



**MILITARY
HERITAGE**
TOURISM



LATVIJAS
OKUPĀCIJAS
MUZEJS

Survey on education professionals' experiences working with young people and military heritage

Occupation Museum of Latvia (PP6)

Dr.hist. Kārlis Dambītis

Military Heritage Tourism conference

25-26 March 2026, Jurmala, Latvia

Interreg



Co-funded by
the European Union

Estonia – Latvia

Improved Accessibility of the Latvian-Estonian Military Heritage Tourism
Product (MIL-HER ACCESSIBLE)

EE-LV00094

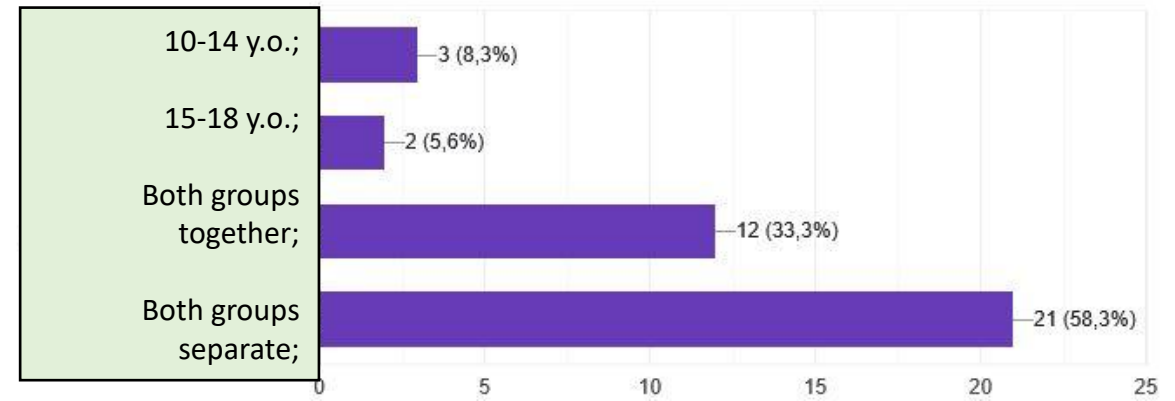
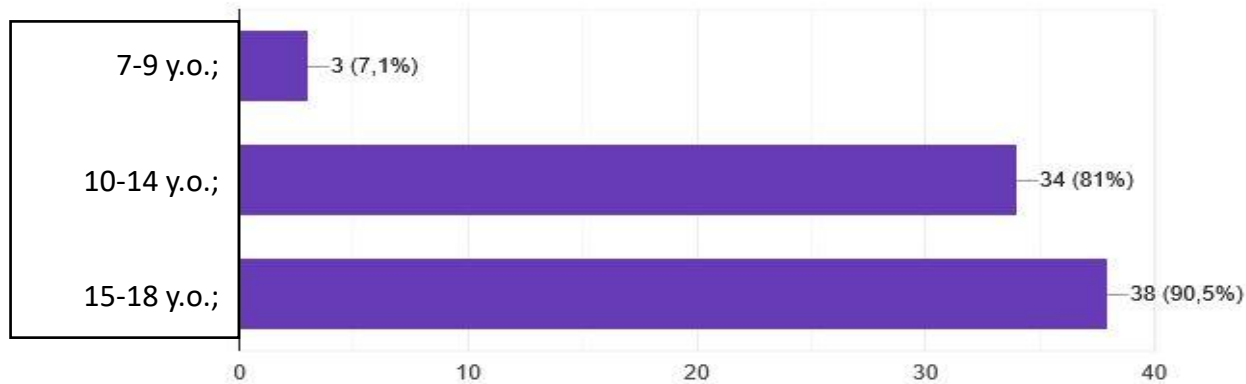
*Military Heritage as a Strategic Resource for
Historical Education and Civic Engagement*

Survey of teachers and instructors of the Youth Guard and State defence training on the use of military heritage in education

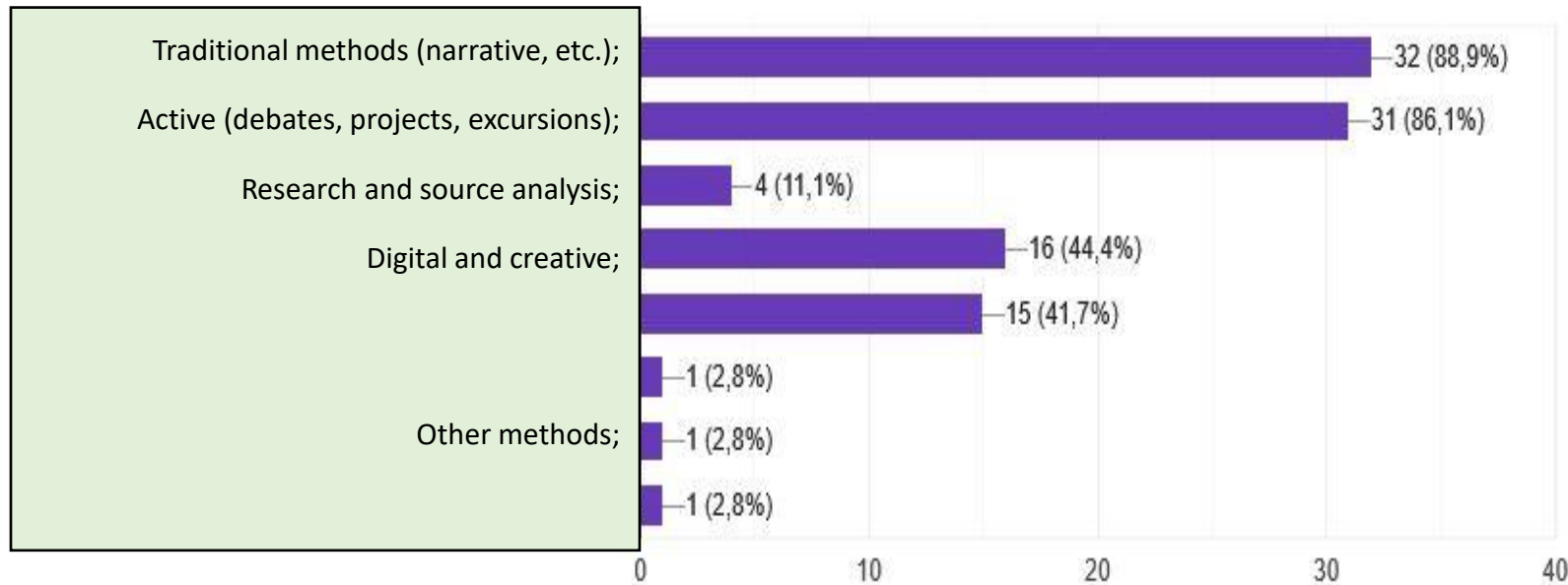
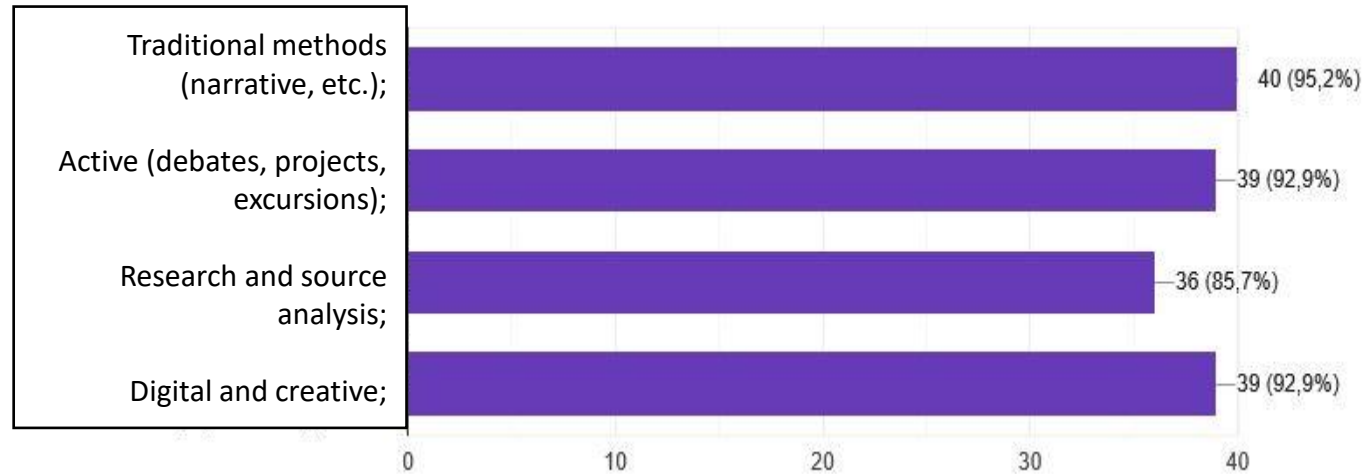
- Educational oriented – what to do if you want more Youth in Your site;
- Targeted survey – Teachers of history and social studies; Instructors of the Youth Guard and State defence training.
- In-depth questionnaire with 18 open/closed questions;
- 42 teachers and 36 instructors from all regions of Latvia;
- Took place in 12-14 August 2025 in “Summer days” organized by *History Teachers Association* and March 2026 on online survey
- Results can be used in the development of guidelines;
- Identified problems and challenges that, once overcome, will improve the accessibility of military heritage;

1. How do you understand the concept of "military heritage"?

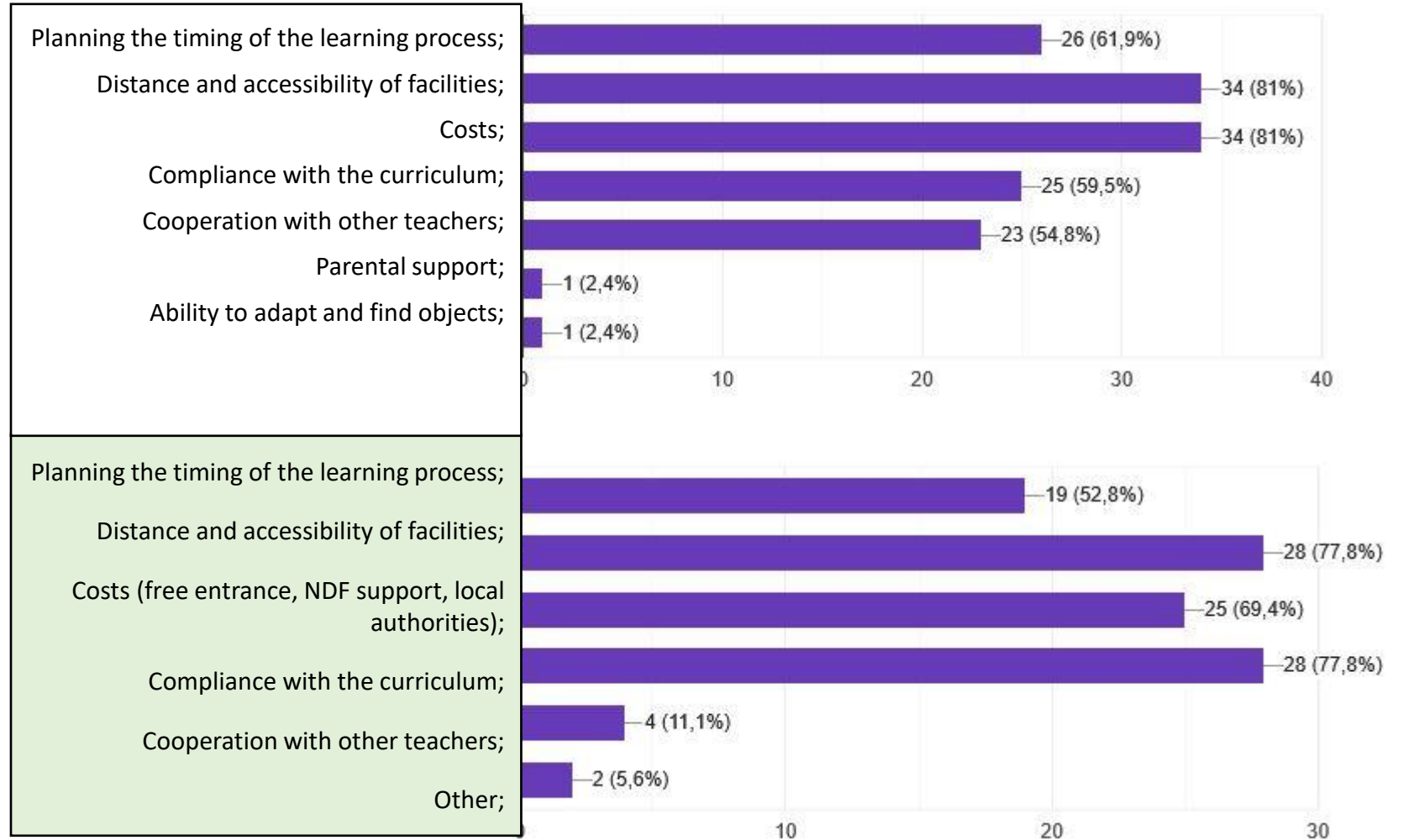
2. What age groups do you work with on a daily basis?



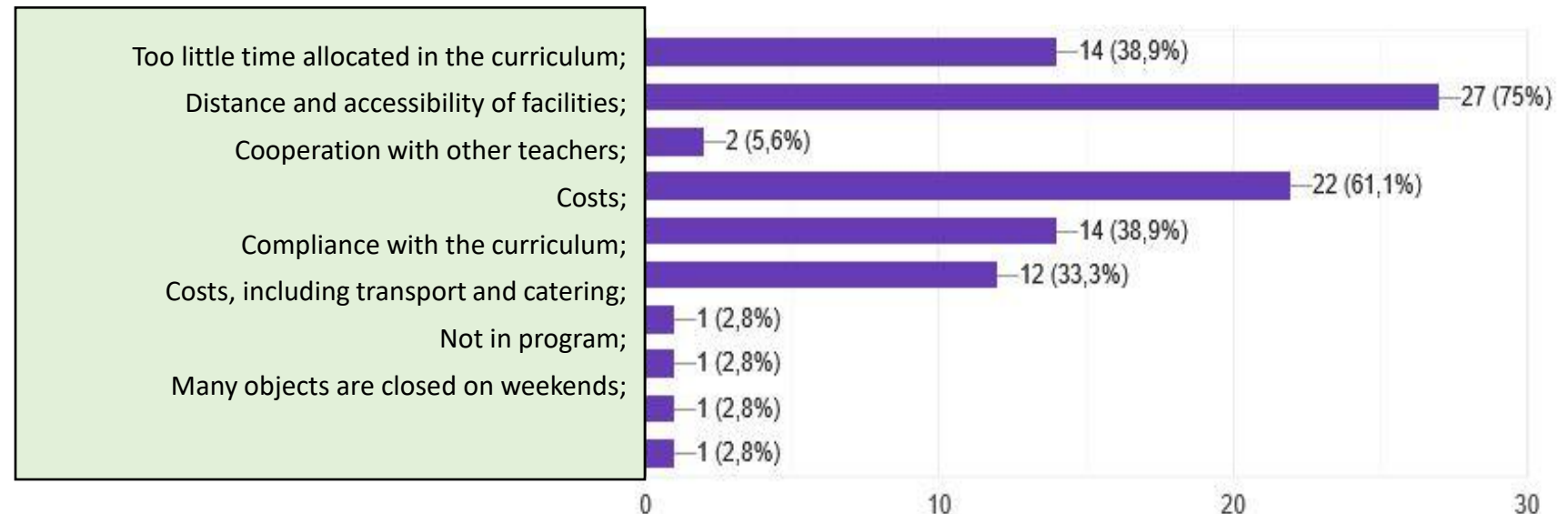
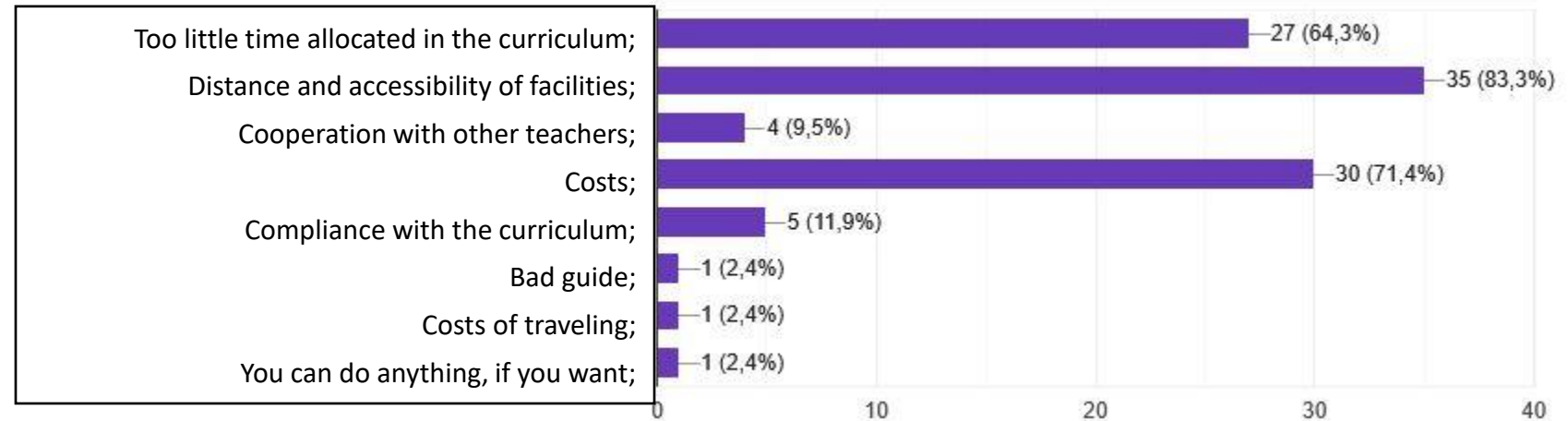
3. What methods do you use in the teaching process?



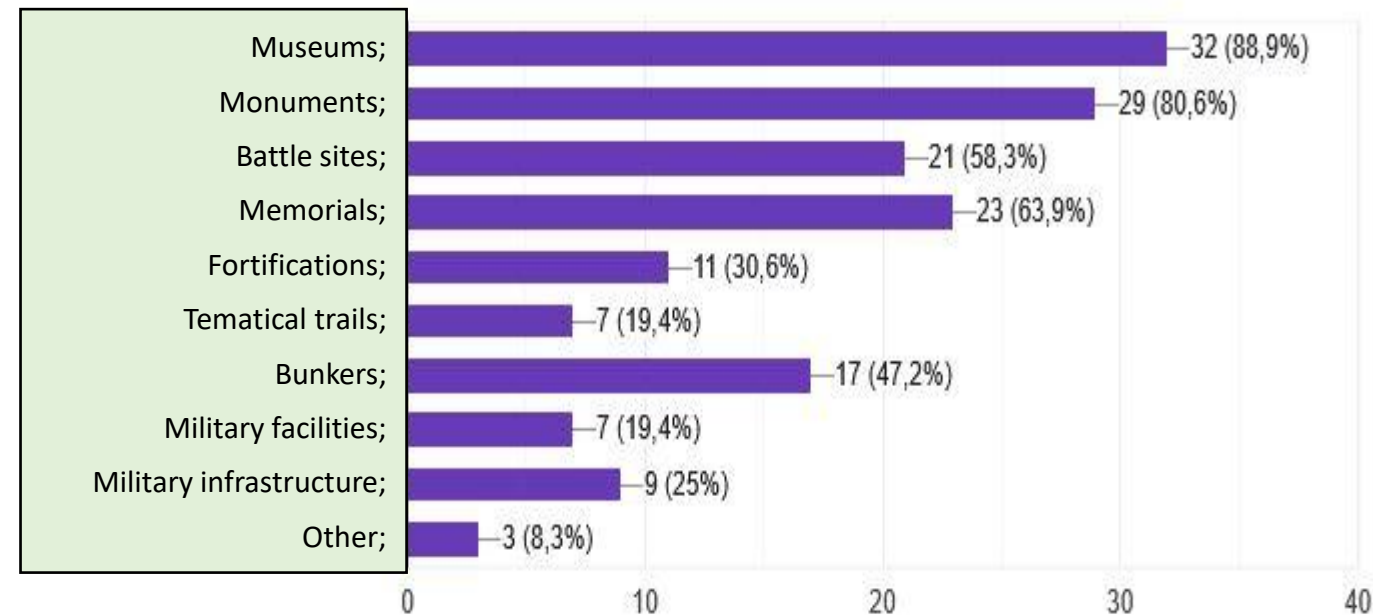
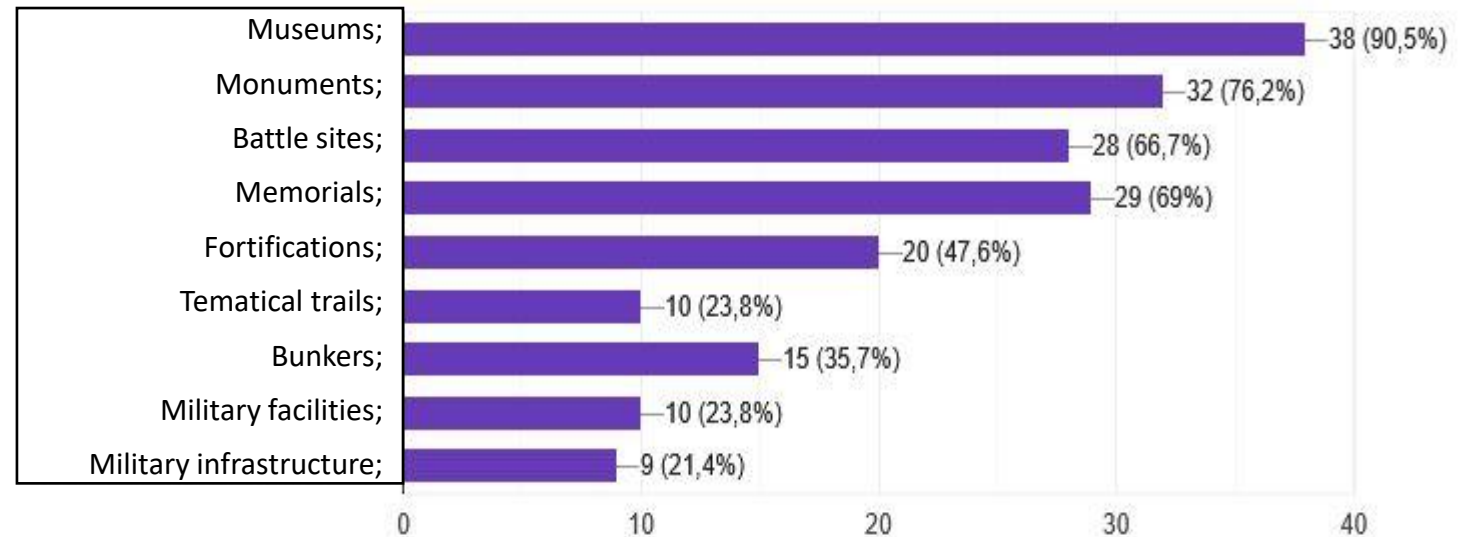
4. What helps to implement comprehensive educational programs that include educational excursions?



5. What limits your ability to implement comprehensive educational programs that include educational excursions?

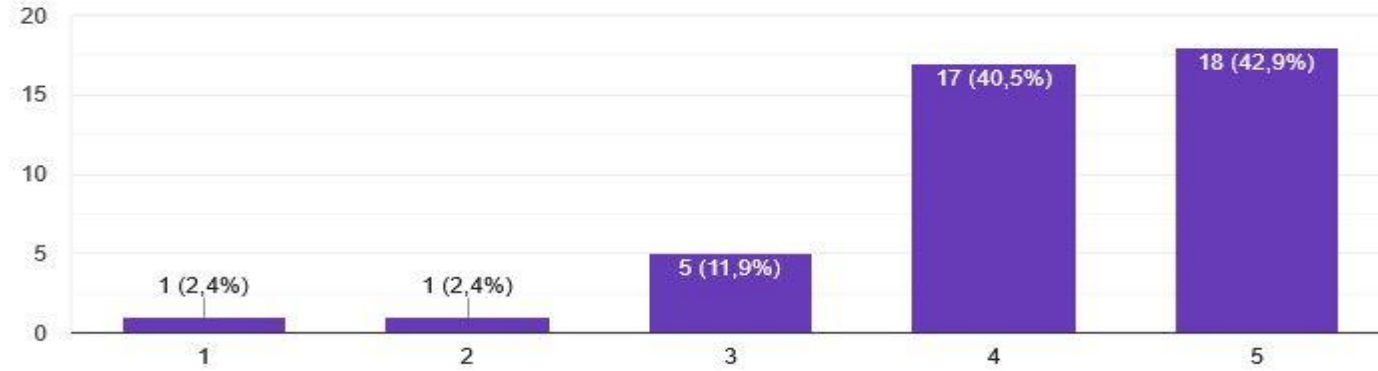


6. What military heritage sites and objects have you used in the teaching process?

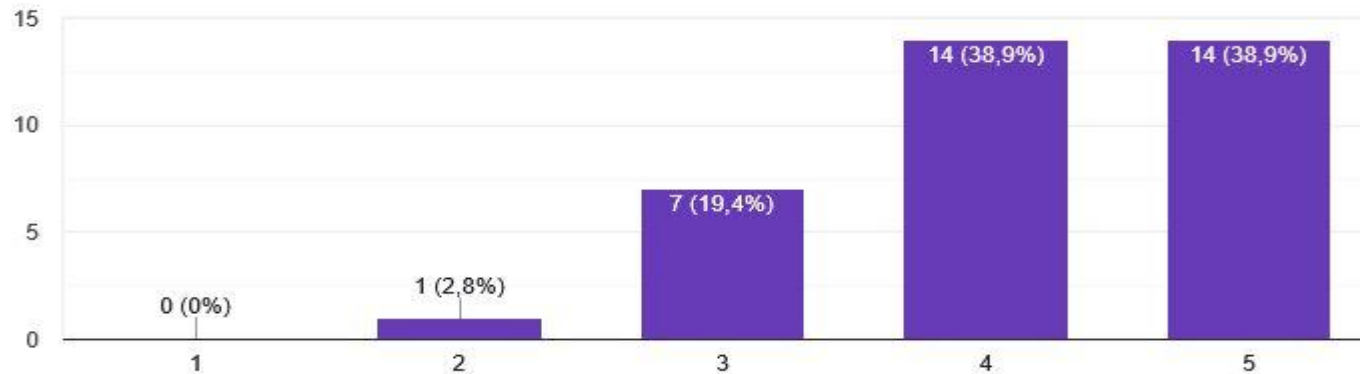


7. To what extent has visiting such places helped students to better understand historical events?

doesn't help



Very Helpful



8. Name a place or object that left you with a positive experience! Why?

World War I

- Christmas Battles Museum “Mangaļi” and open-air exhibition, Tīreļpurvs, Christmas Battle sites, Ložmetējkalns
- Death Island (Nāves sala)
- Medumi World War I Museum

War of Independence / Interwar period

- Oskars Kalpaks Museum and Memorial Site “Airītes”
- Oskars Kalpaks memorial in “Liepsalas”
- Latvian Army summer camp site in Litene
- Former HQ of Latgale division in Plavinas

World War II

- Salaspils Memorial
- Īle Bunker
- Stompaki Marsh
- Žanis Lipke Memorial
- More Battle Museum

Soviet Occupation / Awakening

- Līgatne Bunker
- “Escape from the USSR” adventure program
- Stūra māja (former KGB headquarters, prison cellars)
- Museum of the Occupation of Latvia
- Museum of The Barricades of 1991

Fortresses, forts and naval bases

- Daugavpils Fortress
- Daugavgrīva Fortress
- Liepāja Karosta and Karosta Prison, Northern and Middle Forts in Liepāja
- Mangaļsala Forts

Latvian National Armed Forces

- Ādaži Military Training Area

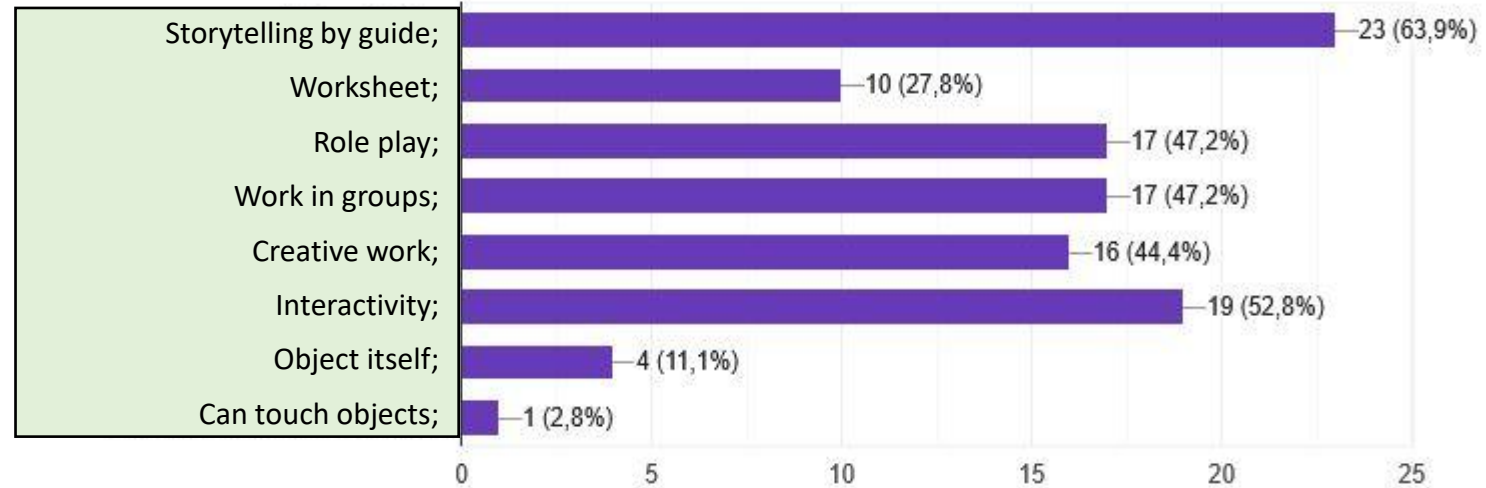
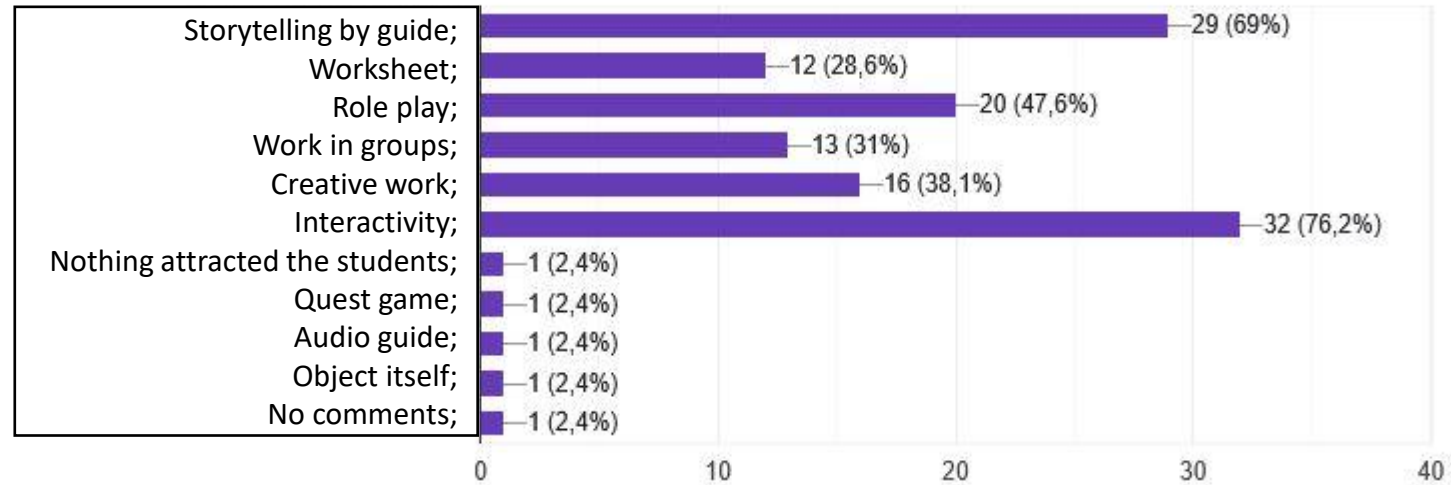
General Military Museums

- Latvian War Museum (Riga)
- War Museum in Aglona
- Museum of the Occupation of Latvia
- Museum of Cesis
- Museum in State Border guard College

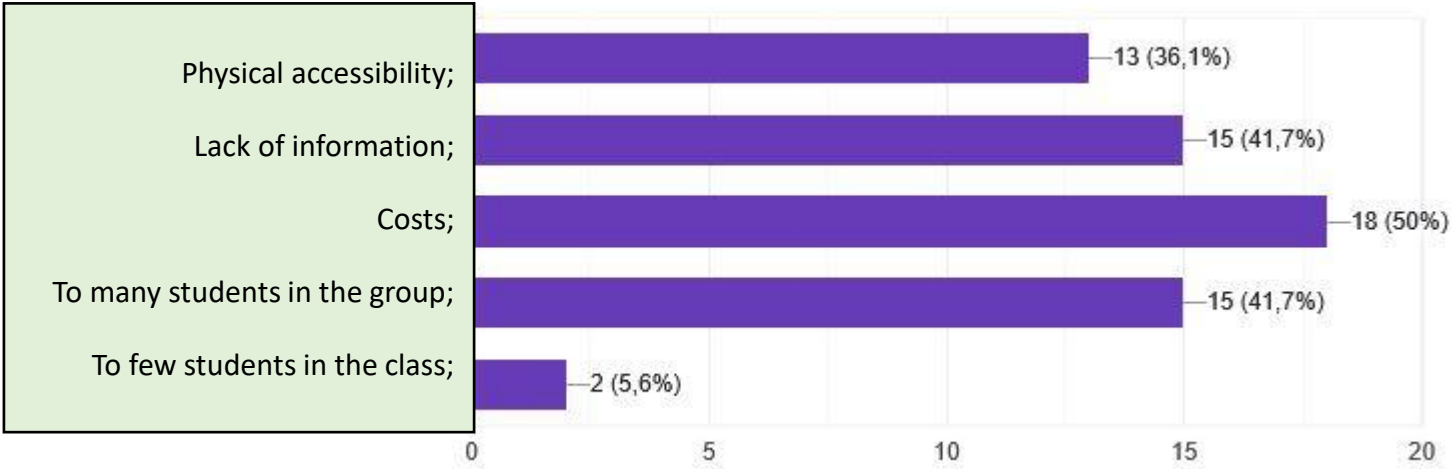
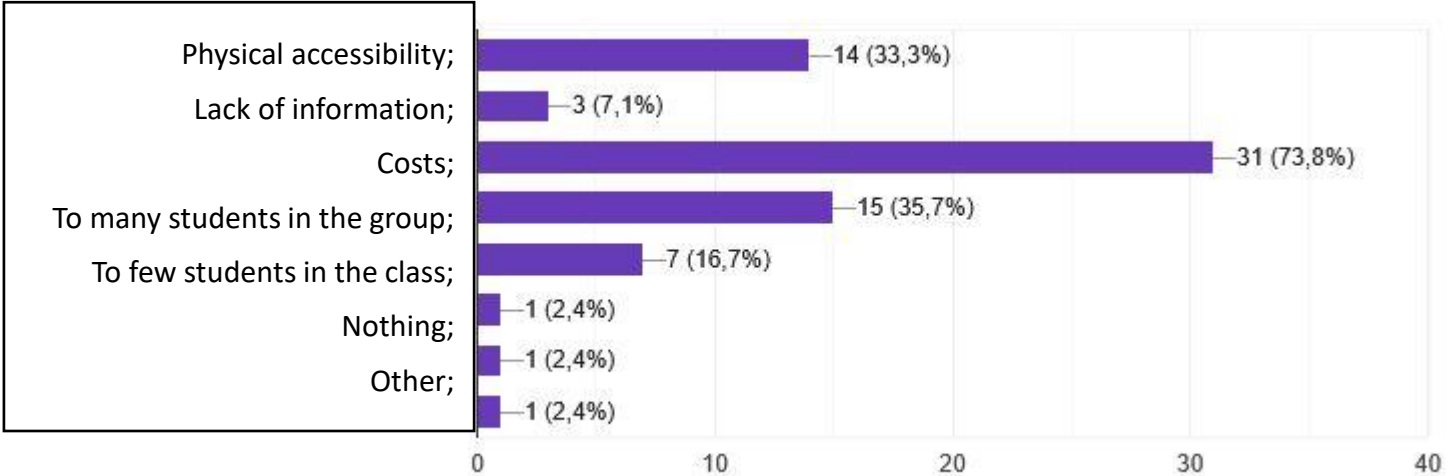
9. Name a place or object that left you with a negative experience! Why?

- “9th grade. Visit to a memorial site (five cemeteries) for soldiers who fell in the War of Independence. We lit candles (the local government or school paid for the bus and candles). The school history museum teacher told very interesting stories about each soldier. **Perhaps there were too many cemeteries to visit.** Some students did not know how to behave in a cemetery, ran over the graves, shouted, and were impatient. When the teacher was talking, they looked at their phones. Instructions were given before leaving. Like a fool, I kept calling someone, scolding them, reprimanding them...”;
- Salaspils camp;
- Small private collections, prices not worth it...;
- “There aren't any. Maybe the positive benefits are smaller, but I've always been lucky with great guides. Even when visiting the Museum of Occupation, the students were quite skeptical, but the guide did his job so well that even the most skeptical ones were speechless at the end and asked me additional questions about what they had learned on the way back.”;
- X museum. The group leader's boring story, ignoring the students, rude behavior;
- X museum. The students were simply given worksheets and, at the end, given one minute to reflect and say thank you for coming;
- X museum. Because the guide was very uninterested. At times, it even seemed that the narrative glorified the Soviet occupation. The rudeness and aggression of the X site guide (playing the part) shocked and had a very negative impact on some of the students;
- X object in Aluksne. The guide was boring and without any interest (It was in 2017);
- Some kind of burials. Places without infrastructure;
- Event in X museum. The guide was chaotic. Dressed in old uniforms, they portrayed soldiers, but very sloppily—jackets unbuttoned, unshaven. They gave a sloppy and unprofessional impression.

10. What activities or materials attracted students the most?



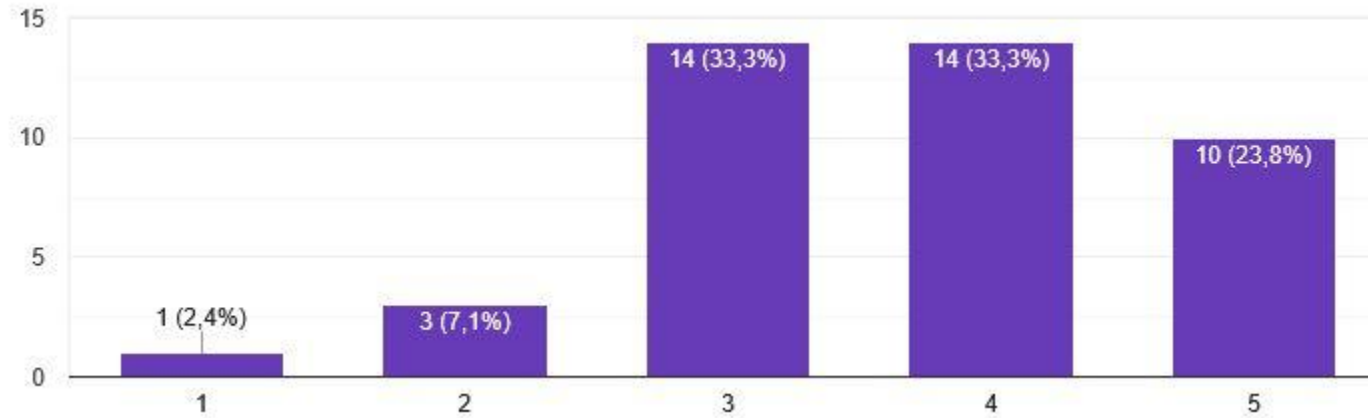
11. What difficulties or obstacles have you encountered when organizing such visits?



12. What would you suggest improving to make military heritage sites and objects more accessible, interesting, and relevant to school audiences?

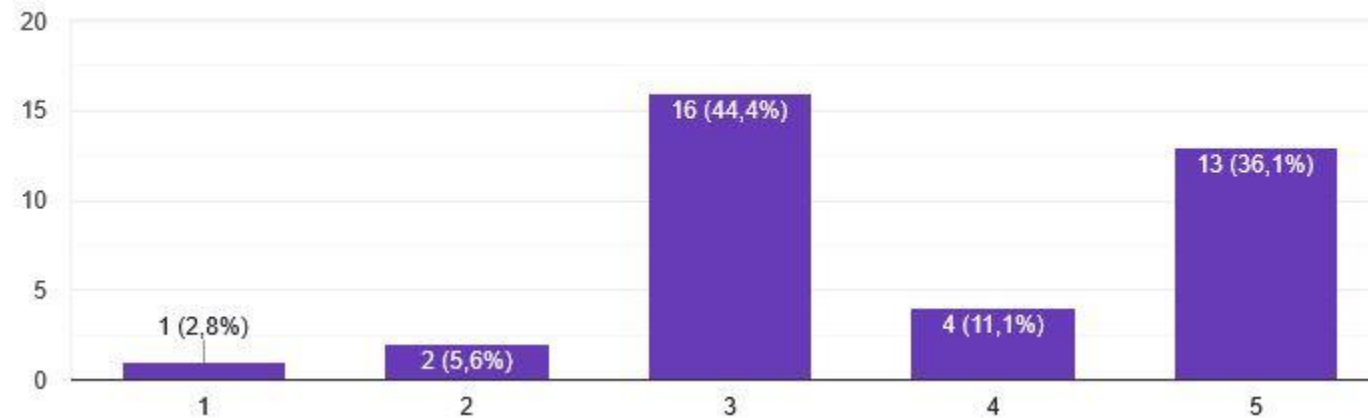
Theme	Ideas
Pedagogical methods and activities	Worksheets, tasks, practical activities; Interactive exhibitions, orientation games at sites; Role-plays, immersion, emotional engagement; Group work, interactive lessons; Museum programs, pedagogical activities for students; Virtual tours, escape games; Mobile apps, VR simulations, digital exhibitions; Reenacting historical situations with digital tools
Accessibility of information and resources	Centralized online resources about all military heritage sites in Latvia; Catalogue or map of sites by regions; Free information at the sites and online in Latvian; More information on a single dedicated website; Greater presence in social media; Advertising aimed directly at children to make visits appealing; Involving influencers/people of interest to youth
Projects and programs	Integration into the 'Latvian School Bag' program (descriptions must match reality); Excursions included in 'School Bag'; Traveling exhibitions; Museum programs with teacher support; Seminars with the History and Social Science Teachers' Association
Organizational and practical obstacles	Transportation costs and distance problems; Covering travel expenses for students; Lack of support from school administration; Lack of time in school schedules, excursions not a priority; Insufficient number of history lessons in the curriculum
Quality factors	Properly selected guides/storytellers (not monotonous); Knowledgeable and professional guides are essential; Appropriate, modern guiding adapted to students' interests; Well-selected and engaging information presentation

13. How useful are the militaryheritagetourism.info website and other informational materials?



doesn't help

Very Helpful



14. What could be improved on the militaryheritagetourism.info website and in other informational materials to make them more useful in the learning process?

- About half did not know or had not visited the site;
- **A significant shortcoming is the lack of one-day excursion offers;**
- Separately indicating which objects are subject to a fee and what the fee is;
- Creating more video material, as it is more visual and intriguing for students;
- Supplementing it with games and information materials;
- More actual information;
- Overall, the assessment is positive;

15. Name the websites you use most often or the way you search for information!

Search engines and keywords

Google, google.lv
Keywords, changing combinations
Internet, "Mother Google"

AI Chatbots

Specialized websites and projects

- militaryheritagetourism.info
- militarais.celotajs.lv
- pieminekli.lv
- enciklopedija.lv
- periodika.lv
- Zudusī Latvija (Lost Latvia)
- Letonika

Museum resources

- Latvian War Museum website
- Museum of the Occupation of Latvia website
- Liepāja Museum
- Other museum websites (in general)
- Museum materials

State and municipal resources

- State and municipal websites
- Regional and local TIC (Tourist Information Centre) websites
- vsb.lv

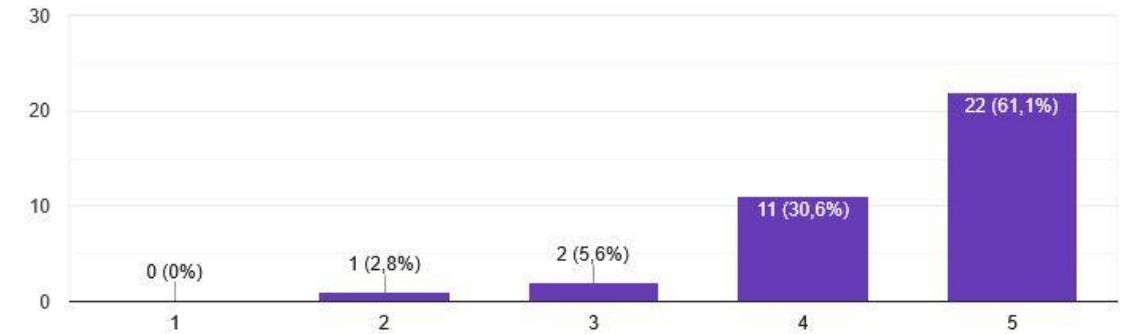
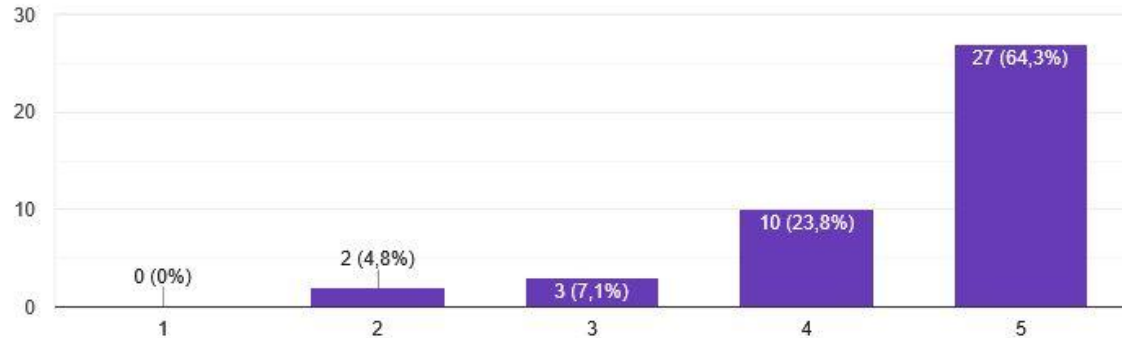
Social media and digital channels

- Facebook
- Social platforms and forum groups
- YouTube
- Latvian School Bag program

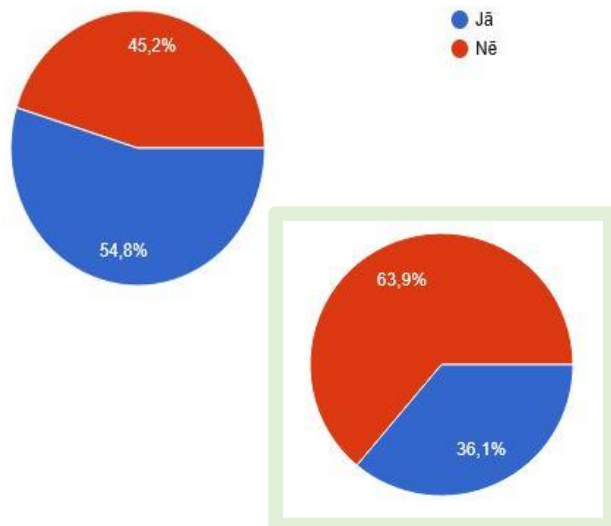
Human resources

- Colleagues (information, experience, feedback)
- Friends and students' suggestions
- wife

16. To what extent would specially developed educational materials or methodological recommendations for teachers on the use of military heritage sites and objects in the teaching process be useful?



17. Have you used the services of a tourist information center or other tourism specialist when planning excursions to military heritage sites?



Positive experience

- Positive experience
- Good experience, accurate information
- Very good / Excellent / Very positive
- Good, engaging
- Had a positive experience
- Got good suggestions and offers
- Very good and valuable (arranged a guide, excellent excursion)
- I choose museum educational programs
- Battle site of the Cēsis Student Company, Cēsis battle reenactment – valuable
- Tourist Information Centre provided useful information

Self-organized

- We research and organize ourselves
- We find the information online ourselves
- No, I always try to organize myself (used to work in tourism)
- Easier for teachers to plan it themselves

School and program context

- There is always a knowledgeable teacher
- A specialist/professional is still a specialist – a teacher cannot know and do everything
- In addition to school work I also work as a guide
- I have visited sites using the **Latvian School Bag** program; otherwise, it hasn't happened
- No specialized interests in school (low relevance)
- Excursions are rare, military heritage excursions are seldom organized

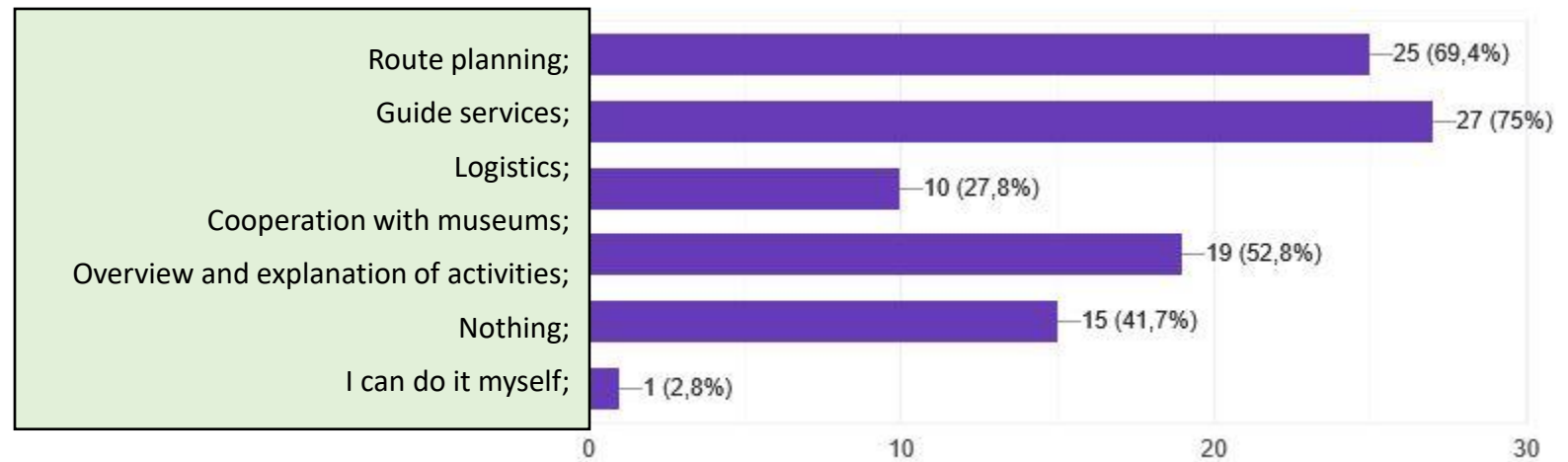
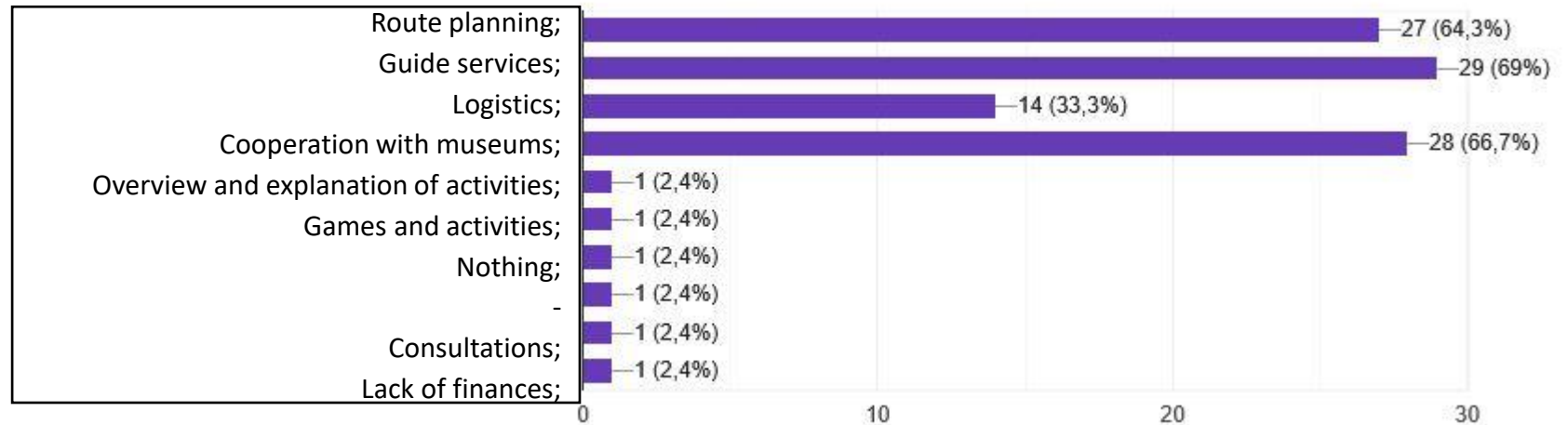
Difficulties and obstacles

- Unknown cost of guide services, whether "School Bag" covers it
- Costs are unclear (financial issues)
- Expenses, lack of financial resources
- Riga is far from Liepāja (distance problem)
- Hard to plan time
- Tourism specialists lack knowledge about military heritage
- No available information / no information provided

Neutral or negative experiences

- Fairy-tale style, poor diction (unsatisfactory guide)
- No need / it hasn't been necessary
- I don't work with upper-secondary students, rarely can adapt military heritage to the teaching theme
- Didn't occur to me (not considered)

18. What services or support do you expect from tourism professionals?



"Guidelines for Methodological Material: Use of Military Heritage Sites in Shaping Youth Understanding of History"

- Target audience: Owners and managers of military heritage sites, educators, non-formal education specialists, tour guides, and Youth Guard instructors;
- Military heritage is an important resource for exploring the history of Baltic states. Studying it helps students develop an understanding of history, strengthen patriotism, and become aware of the historical choices made by the state and society. This material offers methods and examples of how to use military heritage in both formal and non-formal education for students in two age groups: 11–14 and 15–18 years old;

Thank You for Your attention!