

Interview Genutė Gedvilienė (Soros International House, LT)

1. Name and profession / position

Genutė Gedvilienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Doctor of Social Sciences, Professor of the Academy of Education

2. In your opinion, why is multiculturalism and development of adult educators' intercultural communication skills important in Lithuanian society?

I think naturally interculturalism is important because we live in an open world society.

I believe that our country has all the conditions for the free and unrestricted life of people of different nations, religions, ethnicities, and cultures.

3. Briefly describe your work with adult learners. How many of them have been multicultural? How are they different from Lithuanian learners?

I could divide my intercultural experience into three groups. Firstly, the fact that I constantly participate in Erasmus + teacher mobility, i.e. lecturing at other universities in Europe, Asia (Portugal, Spain, Cyprus, Slovenia, Turkey, Latvia, Kazakhstan).

Secondly, I have been involved in various international projects for about 20 years, and thirdly, we have groups of foreign students to work with at the University.

4. How well has the educational system and society prepared you for teaching multicultural learners?

I think Vytautas Magnus University is one of the first in Lithuania to start to develop internationalization. I acquired my first skills as a student at this university.

5. How is teaching multicultural learners different from teaching Lithuanian adult learners? What kind of multicultural activities do you use in your training?

I think too much of anything. Maybe just knowing foreign languages.

6. What is the impact of multicultural educational activities on the learners? Do the relationships between local people and foreigners change? What about the relationship between adult educators and adult learners? Does it really change attitudes and behavior?



I think the difference is. Foreign students are bolder and easily and quickly engage in the discussion, or even initiate the discussion themselves. Lithuanians are more closed, but the situation is improving.

Friendships among foreign students are not common as Lithuanians are less proactive in developing friendships. Teacher relations with foreign students are positive and sufficiently fluent.

7. Have you faced any difficulties working with multicultural adult learners? Do you have any success stories?

Maybe the first meetings, projects, lectures were a bit more difficult. I have a few success cases and thank you letters. For example, a Japanese student chose my one subject, liked it and chose another subject the next semester, motivating that she was interested. Now, from time to time, she writes me letters asking me how I'm doing and so on.

8. Do you have any advice for other adult educators?

I just need a very simple thing, it's to love people.

