VARĖNOS KULTŪROS CENTRAS

From generation to generation: Varenas living heritage

Examples from Varėna Cultural Centre, Lithuania

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VARĖNAS CULTURAL CENTRE MISSION IS TO KEEP LIVING HERITAGE ALIVE

- Preserving and transmitting cultural traditions across generations;
- Organising traditional celebrations, folklore events and educational activities;
- Supporting traditional music, dance and folklore groups;
- Creating opportunities for communities to actively participate in living heritage.

TRADITIONAL MUSIC COURSES IN THE DZŪKIJA REGION

- Organised annually since 2022 by Varėna Cultural Centre in cooperation with the Lithuanian National Culture Centre;
- Held over 3–4 days in June in Marcinkonys, Varėna District;
- Open to participants aged 5–75;
- Focus on traditional instruments and singing.



Learning by doing. Learning from one another. Passing traditions on.

FROM LEARNING TO TRANSMISSION



Participants are encouraged to continue practising traditional music beyond the course itself.

- Practical access to traditional Lithuanian folk instruments;
- Knowledge shared between experienced musicians and new learners;
- Opportunities for children, young people and adults to learn together;
- Continued music-making at home and in folklore ensembles;
- Revitalisation and transmission of regional musical traditions.

ST ANDREW'S TRADITIONAL DANCE NIGHT

A community gathering centred on live traditional music and dance.

- Traditional Lithuanian and other European dances;
- Live music performed by traditional musicians and folk bands;
- Participation of young people, families and experienced dancers;
- An informal environment for learning, sharing and connecting.



The focus is participation, not professional performance.



THE WHOLE FAMILY DANCES



Traditions are kept alive when they are practised together.



An ethnocultural initiative inviting families to discover Lithuanian traditional dances, circle dances and games together.

- Children, parents and grandparents participate side by side;
- Traditional dances and games are learned through shared experience;
- Live music creates an engaging and accessible learning environment;
- Family participation strengthens intergenerational connections.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN NUMBERS

350+ participants in 2026

Children, young people, families and folklore group representatives



A Shared Cultural Experience

In 2026, more than 350 participants took part in the initiative.

Music was provided by the Šauliai Traditional Folk Band of Varėna Cultural Centre.

The initiative creates opportunities for families and community members to experience traditional dance as a shared, participatory activity.

WHAT MAKES THESE APPROACHES MEANINGFUL?

Key Principles for Working with Living Heritage

- Participation: People learn by doing, not only by observing;
- Intergenerational exchange: Knowledge and skills are shared across age groups;
- Continuity: Traditions are practised beyond organised events;
- Community: Cultural heritage brings people together;
- Accessibility: Activities welcome participants with different levels of experience.



Living heritage becomes meaningful when people have opportunities to practise, experience and share it.

BRINGING LIVING HERITAGE INTO CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH'S CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

Practical lessons for cultural professionals

- Create opportunities for children to participate actively in traditional practices;
- Involve tradition bearers and experienced community members;
- Use music, dance and games as accessible entry points to cultural heritage;
- Encourage children and families to learn together;
- Create spaces where traditions can be practised, adapted and passed on.



The future of living heritage depends on opportunities to experience it today.

THANK YOU!

KEEPING TRADITIONS ALIVE THROUGH PARTICIPATION, CONNECTION AND SHARED EXPERIENCE!

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