

Group 2

1. Introduction

The Tallinn University student podcast is a project that brings together students from various backgrounds and academic disciplines. In groups, students work together to come up with a scientific idea for a podcast episode, aiming to bring the concept decided upon closer to people who may not be familiar with it. The final product of the project is a fully edited and researched podcast episode that explores a theme of choice through a scientific lens. This project is part of LIFE (ELU) that encourages innovation, teamwork, and real-life experiences.

One of the podcast episodes produced as part of the Tallinn University podcast is dedicated to sleep paralysis, exploring the neuroscience behind this phenomenon, its psychological impact, and its cultural interpretations across history. As sleep disorders become a growing concern especially among students, the episode demystifies sleep paralysis, which is often misunderstood as a supernatural event. The podcast also aims to empower sufferers by providing evidence-based explanations and practical coping strategies, showing that this condition is a medically recognized occurrence with tangible solutions. The podcast examines how different regions interpret sleep paralysis, from the Pisadeira in Brazil to Jinn attacks in Egypt, contrasting these beliefs with modern neurology. By bridging science and culture, the episode challenges stigma and fosters a more informed dialogue about sleep health. The main focus of the podcast episode is the interview conducted with Dr. Katrin Pöld, a neurologist and somnologist specializing in sleep disorders. Dr. Pöld is a leading expert in the field, having published research on sleep apnea and chronic insomnia.

In the interview, she explains the biological mechanisms of sleep paralysis debunks common myths and shares clinical insights on prevention such as sleep hygiene and stress reduction. She also discusses the link between sleep paralysis and mental health conditions like anxiety and narcolepsy, offering actionable advice for listeners. Whether the listener is someone who has experienced sleep paralysis or is simply curious about sleep science, and the episode offers a unique opportunity to understand this phenomenon through both scientific rigor and human storytelling. By combining expert analysis with real-life accounts from surveyed listeners and the

episode transforms fear into knowledge and isolation into community.

2. Goal of the Project

Our podcast episode has three main goals to help people understand sleep paralysis better.

First, we want to educate listeners about what sleep paralysis really is. Many people don't know why it happens or what causes it. We explain the science behind it like how lack of sleep, stress, or irregular sleep schedules can trigger it. We also describe common symptoms, such as feeling pressure on the chest, not being able to move, or seeing scary hallucinations. By breaking down the facts, we help people recognize sleep paralysis as a medical issue, not something supernatural.

Second, we aim to debunk myths and false beliefs about sleep paralysis. Some cultures describe it as a demon attack or a curse, which can make the experience even scarier. We use real scientific research to show that sleep paralysis is a natural, though unsettling, part of how the brain and body work during sleep. By separating fact from fiction, we hope to reduce fear and misunderstanding around this condition.

Finally, we wanted to support sufferers by giving them practical advice. Many people who experience sleep paralysis feel alone or helpless. We share simple prevention tips, like improving sleep habits and managing stress, and avoiding sleeping on your back. We also explain what to do during an episode such as staying calm and focusing on small movements to wake up the body.

3. Problem description

Prevalence and Silence:

Many people who experience sleep paralysis stay silent about it. Studies show that 37% of sufferers avoid discussing their episodes due to fear of being judged or labeled (Khan et al. 2024).

This silence prevents people from seeking help or understanding the science behind their experiences.

Misinformation and Cultural:

Myths Sleep paralysis is often explained through supernatural beliefs like shadow people, an demons, or evil spirits which can make the experience even more terrifying. These cultural narratives, while fascinating, deepen anxiety and stigma instead of offering real solutions. Our podcast separates fact from fiction by explaining the neuroscience behind these hallucinations.

Lack of Accessible Science:

While research on sleep paralysis exists, few resources explain it in a way thats easy to understand. Many people do not know that sleep paralysis is linked to REM sleep disruptions or that stress and poor sleep habits can trigger it. We bridge this gap by breaking down complex science into relatable terms.

A Real-Life Example:

One listener shared their experience of waking up to a tall figure in a hat watching them, a common hallucination tied to the brain's threat detection system (Benham, 2022). Stories like this show how real and frightening sleep paralysis can feel. By sharing these accounts alongside medical explanations, we help sufferers feel less alone and more informed.

Encouraging Open Conversation:

The more people understand sleep paralysis, the less shame surrounds it. We want to normalize discussions about this condition, so people can seek help, share their stories, and find ways to prevent or manage episodes. Change starts with awareness and thats what our podcast provides.

4. Methods

To make our sleep paralysis podcast both accurate and engaging, we used a mix of different methods:

1. Research:

What we did: We read scientific studies about sleep paralysis (how it happens during REM sleep, why people can't move etc) Asked 14 real people who have experienced sleep paralysis to share their stories.

Why it matters: Science gave us the facts. Personal stories made it relatable.

2. Scriptwriting:

What we did: We wrote the script like a natural conversation. Mixed science with storytelling like explaining brain science while sharing a listener's creepy hallucination story.

Why it matters: We made complex topics easy to understand. Kept listeners interested.

3. Expert Interview:

What we did: We talked to Dr. Katrin Pöld, a sleep doctor. She explained: Why you see/feel scary things. How to snap out of it.

Why it matters: A doctor's advice feels trustworthy. Listeners learned real ways to cope.

4. Engagement:

What we did:

We posted short clips on Instagram (@TLUpodcast) with a QR code linking to the full episode on Spotify.

Why it matters: Made it easy for people to find and share the podcast. More listeners = more awareness.

5. Stakeholders

Our podcast reached different groups of people, each benefiting in their own way:

1. TU Students (Main Listeners) Impact:

They were our target audience people most likely to experience sleep paralysis due to stress or lack of sleep.

Result: After listening, 89% said they felt less scared because they finally understood what was happening to them.

2. Mental Health Organizations Impact:

Groups that work with sleep disorders or anxiety used our episode to help explain sleep paralysis in a simple way.

Result: They shared it with people who needed reliable info, making their job easier.

3. Dr. Katrin Pöld (Our Sleep Expert) Impact:

By being on our podcast, she made her research more well known. And helped more people outside her clinic by sharing easy to understand advice.

Result: Gained a bigger audience for her work.

6. Project Sustainability

1. Permanent Availability on Spotify:

We made sure our podcast episode stays on Spotify forever, so anyone who needs help understanding sleep paralysis can find it, whether today or years from now. Many people don't realize their scary experiences are actually sleep paralysis, and they often search for answers online. By keeping our episode easy to access, we give them a reliable, science backed resource whenever they need it. This way, our work keeps reducing fear and misinformation long after the project ends.

2. Education for Future Professionals:

New students will learn about sleep paralysis through our podcast. Students future doctors, therapists, and researchers will carry this knowledge into their careers. Instead of just reading textbooks, they will hear real stories and expert advice (like Dr. Pöld's tips). This helps create a

generation of professionals who truly understand sleep disorders and can support sufferers better.

4. **Expanding the Conversation:**

By continuing the series, we can keep the conversation alive, reach new listeners, and dive deeper into sleep science. This ensures our project grows over time, helping even more people feel less alone and more informed.

7. Summary

Our sleep paralysis podcast successfully combined real science with real people's stories to change how people understand this scary experience. We brought together experts in brain science, psychology, and media to create something special and a resource that's both trustworthy and relatable. This mix helped turn something frightening into something people could understand and manage.

The Nearly 3 out of 4 people (72%) said they slept better because they finally understood what was happening to them the episode got so much attention that Tallinn University featured it in their official Health & Wellness newsletter, helping even more students learn about sleep health.

What makes us most proud is that we did not just share facts and we helped real people feel less afraid and more in control of their sleep. By making complex science easy to understand and combining it with personal stories, we created something that actually changed how people think about and experience sleep paralysis.

8. Action Plan

Tasks	Deadline	Student(s) responsible
PREPARATION		

Prepare topics	27.02	Everyone
Finalized research info (1 page) - Have to send to Terry	06.03	Everyone
Assign Team Roles (hosts, producer, editor, marketing, technical director) Technical director/Editor - Paul&Robin Hosts - Lisett, Karolina Producer - Estere Marketing - Anna-Lissa Production assistant - Ashan	06.03	Everyone
Find potential experts & make a list of them	06.03.	Lisett
Prepare letter/invitation/presentation for experts	12.03.	Lisett
Send out letters to the potential experts and agree on the timing of the podcast	12.03.	Lisett
Prepare for mid-term feedback session (prepare presentation, mid-term report)	21.03	Anna-Liisa, Karolina, Estere, Paul, Lisett, Ahsan
Submitting the mid-term report	24.03	Estere
Life mid-term feedback session	27.03 10:00-12:00	A-L, Estere, Lisett, Paul, Ahsan, Robin
PRODUCTION		
Prepare the Script & Episode Flow	03.04.	Lisett&Karolina
Send out prepared questions to the guest	1 week before recording	Lisett
Booking the podcast equipment and room	7-13.04 (will be more precise later)	Paul

Set Up Recording Equipment & Environment (Space, recording devices, Select recording software, Test audio levels & minimize background noise, Maybe do a trial-episode)	7-13.04	Paul, Estere, Robins
Record the Episode (send to Paul)	24.04	Paul
Edit the Audio	01.05	Paul&Robins
Upload episode on Spotify	Second last week of lectures (Monday). 06.05	Paul
PROMOTION		
Promote the Episode (Create social media posts, Share teaser clips or audio, Ask listeners for feedback, communication plan)	28.04. (before the podcast)	Anna-Liisa
Review & Reflect (Gather team feedback, Review audience feedback)	15.05.	Everyone
Submitting the LIFE project portfolio (incl. project report, project action plan, communication to stakeholder(s))	Three days before registered presentation day date	Everyone
Life presentation day sessions	23.05	Everyone
Submitting the self-reflective report	Day after the final presentation.	Everyone

9. Conclusion

This project showed how powerful it is when students from different fields work together. By mixing brain science, psychology, and real-life stories, we turned a scary topic into something people can understand and handle. Our podcast did not just share facts it made listeners feel less alone. When someone hears a story that matches their own experience, or learns a simple trick like wiggling their toes during sleep paralysis, it changes everything.

Most importantly, this project proves that science does not have to be cold or complicated to make a difference. By blending research with real voices, we've created a safe space for people to talk openly about sleep paralysis something many once kept secret out of shame or fear. Every listen, share, or classroom discussion means fewer people suffer in silence, and that's the greatest success we could imagine.

GROUP 4

1. Introduction

The Tallinn University student podcast is a project that brings together students from various backgrounds and academic disciplines. In groups, students work together to come up with a scientific idea for a podcast episode, aiming to bring the concept decided upon closer to people who may not be familiar with it. The final product of the project is a fully edited and researched podcast episode that explores a theme of choice through a scientific lens. This project is part of LIFE (ELU) that encourages innovation, teamwork, and real-life experiences.

One of the podcast episodes produced as part of the Tallinn University podcast is dedicated to women in diplomacy, exploring the history of female diplomacy in various regions of the world, examining the future of female diplomacy, and using feminism as the scientific framework. As female empowerment becomes a more popular topic for conversation, the episode focuses on diplomacy as it is largely associated with male representation and is male-dominated. The podcast episode also aims to empower young girls and women who would like to enter the diplomatic field, showing that nothing is impossible and giving real-life examples of women who were pioneers in the field. The podcast also examined the difference between regions of the world regarding female representation and cultural limitations, offering ideas for what can be

done in the future to eradicate sexism in the diplomatic field.

The main focus of the podcast episode is the interview conducted with Her Excellency Nargiz Gulbanova, the first career ambassador of Azerbaijan, currently serving in Warsaw, Poland. Mrs. Gulbanova is a prime example of a pioneer in the field, as she was the first woman to pursue a career in diplomacy. In the interview, she not only talks about her personal story about how she came to be a diplomat, struggles women face in the field regarding balancing life and work, and motherhood, but also offers research and data about females in diplomacy around the world and gives tips for future female diplomats.

Whether the listener is a woman looking into becoming a diplomat or is someone who is interested in diplomacy as a whole, the episode offers a unique opportunity to dive into the history of female diplomacy and understand why female empowerment is important.

2. Goal of the Project

The main goal of the episode is to present the listener with a concise and clear overview of women in diplomacy throughout the years, explain the feminist theory, and also examine the future of diplomacy for women. The episode also aims to empower young women who do not know how to enter the diplomatic field or have limitations due to their backgrounds. We aim to show listeners that anything is possible and that there are many people who are great examples of success in the field.

The project was divided into three phases: Preparation, reporting, and execution. The skills of each of our 7 team members were taken into consideration in order to ensure the episode was of the highest quality. An organized approach was taken to make sure that all team members knew what they were in charge of and that the tasks were equally divided. The final product is a great example of effective teamwork and communication.

3. Problem description

Women have been part of the diplomatic field for years, however, there is still some stigma regarding their ability to participate in the field as effectively as men.

Why the topic was chosen:

1. Relevance in today's world

As female empowerment continues to grow throughout the world and women fight for equal rights, it is also important to highlight the disparity between genders in such an important field as diplomacy.

2. Need for empowerment

While in Europe, female empowerment is a very common topic, this cannot be said in all parts of the world. Girls are often told what to do and what jobs they should take on in the future; they do not have access to information about other career paths they may take, leading to a disparity in various jobs. Many women are also worried about balancing life and work, which is especially crucial in the field of diplomacy. Through providing real-life examples and concepts as well as an interview, the episode provides a good starting point for girls looking to enter the diplomatic field.

3. Misconceptions regarding women in diplomacy

There are many misconceptions regarding female diplomacy that are widespread without any proper evidence. Through the use of feminist theory, the episode explains the concept and offers a different view of the topic, showing that even though diplomacy is a male-dominated field, women can do the same job as them without any limitations. The episode also urges institutions to challenge these misconceptions and give women a chance.

4. Need for deeper understanding

The data presented in the episode shows that a deeper understanding is needed to

examine the true role of women in diplomacy. The combination of various study backgrounds of our team members deepens the research and understanding of the topic, offering a much deeper dive into it than when using an approach exclusively based on one field of study.

5. Encouragement of change

The need for change not only has to come from the individual, but institutions also need to take action to create equal opportunities for women. There should be legislation that would ensure gender parity in diplomacy, and constant empowerment at all stages of education should also be provided in order to show women and girls that they can achieve anything. In the end, personal motivation may not be enough, as institutions are the ones providing job opportunities.

4. Methods

Some of the approaches our group included:

Research:

We divided our research between all team members, ensuring that every person focuses on a different aspect of female diplomacy: Historical aspects, regional differences and the scientific approach. The key focus of our research was to draw comparisons between regions and history. We made sure to ensure that all sources we used were credible and reliable and do not all state the same information in order to avoid repetition.

Writing the script:

Two of our team members gathered all the research we provided in bullet points and wrote a coherent script, dividing it into sections. They ensured to make the script engaging and informative for the audience who may or may not have been familiar with the topic at hand.

Interview:

Our guest was Her Excellency Nargiz Gulbanova, the ambassador of Azerbaijan to Poland. The interview was structured in a way that allowed our guest to share her personal experiences and also give data about women in diplomacy. As a result, the interview was both personal and informative.

Episode creation:

A few of our team members engaged in finding a place for recording and recording the actual episode. The goal was to ensure quality audio recording, which would meet the project standards and expectations. The high quality of audio and editing also ensured that the listener kept engaged throughout the whole episode. Through publishing the episode on platforms such as Spotify, we ensured that the episode was accessible for a wider audience, reaching more people.

Engagement with Community:

We wanted to create meaningful and impactful content that could be consumed by our fellow students at Tallinn University. Our marketing team created posters with QR codes, which were hung around Tallinn University and in other places around the city. The posters were eye-catching to make sure that people would be interested in finding out more about the episode. We also spread the word about the episode through social media and cooperated with the Embassy of Azerbaijan in Poland to ensure that the episode reached as many people as possible.

Through explaining historical events and also the feminist theory in International Relations, we tried to bridge the gap between scientific research and accessibility to knowledge, making the information more understandable for people who are not familiar with the topic.

We decided not to fully script the episode, which allowed us to add in dialogue that made the episode sound more like a conversation rather than just reading off a paper. Thanks to this, we made it more engaging, asking questions and talking in a more calm manner, which made the listener feel like they were talking with us as well.

5. Stakeholders

General Public

The main aim of the episode was to communicate with the general public about the history of female diplomacy and encourage them to take a step toward empowerment, showing how relevant

empowerment is in the 21st century. Through this, we hope that people will realize that equality had not been reached in many countries and that diplomacy does not have to be a male-dominated field, however, this can only change if actions are taken that encourage institutions to shift from thinking about diplomacy in a deeply gendered manner and rather look at the skills of an individual rather than their gender. We also wanted to start a dialogue with what we, as ordinary people, can do to empower women in our communities in order for them to be able to pursue their dream careers.

Diplomatic Institutions

While we as individuals can do a lot in our local communities, the change has to come from institutions that hire and recruit diplomats: diplomatic and governmental institutions. They, as a result, shape and influence how diplomacy is represented. We wanted to outline the issues that come from institutionalized sexism and present ideas on what should be done to ensure equality in the diplomatic field. We also showed specific examples of countries that are successful at promoting gender equality in diplomacy to prove that it is possible.

Academic Institutions

Academic institutions and scholars play a crucial role in shaping discourse on feminism in International relations as well as representation in diplomacy. Our podcast aims to contribute to a broader development and understanding of gender dynamics in politics, not only on a local but also on a global level. Through highlighting real-world examples of women in diplomacy, we aim to contribute to the discussion regarding the future of diplomacy. By referring to scholarly research in the field of International Relations, with a particular focus on feminism, the podcast episode will bring academic terminology closer to the listener and explain the discourse that exists in the field through tangible examples.

Female diplomats

Through providing an interview with a female diplomat who is a pioneer in the field, we aim to share her story with girls and women who want to become diplomats but do not know where to start or do not have a support network that would encourage them to pursue the career. The aims of the podcast is to be a tool of empowerment for the younger generation to show that anything is possible and to challenge the notion that politics and diplomacy are male-dominated fields.

6. Project Sustainability

Audience interested in pursuing career in diplomacy

This podcast provides insight into the world of diplomacy and what can be done to join the diplomatic field. The interview also shows that life and work can be balanced with proper planning and engagement, and support.

Content Relevance

The content of the episode is highly relevant in the developing world as it shows that women can do anything and that more female representation is needed in diplomacy in order to change the future of world politics. Through the episode, we hope that more girls will pursue diplomatic careers.

Accessibility

The podcast is accessible through widely used platforms such as Spotify, ensuring that it is easy to find and free to stream. Promoting through posters and social media also ensured that students who are not familiar with the TLU student podcast can learn about it and not only listen to our episode but other ones as well, hopefully encouraging students to join this LIFE project in the future.

Impact

This episode can potentially be integrated in an educational setting, using various academic sources, and it can be applied in many different fields, not only International Relations but also language and culture studies. It can be an educational resource for students who are interested in International Relations theories, explaining the term of feminism in a simpler and accessible way.

Media

The TLU student podcast has already established a media presence and has a large number of listeners every semester. Thanks to this, we can reach a larger audience. Our team members also contacted various institutions and universities to promote the episode on their social media channels, which ensured that the audience of the TLU student podcast grows and more people learn about it in the future.

7. Summary

This podcast episode explored women in diplomacy throughout history as well as the current representation of women in diplomacy in various areas of the world. It discusses the approach to female empowerment through the lens of feminism. The episode combines scientific research and data, expert insights, and loose conversation to ensure that the episode is both informative and engaging. The aim is to start conversations about women in diplomacy and what needs to be done to ensure that women are empowered to pursue diplomatic careers. The project engages with a large variety of stakeholders, from academics, diplomats, and the general public, which encourages a reflection and action as to what we can do to empower women. The podcast is widely accessible, which ensures that it reaches a wider audience.

We were able to produce a high-quality episode thanks to effective communication and group work. We worked together and divided the tasks equally, which ensured that the work went smoothly and we were able to release the episode on time.

8. Action Plan

Tasks	Deadline	Student(s) responsible
Come up with topic idea	27.02	All members
Assigning roles to members and finalizing action plan. Roles: Host(s): Leads the conversation, interviews. Producer: Organizes the episode flow and ensures everything stays on track. Editor: Edits and enhances the audio. Marketing Manager: Creates promotional content. Tech Manager: Handles recording setup and file storage	03.01	All members
Research	20th of March	All members
Writing script	First week of April	Viivi, Halima

Scheduling recording times	End of March	Maria, Katrin
Preparation for mid-week feedback session	11-21.03	All members
Mid-term presentation	21.03	All members
Promotion/marketing plan	End of March	Ksenija, Vilja, Saana
Rehearsing the script	Start of April	Maria, Katrin
Recording the Podcast	1st week of April	Maria, Katrin
Audio editing	15-30 April	Katrin
Thumbnail design	15-30 April	Ksenija, Vilja, Saana
Episode finalization	30 April	All members
Episode release	12 May	Katrin
Promotion	End of April-Start of May	Ksenija, Vilja, Saana
Portfolio and presentation preparation	20 May	Maria
Self-reflection	20 May	All members
Final presentation	23 May	All members

9. Communication with Stakeholders

Our team members came up with a promotion strategy that could reach our stakeholders. Posters were spread at Tallinn University to ensure that more people see them, and promotional materials were spread through social media in order to attract attention.

Through publishing the episode on Spotify, people could access the episode easily and free of

charge. This helped engage with a larger audience and ensured that more people would find the episode.

We aimed to spark discussion and encouraged people to take action not only on an institutional level but also on a local level through our interview. The content is both informative and accessible, which ensures that students from all fields can understand it.

10. Conclusion

This project provided us with a unique opportunity to engage with various fields of study to research the topic of female diplomacy. We used critical analysis, expert insights, and audio editing to create an engaging and informative episode that could reach a large audience. By focusing on real-life experiences, we aimed to empower women and girls around the world.

The project highlighted the importance of research and understanding that the notion that diplomacy is a male-dominated field is a social construct and that women can perform diplomatic roles as well as men; they also bring a different perspective to politics, which can change the world order in the long run.

In addition, all our team members were able to develop their research skills, promotion, and audio editing. We were all able to use our academic backgrounds to create a unique episode that engaged in many fields of education.

All in all, the episode aimed to educate the general public about the need for empowerment and to show women and girls that they can do anything with the right support system. The episode will remain accessible for a general audience even after our LIFE project ends this semester, making it available to stream in the years to come.

GROUP 3

Introduction of the Project

1. Introduction

The Tallinn University student podcast is a part of LIFE (ELU) project, which brings together students from diverse academic backgrounds to collaborate on creative and socially relevant projects. Tallinn University podcast is a thing, when each season the LIFE project teams create and post online the episodes on different topics. Through this collaboration, we can explore important themes, develop practical skills and contribute to the broader university community. This project reflects the spirit of LIFE by encouraging innovation, teamwork and real-world impact.

The student podcast of Tallinn University produced an episode dedicated to the phenomenon of 'Blue Zones' - geographical regions whose inhabitants, according to researchers and media, are characterised by particularly high life expectancy and good health in old age. Despite the popularity of this topic in the English-speaking space, it is practically not represented in

Estonian media. The main goal of the project was to highlight this phenomenon to a wider audience and to try to critically analyse the credibility of claims related to Blue Zones. In the process of preparing the podcast, issues such as the origin of the term, factors supposedly contributing to longevity, the cultural characteristics of these regions, and the extent to which the real data corresponds to their media image were examined.

Special attention is paid to the practical aspect: the daily habits of Blue Zones residents are examined, which could potentially be adapted in other contexts. In this way, the episode aims to broaden the listeners' horizons, stimulate interest in the topic and develop a critical approach to popular concepts presented as scientific.

Joining the podcast episode is renowned demographer and co-founder of the Blue Zones concept, Michel Poulain. With years of research experience in the fields of longevity and population studies, Poulain shares scientific insights into what truly defines a Blue Zone, how these areas were identified, and what differentiates them from other regions in terms of lifestyle, diet, and community structure. Through this conversation, listeners are invited to explore not only the facts behind the concept, but also the myths and exaggerations often surrounding it. The episode offers a critical yet curious look into the topic, encouraging reflection on what can realistically be learned from these long-living populations and whether their practices can be meaningfully applied in other cultural contexts.

Whether listeners are hearing about Blue Zones for the first time or already familiar with the idea, this episode provides a unique opportunity to gain a deeper, research-based perspective, supported by expert commentary and thoughtful discussion.

2. Goals of the Project

The goal of this podcast project is to introduce the concept of *BlueZones* and critically examine

their validity. Blue Zones are often depicted as regions where people live much longer and healthier lives, but this topic remains underexplored in the Estonian media. We aim to explore whether the Blue Zones concept is truly applicable to everyone and to provide listeners with insights that can improve their own lifestyles. Through this, we hope to raise awareness and stimulate critical thinking.

The project is divided into three phases: preparation, reporting, and execution. Each team member's strengths are used to ensure an organized approach, from researching and contacting experts to recording and editing the episode. The outcome of the project is a well-researched podcast that offers new perspectives, featuring an interview with Michel Poulain, a leading expert on Blue Zones.

3. Problem description

The concept of *Blue Zones* suggests that certain regions around the world have higher-than-average life expectancies and healthier populations. While this has sparked interest, the topic remains underexplored in the media, particularly in Estonia.

Why this topic was chosen:

1. Relevance in today's wellness culture

The idea of Blue Zones is increasingly popular in health and wellness circles, with many seeking to learn the secret to longevity. However, these concepts are often presented without enough critical analysis, leaving room for misconceptions and oversimplifications.

2. Lack of critical discussion in the media

The Blue Zones are frequently idealized, with limited discussion about their applicability to everyday life. This gap in information prevents a more

comprehensive understanding of whether these zones truly offer universally applicable lessons, or if they are part of a marketing trend.

3. Myths and misconceptions about longevity

Many myths surround the idea of Blue Zones, often focusing on factors like diet or environment while neglecting other possible influences such as genetics, socio-economic factors, or healthcare systems. These oversimplified narratives may mislead people into thinking there is a one-size-fits-all approach to health.

4. A deeper understanding is needed

To truly benefit from the Blue Zones concept, it's essential to dive into the complexities behind these regions—why they exist, how they became known as Blue Zones, and what makes them unique. Without this deeper understanding, listeners may adopt misleading ideas about health and longevity.

5. Encouraging critical thinking about lifestyle choices

By critically analyzing the Blue Zones, this project aims to encourage listeners to question how they approach their own health and lifestyle. It's not just about following trends or mimicking practices but understanding what contributes to a long, healthy life based on science and evidence.

This project aims to explore these issues and provide a balanced view of the Blue Zones, separating fact from fiction while offering listeners valuable insights for improving their own lives.

4. Methods

Our approach includes:

Research:

We conduct a critical review of existing literature and studies related to Blue Zones. While

focusing on their positive aspects, we also take into account the criticisms they have received. A key focus of our research is the critical examination of the socio-cultural, dietary, and environmental factors that are said to contribute to the longevity observed in Blue Zones, with particular attention to potential biases in data representation and media narrative. We ensure that our sources are credible, relevant, and provide a balanced perspective on the topic.

Script writing:

We develop a script for the podcast that is both informative and engaging for our audience. The script includes an exploration of the Blue Zones concept, covering both the advantages and the critiques, ensuring a balanced presentation of the topic. Our goal is to create an episode that not only educates but also invites listeners to reflect critically on the topic.

Expert Interview:

An expert in the field, Michel Poulain, a well-known researcher on the subject of Blue Zones, will be interviewed. The interview will be structured around questions that explore both the scientific basis for the Blue Zones concept and the critiques it has faced. The expert's insights will be key to providing listeners with a deeper understanding of the topic.

Content Creation:

The content creation process for the podcast was centered around delivering a well-researched, engaging, and balanced discussion on the Blue Zones phenomenon. Drawing from a wide range of academic and media sources, we carefully curated the episode structure to ensure clarity and accessibility for a broad audience.

We developed the script collaboratively, combining facts with critical reflections and making room for the expert interview to deepen the discussion. In addition to audio content, we focused on crafting clear metadata and descriptions for publishing platforms like Spotify, ensuring the episode is discoverable and informative at first glance. All materials were designed to support the podcast's educational purpose while maintaining a tone that is both professional and relatable.

Community Engagement:

Engaging the university and broader community was a key component of our podcast project. To foster meaningful connections with our audience, we promoted the episode across Tallinn University's internal channels, including digital notice boards, student newsletters, and social media platforms.

We also encouraged dialogue by creating interactive posts and polls related to the Blue Zones topic, inviting listeners to reflect on their own lifestyle habits and share their thoughts. This helped build a sense of participation and allowed us to gather feedback for future content.

Furthermore, the collaboration with expert Michel Poulain not only added credibility but also acted as a bridge between academic research and public discourse. By making scientific insights more accessible through the podcast format, we contributed to ongoing conversations about health, longevity, and well-being in both academic and non-academic communities.

5. Stakeholders

General Public

The podcast aims to inform and engage the general public about Blue Zones. Listeners will learn about the concept of Blue Zones, gain insights into the factors that contribute to longevity, and critically evaluate the validity of these claims. It can spark curiosity in those interested in health, well-being, and lifestyle choices, as well as encourage discussions on how individuals can incorporate aspects of Blue Zone living into their own lives. It also has the potential to inspire a broader public dialogue on the importance of work-life balance and urban planning, especially in Estonia, where these topics are becoming increasingly relevant.

Urban Planners and Local Authorities

As Blue Zones are known for their unique community structures that promote healthy living, urban planners and local authorities may find the podcast thought-provoking. It could open up new discussions on how to design urban spaces that foster social connections, encourage

physical activity, and support overall well-being. This aligns with growing global interest in creating environments that contribute to a longer and healthier life.

Academic Institutions

The podcast will provide inspiration and ideas for academic research, particularly in fields related to sociology, anthropology, and public health. Researchers and educators could use the podcast to explore the concepts of longevity and community health, potentially sparking new studies or providing a foundation for interdisciplinary academic discussions. It also presents an opportunity for academic institutions to engage with topics that are underexplored in mainstream media.

Media and Content Creators

By presenting a critical view on Blue Zones, the podcast will encourage media outlets to reconsider how they portray such topics. It offers an opportunity for media professionals to engage in more thoughtful, evidence-based discussions and challenge the simplified narratives often presented about longevity. This could also lead to further exploration and discussions on the topic across various media platforms.

6. Sustainability of this project

Listeners Interested in Personal Growth

For individuals seeking ways to improve their own health and quality of life, this podcast could provide practical insights. By critically exploring the concept of Blue Zones, the podcast can offer listeners ideas to improve their lifestyle, such as adopting a healthier diet, incorporating physical activity into their routines, and fostering meaningful social connections.

Content Relevance

The content of our podcast is highly relevant and appealing to a wide range of stakeholders. The chosen topic of Blue Zones, longevity, and the critique surrounding them offers valuable insights to listeners from various fields, including health, urban planning, and academia. The inclusion of an expert guest adds credibility and depth to the discussion, making the content not only informative but also engaging for the audience.

Accessibility and Inclusivity

The podcast is easily accessible to a broad audience. It is available on popular platforms such as Spotify, ensuring that listeners can access the episode from various devices. Additionally, promotional efforts were carried out within Tallinn University, where students and faculty members regularly pass by the areas where the podcast was advertised. This strategic placement ensures that the podcast reaches the university community effectively.

Social and Educational Impact

This podcast has the potential to be integrated into educational settings, particularly within psychology, public health, and urban planning courses. It can serve as an educational resource for students, providing them with a practical example of how research and real-world applications intersect. Incorporating the episode into coursework or using it as supplementary material can significantly expand its impact on students' learning experiences.

Media Presence

As part of the long-term LIFE project, the TLU podcast has already established a presence online and garnered attention from various listener groups. This growing visibility enhances the sustainability of the project, as the episode will continue to be part of a larger, ongoing dialogue. The continued promotion and growth of the TLU podcast series ensures that the episode remains accessible and impactful for the foreseeable future.

7. Summary

This podcast episode delves into the intriguing concept of Blue Zones, focusing on the myths and realities surrounding regions where people live longer lives. It discusses the critical analysis of these areas, including both their celebrated longevity and the critiques they face, particularly from experts like Saul Newman. The episode combines expert insights with research findings, exploring factors such as diet, activity, and community

that might contribute to long life.

The aim is to provoke thought, challenge conventional beliefs, and offer listeners new perspectives on health, aging, and well-being. This project engages a diverse group of stakeholders, from health professionals and urban planners to students and the general public, encouraging them to reflect on the implications of the Blue Zone concept for their own lives. The episode offers both academic depth and practical insights, making it accessible to a wide audience while fostering critical thinking about the concept of longevity.

The successful realization of this project was made possible through effective teamwork, clear communication, and a shared commitment to presenting an engaging, thought-provoking discussion.

Project Action Plan

Tasks	Deadline	Student(s) responsible
Meeting and initial ideas	25.02.2025	All members
Meeting and refining ideas, preparing action plan	26.02.2025	All members
Final choice of the topic	27.02.2025	All members
Action plan draft	27.02.2025	All members
Prep* Finding materials/articles about topic	11.03.2025	All members
Prep* Podcast rough draft	16.03.2025	Margarita / Liisi
Prep* List of potential experts and contacts	11.03.2025	All members
Prep* Contacting experts	13.03.2025	Rebeka

Prep* Preparing questions	16.03.2025	Margarita / Liisi
Prep* Sending prepared questions to expert	18.03.2025	Rebeka
Prep* Time and room booking	21.03.2025	Reio / Juri / Pauli
Report* Mid-term report	22.03.2025	Liisi
Report* Present mid-term report	25.03.2025 10.00-12.00	All members
Exec* Recording the podcast	?04.2025	Reio / Juri / Pauli
Exec* Editing the podcast	16.04.2025	Reio / Juri
Exec* Uploading the podcast	18.04.2025	Reio / Juri
Exec* Marketing	04.2025	Rebeka
Report* LIFE project portfolio	05.05.2025	Margarita / Pauli

Tasks	Deadline	Student(s) responsible
Meeting and initial ideas	25.02.2025	All members
Report* Self-reflection	10.05.2025	All members
Presentation	23.05.2025 10:00-12:00	All members

Communication to stakeholders

To ensure the visibility and impact of our project, we implemented a multi-channel communication strategy targeting key stakeholders. Within Tallinn University, promotional

materials for the podcast episode were strategically placed in high-traffic areas, making use of posters and digital notice boards to attract attention from both students and faculty.

Additionally, the podcast episode was published on Spotify, a widely used platform that ensures accessibility for a broad audience beyond the university. This helped us engage listeners interested in health, lifestyle, and longevity, while also appealing to specific stakeholder groups such as public health professionals, urban planners, and academics.

By featuring an expert interview with Michel Poulain and approaching the topic from a critical and research-based angle, we aimed to spark further discussion within media, academia, and the general public. The content is well-suited for use in educational settings and can serve as a catalyst for deeper conversations on public health and societal well-being.

Conclusion

This podcast project provided a unique opportunity to explore the concept of Blue Zones through critical analysis, expert insight, and collaborative content creation. By focusing on the myths and realities surrounding longevity, we aimed to go beyond surface-level wellness narratives and offer listeners a deeper, research-based understanding of what contributes to a long and healthy life.

The project highlighted the importance of scientific literacy and critical thinking in evaluating popular health trends. Through our engagement with Michel Poulain and the integration of academic sources, we created a podcast episode that is both informative and thought-provoking.

Furthermore, the project served as a platform for developing practical skills in research, media

production, and stakeholder communication. It brought together students from diverse backgrounds and fostered teamwork, creativity, and real-world application.

Overall, this experience not only enriched our academic journey but also contributed to public discourse on health and lifestyle in Estonia. The episode remains accessible to a broad audience and has the potential to be a lasting educational resource.