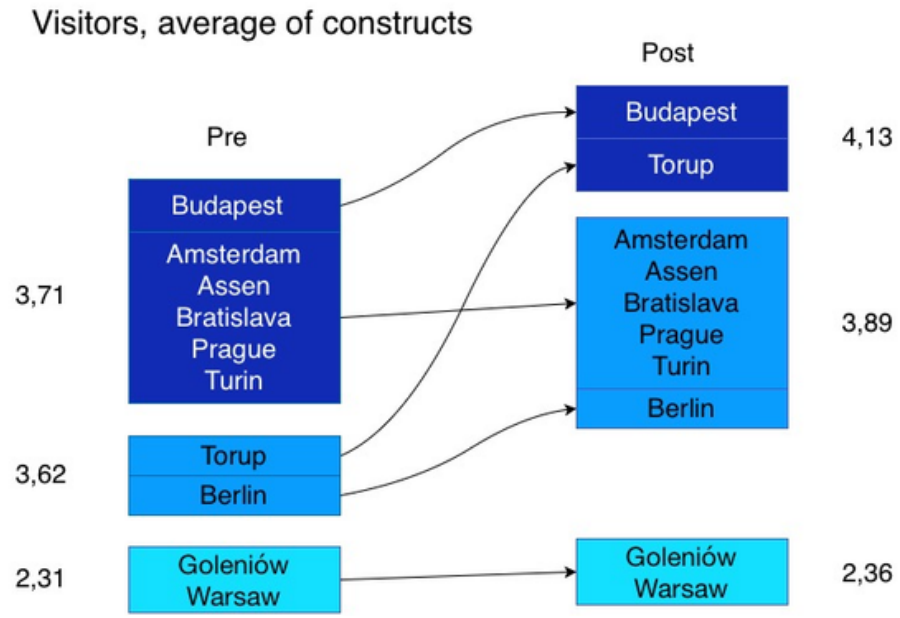
It is striking that a small group of locations scoring low on the constructs in the pre-measurement also continue to score low in the post-measurement, while a large group of medium locations converge to a higher level after the intervention and a top group (particularly Budapest) clearly distinguishes itself in an extra positive way.

The cluster analyses were conducted based on the pre- and post-measurements per location of young participants and visitors. Visitors show a similar pattern as the young participants. This is discussed further below.

**Graph 3: Average of constructs (empathy, interest in local history, connectedness with the neighbourhood) by target group young participants for pre- and post-measurement**



**Graph 4: Average of constructs (empathy, interest in local history, connectedness with the neighbourhood) by target group visitors for pre- and post-measurement**




**Young participants**

Below you can see the cluster classification for young participants at the pre- and post-measurement.

Pre-measurement Young Participants Cluster 1. High pre-level, strong starting locations:

- Amsterdam
- Bratislava
- Budapest
- Prague
- Torup

Pre-measurement Young Participants Cluster 2. Moderate pre-level ("construct 1. Empathy" lags behind), these are locations with room for improvement:

- Assen
- Berlin
- Turin

Pre-measurement Young Participants Cluster 3. Low pre-level, weak starting locations:

- Goleniów
- Warsaw

Post-measurement Young Participants Cluster 4. High post-level, top performer / best practice:

- Budapest

Post-measurement Young Participants Cluster 5. Stable high-middle level, large converging middle group:

- Amsterdam
- Assen
- Berlin
- Bratislava
- Prague
- Torup
- Turin

Post-measurement Young Participants Cluster 6. Low post-level, laggards:

- Goleniów
- Warsaw

**Visitors**

Below you can see the cluster classification for visitors at the pre- and post-measurement.

Pre-measurement Visitors Cluster 1. High pre-level, strong starting locations:

- Amsterdam
- Assen
- Bratislava
- Budapest
- Prague
- Turin

Pre-measurement Visitors Cluster 2. Mediocre pre-level ("construct 1. Empathy" lags behind), these are developable locations:

- Berlin
- Torup

Pre-measurement Visitors Cluster 3. Low pre-level, weak starting locations:

- Goleniów
- Warsaw

Post-measurement Visitors Cluster 4. High post-level, top performer / best practice:

- Budapest
- Torup

Post-measurement Visitors Cluster 5. Stable high-mid level, large converging middle group:

- Amsterdam
- Assen
- Berlin
- Bratislava
- Prague
- Turin

Post-measurement Visitors Cluster 6. Low post-level, laggards:

- Goleniów
- Warsaw

**Key insights:**

- Budapest is an outlier in a positive way: “Construct 1. Empathy” in particular is rising sharply. What can be learned from Budapest?
- Goleniów and Warsaw are consistently in the lowest cluster. What is the reason for this?
- Many locations are converging towards “good”: Differences between locations are becoming smaller after the intervention.

**Goleniów and Warsaw:**

Goleniów and Warsaw (both in Poland) are consistently in the lowest cluster. What is the reason for this?

We asked the partners in Poland, these are their explanations.

***Explanations Goleniów:***

Goleniów is a small town where, at the moment, not very much is happening that people might find engaging or fascinating. This may influence how people feel connected to the local area.

Other than that, the region has a very mixed background, with many residents having family roots in other parts of Poland or in other countries. Maybe some people feel less connected to the local history or neighbourhood identity because of it. Finally, I personally find that this part of Poland is sometimes overlooked and receives less attention, investment, and visibility than other regions.

***Explanations Warsaw:***

The results regarding the low level of identification with local history or connection to the neighbourhood may seem surprising, but from our perspective they have quite clear social and demographic foundations.

Here are a few factors that, in our opinion, contributed to this outcome:

The “temporary resident” identity:The majority of participants in our group are students. Warsaw is a city people come to from various parts of Poland to study. These individuals often do not yet feel (or do not feel at all) like “Warsaw residents.” Their local identity is rooted in their hometowns, and they treat Warsaw as a transitional or purely educational place. It is difficult to expect a strong connection to the history of a district from someone who has lived there for only a few months and does not plan to stay permanently.

New demographic structure (geopolitical context):This year, only two people in our group had been living in Warsaw for more than a year—and both were of non-Polish nationality (one Ukrainian and one Belarusian). Currently, Warsaw is home to a large number of people from Ukraine and Belarus who have fled war or political circumstances.

Priorities of empathy and connection: Lower results in areas such as empathy or local history may come from the fact that, for people with migration experience or newly arrived students, the priority is building a life “here and now” and coping with their own, often difficult, life situations. The history of Warsaw during World War II may feel distant compared to the immediate challenges they face in everyday life.

We would also add that our young participants resonated more strongly with the stories of witnesses—they experienced and lived through them emotionally. Through these accounts, they learned about what was happening in Warsaw at that time. The individual experiences of the witnesses moved them more deeply than the local history itself.

From our perspective, low scores in these categories do not indicate a lack of engagement, but rather reflect the process of adaptation within Warsaw’s new,

multicultural community. For many participants, our project is a first step toward building this connection, which in itself is of great value—even if it is not yet reflected in high indicators in the report.

**Deeper interpretation per construct:**

- "Construct 1. Empathy" is often the most distinctive; this is the key variable. Greatest spread between clusters and strongly determines "top performer".
- "Construct 2. Interest in local history" and "Construct 3. Connectedness with the neighbourhood" are less distinctive and move in line with the general trend of "Construct 1. Empathy".
- "Construct 4. Communication skills" is relatively stable and less sensitive to change.

# RESULTS OPEN QUESTIONS THEATRE OF REMEMBRANCE 2025/2026

**Overview**

We also looked at the open-ended responses about what people learned from the project, what they learned about WWII locally, their perception of when WWII ended, and what helps maintain peace. Because the material is qualitative rather than numerical survey scales, the most meaningful interpretation comes from thematic pattern analysis combined with demographic comparisons (place, theatre company, gender, and age/year of birth).

This chapter presents a qualitative impact analysis based on open-response survey data collected from young participants (n=148), elderly participants (n=53), and visitors (n=379) across multiple European partner locations. The analysis evaluates learning outcomes, intergenerational exchange, civic reflection, and local historical awareness emerging from participation in theatre-based remembrance activities related to the Second World War.

Overall, the dataset shows strong evidence that the project successfully supported intergenerational dialogue, local historical awareness, empathy development, and reflection on democratic values and peacebuilding. Differences between groups exist, but they are mostly differences in emphasis rather than disagreement.

Across all respondent groups and partner locations, the findings demonstrate that the project successfully contributed to:

- Increased awareness of local wartime history
- Enhanced empathy and historical understanding
- Stronger understanding of the human consequences of war
- Reflection on peace, democracy, and civic responsibility today
- Strengthened intergenerational dialogue

Differences between participant groups are primarily complementary rather than divergent, indicating that each audience type contributed uniquely to the project's overall impact structure. The differences between young participants, elderly participants, and visitors mainly concern perspective and depth of reflection, not direction of impact.

**Impact on Young Participants**

Young participants reported strong learning effects across three major domains.

***1. Increased awareness of local WWII history***

A large proportion of young respondents indicated that the project introduced them to previously unknown historical events connected to their own neighbourhoods and cities. This reflects a successful shift from abstract textbook knowledge toward place-based

historical understanding.



Participants frequently described:

- discovering stories from their immediate surroundings
- recognizing the relevance of history within their own community
- understood that WWII history is not only national but personal and local
- developing curiosity about local wartime experiences

This indicates strong success in place-based historical learning, which is one of the intended educational outcomes of participatory theatre memory projects.

> *"One of the witnesses lived in the same neighbourhood where I live. It was very moving to hear them talk about events and places I know—the street where I quietly drank coffee, walked my dog, and looked at a clear sky. For me, it is a safe space, my home; for someone else, it was a trap, the beginning of suffering, a lost home. I learned the price these people paid so that today we can peacefully drink coffee under a safe sky."*
>
> *Young participant, Warsaw*

***2. Personal connection to eyewitness testimony and lived experience***

Young participants emphasized the importance of direct interaction with older generations and personal stories. These encounters supported the transformation of historical learning from informational knowledge into relational and experiential understanding (a shift from: history-as-information to history-as-experience).

Respondents frequently described:

- meaningful conversations with eyewitnesses
- emotional engagement with personal wartime narratives
- recognition of the human dimension of historical events

Such outcomes represent a key success factor in intergenerational remembrance projects.

***3. Reflection on peace, democracy, and civic responsibility***

Young respondents consistently linked their learning to present-day societal questions. Many explicitly connected WWII memory to contemporary concerns including social cohesion, discrimination, polarization, and democratic values.

Common themes included:

- the importance of tolerance
- responsibility to prevent exclusion
- the role of dialogue in maintaining peace
- the value of remembering history

This indicates successful transfer from historical learning to civic awareness and democratic reflection.

> *"For me, this evening is not just a moment on stage and not just another story told. It is a very personal and meaningful experience. Everything we spoke about on stage today resonates deeply with what is happening in Ukraine right now. Unfortunately, war is not only a part of history books or theatrical material. For me, and for millions of people, it is a present-day reality. That is why the opportunity to speak about it through theatre, together with you — honestly, delicately, sometimes with humor, sometimes with pain — is especially valuable to me."*
>
> *Young participant, Goleniow*

> *"Talking to one another. Breaking the silence. Taking responsibility... Recognize human rights violations and take action against them... Confront politicians with real society... Support culture, education, and environmental protection so that we all retain a perspective for life and do not sink further into anxiety about the future."*
>
> *Young participant, Berlin*

**Impact on Elderly Participants**

The elderly group included eyewitnesses and surviving relatives. The elderly participant group contributed primarily through memory transmission rather than historical discovery. Their responses demonstrate strong intergenerational engagement outcomes.

***1. Recognition of youth engagement and interest***

Many elderly respondents expressed appreciation for the curiosity and attentiveness of younger participants. Several described the exchange as meaningful and encouraging, highlighting the importance of dialogue between generations.

This confirms the project's success in creating reciprocal learning environments rather than one-directional testimony settings.

***2. Validation of personal memories and experiences***

Participation offered elderly respondents opportunities to share stories that were received with respect and interest. This contributed to a sense of recognition and preservation of lived experience.

Such outcomes reflect the project's role in supporting:

- dignity of memory
- acknowledgement of testimony
- preservation of lived historical knowledge

These effects represent important cultural and social value beyond traditional educational outcomes.

### *3. Transmission of historical responsibility to younger generations*

Elderly participants frequently framed their involvement as contributing to future-oriented remembrance rather than retrospective storytelling alone.

Many emphasized:

- the importance of preventing repetition of historical violence
- the role of education in safeguarding democracy
- the responsibility to maintain awareness of wartime experiences

This confirms that the project supports living memory continuity.

> *"As you know, I will be 90 in July, but I really hope that my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren will never have to experience war in reality...*
>
> *Today's well-meaning, intelligent young people must be vigilant in preventing the spread of anti-Semitism and all forms of racism. The methods used can be varied: protest, voting correctly (and participating in elections!), etc.*
>
> *I hope that there will always be smart girls and boys who will not allow their parents and grandparents to live in fear, as our generations did then and, unfortunately, sometimes still do now."*
>
> *Elderly participant, Budapest*

**Impact on Visitors**

Visitors represent the largest respondent group and provide insight into the broader societal impact of the performances.

### *1. Emotional engagement with wartime experiences*

Visitors frequently reported strong emotional responses to the performances and highlighted the human dimension of occupation, resistance, and civilian life during wartime.

Visitors frequently referenced:

- the human impact of occupation
- stories of ordinary citizens
- personal identification with individuals in the narrative

This indicates successful translation of historical material into accessible and meaningful public narratives and indicates successful translation of historical material into empathetic understanding.

> *"Theater! Theater develops empathy in people, and empathetic people who can communicate are what we need to build peace." Visitor, Goleniów*

***2. Increased knowledge of local wartime history***

Like young participants, visitors reported learning new information about events that took place within their own cities and neighbourhoods.

This confirms that the performances functioned as effective tools for activating local historical awareness within wider audiences. It also confirms that the performances functioned as local historical activation tools, not only artistic presentations.

> *"Introduce young people to the war and everything that happened, and let them think for themselves using lesson programs. Politicians should set a good example and show how we treat each other respectfully. Show more empathy and understanding by getting to know each other instead of living past each other and holding on to prejudices."*
>
> *Visitor, Assen*

***3. Reflection on peace and social cohesion in contemporary Europe***

Visitors frequently connected wartime lessons to present-day societal challenges. Many responses referred to:

- the importance of democracy
- the need for social cohesion
- the risks of polarization
- individual responsibility for maintaining peace

These reflections demonstrate successful linkage between historical remembrance and contemporary civic awareness.

> *"Be civically engaged, educate ourselves, do not ignore injustice, go to the polls, set an example, remind people of the events that led to wars in the past. Do not think peace is a given or that democracy is self-preserving. Sense the warnings of experts and show readiness rather than questioning threats that aren't immediately visible but hang over the world."*
>
> *Visitor, Prague*

**Differences Between Participant Groups**

Differences between groups reflect variations in role rather than differences in impact quality.

Young participants primarily reported: learning, discovery, curiosity, and reflection.

Elderly participants emphasized: transmission and continuity of memory, responsibility, and intergenerational connection.

Visitors demonstrated: emotional reception and public reflection.

Together, these roles form a complementary impact ecosystem supporting the project's

intergenerational structure.

**Differences by Gender**

Gender-related differences were present but moderate.

Female respondents more frequently emphasized:

- empathy
- personal narratives
- social cohesion
- responsibility toward others

Male respondents slightly more often highlighted:

- historical processes
- timelines
- structural interpretations of conflict

However, these differences did not affect overall project outcomes and should be interpreted as variations in emphasis rather than divergence in experience.

**Differences by Age**

Year-of-birth patterns suggest:

Younger respondents: focused on discovery and awareness.

Middle-age visitors: focused on civic lessons and responsibility.

Elderly respondents: focused on transmission and remembrance.

This indicates a clear generational layering of meaning, which strengthens the educational value of the project rather than fragmenting it.

**Differences Between Locations**

Across partner cities responses showed strong thematic consistency.

Participants across locations reported:

- increased knowledge of local WWII history
- emotional engagement with wartime experiences
- reflection on democratic values and peace

Some contextual variation appeared:

- Central and Eastern European responses more frequently referenced occupation and political repression
- Western European responses more frequently emphasized democracy and social

responsibility today

These differences reflect historical context rather than variation in project effectiveness.

**Understanding of the End of the Second World War**

While many respondents identified 1945 as the formal end of the war, others provided reflective answers indicating awareness that historical consequences extended beyond this date.

Some responses emphasized:

- continuing effects of wartime experiences
- differences between regions
- ongoing relevance of memory today

This indicates development of historical complexity awareness, particularly among younger participants.

**Reflections on Maintaining Peace Today**

Across all respondent groups, there was strong consensus regarding the importance of:

- education
- dialogue
- mutual respect
- democratic values
- historical awareness
- social responsibility

This confirms the project's success in linking remembrance activities to contemporary civic engagement, which is a major indicator of cultural impact success.

**Overall Conclusion**

The findings demonstrate that the project achieved substantial educational, cultural, and societal impact across all participant groups.

Key outcomes include:

- Educational impact: Participants learned new local WWII history
- Emotional impact: Visitors connected personally with historical experiences
- Intergenerational impact: Elderly participants felt heard and valued
- Civic impact: All groups reflected on peace and responsibility today
- Cultural impact: Theatre functioned as a bridge between:
- Memory
- Community
- Democratic awareness

- Peacebuilding

Participatory theatre proved to be an effective medium for connecting historical remembrance with present-day civic awareness across diverse European audiences.

# REFLECTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter addresses reflections on experiences conducting impact research with elderly participants, young participants, and audience members. The reflections highlight challenges related to cultural context, survey design, and data collection methods, alongside practical recommendations for improving engagement and response rates.

**1. Cultural Sensitivity & Historical Context**

Experiences showed that survey questions must be carefully adapted to national and historical contexts. Topics such as WWII, the Holocaust, and the role of perpetrators can be perceived very differently across countries. In some contexts, these issues remain sensitive or taboo, affecting how participants engage with surveys.

Survey questions about imagining experiences like WWII or the Holocaust can feel inappropriate or uncomfortable depending on the country (e.g. Germany). Each country has different ways of dealing with historical responsibility and memory. In Hungary, topics like perpetrators or state involvement are often taboo, making certain survey questions difficult to approach.

**Recommendation:**

Adapt survey language and framing to cultural sensitivities and historical awareness in each country.

**2. Survey Design and Clarity**

Several partners noted that the surveys were too long or contained confusing elements. Questions about residence and neighbourhood/city/village (constructs “Interest in local history” and construct “Connectedness with the neighbourhood”) versus performance location created misunderstandings, and some items could be streamlined.

**Recommendations:**

Shorten and simplify surveys if possible.

Combine overlapping questions (e.g. organisation + location) (in the data analysis it was used as a check variable).

Clarify ambiguous wording (residence versus performance location).

Ensure that the residential locations of all target groups and the location of the performance are the same or minimize the distance between them.

Include a last open-ended question for personal reflections after the performance.

**3. Audience Engagement and Reflection**

Audiences expressed a strong desire to share personal reactions rather than only respond to structured questions. Opportunities for post-performance reflection (such as informal discussions, guestbooks, or dedicated spaces to linger) enhance engagement and emotional processing.

**Recommendation:**

Integrate moments for immediate audience reflection and dialogue into the experience.

**4. Data Collection Methods (Paper vs. Digital)**

Partners believe that paper-based surveys yield higher participation rates than digital ones. While many participants agreed to complete online surveys, follow-through (especially after performances) was low. In contrast, paper surveys completed on-site proved more effective. Partners believe that paper surveys are easier to complete on the spot and is a more controlled and reliable way of data collection.

**Recommendations:**

Use paper surveys as the primary data collection tool.

Offer digital options (e.g. QR codes) as a supplement.

Avoid relying solely on online surveys, particularly post-event.

**5. Practical Implementation**

Successful approaches included distributing a single-sheet survey with pre- and post-questions (front/back), providing pens, and giving clear, repeated instructions in person. These small logistical details improved completion rates.

**Recommendations:**

Keep surveys concise and visually simple (e.g. one-sheet format, pre + post on

front/back).

Facilitate completion on-site by distributing surveys and pens.

Use direct, personal communication to encourage participation.

Repeated, in-person reminders and clear guidance improve participation.

Direct communication and facilitation are key to success.

QR codes can still be offered for flexibility, but should not be the main method.

**6. Accessibility Across Age Groups**

Challenges were noted in engaging both elderly participants (who may struggle with surveys) and younger participants (who may misinterpret questions).

**Recommendation:**

Adapt survey design and language to ensure accessibility and clarity for different age groups.

**Conclusion:**

Effective impact research requires a balance between methodology and audience sensitivity. A hybrid survey approach (prioritizing paper-based collection, supported by clear design and culturally aware framing) combined with opportunities for reflection and active facilitation, leads to stronger engagement and more reliable data.

# MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

The Theatre of Remembrance 2025/2026 project, initiated by Theater Na de Dam, continues to demonstrate strong educational, cultural, and societal impact across Europe. Conducted in 10 locations across 8 countries, the project engaged 290 young participants, 104 elderly contributors, and over 4,900 audience members.

The primary objective of this impact study was to assess changes in four key constructs: empathy, interest in local history, connectedness with the neighbourhood, and communication skills. Using a combination of pre- and post-measurements (n=480 matched respondents) and qualitative analysis (n=580 open responses), the study provides both statistically validated and in-depth insights.

Key quantitative findings:

- Empathy increased significantly across both young participants and visitors, confirming its role as the project's strongest impact driver.
- Interest in local history showed moderate positive change overall, though variations between locations (notably Warsaw) influenced results.
- Connectedness with the neighbourhood showed limited or inconsistent change.
- Communication skills improved significantly among young participants.

Cluster analysis revealed a convergence effect: most locations moved toward a stable, high-middle performance level after the intervention. Notably:

- Budapest emerged as a best-practice location with exceptional growth, particularly in empathy.
- Goleniów and Warsaw consistently scored lower, largely due to contextual demographic and social factors rather than lack of engagement.

Qualitative findings reinforce and deepen these results:

- Young participants developed strong awareness of local WWII history, emotional engagement through eyewitness interaction, and increased civic reflection.
- Elderly participants experienced recognition, validation, and meaningful intergenerational exchange.
- Visitors demonstrated emotional connection, increased historical awareness, and reflection on democracy and peace.

Across all groups, the project successfully linked historical remembrance to contemporary societal themes such as tolerance, responsibility, and democratic values.

Overall, Theatre of Remembrance proves to be an effective model for:

- Intergenerational dialogue.
- Place-based historical education.
- Civic engagement through cultural participation.

# CONCLUSION

The Theatre of Remembrance 2025/2026 project has achieved substantial impact across educational, cultural, and societal dimensions. The findings demonstrate that participatory theatre is a powerful medium for connecting historical remembrance with present-day civic awareness.

The most consistent and significant outcome is the increase in empathy, which emerges as the central mechanism driving broader impact. Through personal stories, intergenerational dialogue, and artistic expression, participants move beyond abstract historical knowledge toward deeper emotional and social understanding.

While other constructs (such as interest in local history and connectedness) show more variation, these differences are largely explained by local demographic and contextual factors rather than shortcomings of the project itself. Importantly, even in lower-scoring locations, qualitative insights indicate meaningful engagement and the early stages of connection-building.

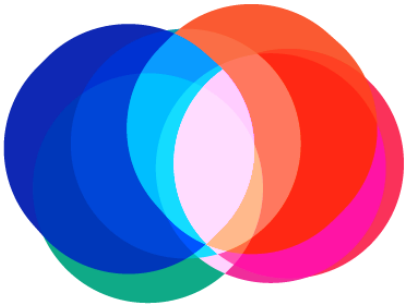
The project's strength lies in its complementary impact structure:

- Young participants learn, reflect, and develop civic awareness.
- Elderly participants transmit memory and experience recognition.
- Visitors engage emotionally and translate historical insight into contemporary reflection.

Together, these roles create a cohesive ecosystem that supports remembrance, dialogue, and democratic consciousness across generations and cultures.

Furthermore, the convergence of most locations toward a higher performance level highlights the project's scalability and adaptability across diverse European contexts. The identification of best practices (e.g., Budapest) and contextual challenges (e.g., Warsaw, Goleniów) provides valuable direction for future improvement.

In conclusion, Theatre of Remembrance successfully fulfils its mission to keep the memory of the Second World War alive while fostering civic engagement among younger generations and wider audiences. It demonstrates that cultural interventions — when grounded in participation, locality, and dialogue—can make a measurable and meaningful contribution to empathy, historical awareness, and the preservation of democratic values in contemporary Europe.



Theatre of
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