

Lithuanian case study: constructing context for adult education. towards multicultural world future

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Abstract

Conscious and responsible discussions of the processes of changes that we witness are one of the main qualities that any adult, and especially adult educators should be involved into. As a contemporary world is characterized with both changes, and reflection about these changes, Giddens (Giddens, 1992) notices, reflexivity is being institutionalized at the moment. One of the major changes is globalization of the world. Former homogeneous societies become more heterogeneous. Heterogeneity will characterize a context of future adults' educators to a major extent, and therefore even in relatively stable societies (like Lithuania) a discussion on these issues is of utmost importance. International context acts as a significant catalyst of change as it preconditions global integration and integration into the EU. At the national level interrelated process of iterative relationship between development of adult education and social initiatives should be identified and certain aspects of education of future adult educators are discussed. *Aim* of this paper is to identify those features of Lithuanian society, which characterize it as learning, and, therefore, a civic society, also, to present results of the impact study that has been completed at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania. Survey was completed in two stages. Impact stage. In-depth discussions with future adult educators were carried out in order to reflect of changes in the world, and the responsibilities that adult educators will face. Seminars enabled to introduce ideas, controversial issues and challenges. During the second stage 241 student was asked to share ideas in an open-type questionnaire. *Methods* of literature, documents, and qualitative research (contents analysis of an open-type questionnaire) were employed. Conclusions that reveal students' approach are presented; it seems they do not think learning in itself can solve problems of social cohesion, and that systematic measures are needed, and study revealed that there is a wide range of concepts of intercultural education, and it varies in 9 subcategories from science to opportunities for employability.

Introduction

It seems that contemporary world is characterized with both changes, and reflection about these changes, moreover, as Giddens (Giddens, 1992) noticed, reflexivity is being institutionalized at the moment. Therefore, conscious and responsible discussions of the processes that we witness are one of the main qualities that any adult, and especially adult educators should be involved into. Moreover, discussions and critical reflection upon diverse reality is as the feature of critical thinker, as it is a feature of the person, who constructs one's identity consciously (Brookfield, 1995). As a new member of the European Union, both Lithuanian (Population: 3,7 million inhabitants; area: 65 thousand sq. km.) state, and its citizens are challenged by a number of new responsibilities and the ability to exercise these responsibilities is to be acquired. One of these new responsibilities is to exercise national and global citizenship adequately, and to initiate reflection on these issues in the process of educating future adult educators.

Aim of this paper is to identify those features of Lithuanian society, which characterize it as learning, and, therefore, a civic society, also, to present results of the impact study that has been completed at Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania.

Methods of literature, documents, and qualitative research (contents analysis of an open-type questionnaire) were employed.

Citizenship Education in anticipation of multicultural context: Lithuanian Case study

Firstly, for further analysis, at least two contexts are discerned here: international and national(Chart 1).

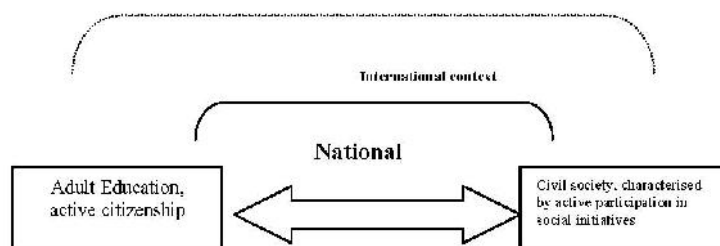


CHART 1. Citizenship and Adult Education as Prerequisite for Civic Society

International context acts as a significant catalyst of change as it preconditions global integration and integration into the EU. At the national level interrelated process of iterative relationship between development of adult education and social initiatives is identified. Secondly, certain aspects of education of future adult educators are discussed.

Analysis of the influence of adult education towards the development of civic society is based upon the investigation of a number of processes that take place in Lithuanian and global societies. For cultural purposes it may be reasonable to present a short glimpse of ideas on citizenship at its dawn and compare it with contemporary contemplations on the theme.

The birth of the concept and the very phenomenon of citizenship in the West, it is generally agreed, come from the Classical Greece. Greeks were profoundly concerned with establishment of order against chaos, as they were at frontier of establishing civilized: regulated and managed by reason world, as opposed to the world, which was regulated by unknown forces. This concern is reflected in their philosophy, literature and understanding of what social cohabitation is. As a social dimension, order for Greeks seems to be intimately related to citizenship. The most widely spread and acknowledged model of 'citizenship' seems to include the following factors:

- Common law should be established to protect [the citizen] against internal and external threats;
- Appropriate and negotiated systems of governance are the best way to ensure the common law is administered properly;
- Norms and values of the community should serve as benchmarks of citizens' behavior. (Castles, Davidson, 2000)

As Pericles noted in the 5th century BC: "Our order is called democracy, because it defends the rights of a majority, rather than of a minority. Our laws are equal concerning the interest of all our citizens. Political superiority is given to a person due to his personal advantages, rather than because he belongs to a certain group". (Arskis 1989, 118).

Law, securing of its functioning, and norms/values are at focus in this model; therefore, those are several themes at least, which might be pursued in our paper in order to disclose the phenomenon of being a citizen and of acting as one. Legislation concerning equal rights and duties, as well as systems and prevailing norms seems to be an integral part of the concept of citizenship.

However, contemporary discussions on citizenship seem to be focused on the *context* of citizenship. If for an ancient Greek 'citizenship' meant order, security and relative freedom in a very specific, geographically, socially, and politically defined area, it is not the case today, or at least it is debatable.

One of the main challenges that face contemporary European society is multiculturalism. On the one hand, European society has never been otherwise, as Durkheim noted (Durkheim, 1977), certain locations in Europe in 13th century were examples of extreme multiculturalism. Paris university, established in 13th AD is one of such examples, since among students we could have found people from all over Europe and beyond. Another example of the same is universities in Krakow or Torun, which played a major role in introducing cultural heritage to the whole region, and in fostering new, and sometimes revolutionary scientific ideas (e.g., contribution of Nicolaus Copernicus to understanding of the structure of solar system cannot be underestimated).

On the other hand, however, as Fields (Fields, 2002) notes, we can identify a major, in-depth difference between situations prior to modernity, and in 21st century. Earlier, locations where many cultures met, and interacted (most often – with extreme success) were even if numerous, than surely limited to certain places (for example, universities, courts of monarchs, monasteries). Today, however, the same applies to almost all clusters of society, geography of multicultural situation is universal, as is the level of impact to individual's, groups', and social institutions' (for example - system of education) lives.

According to Bullock and Batten (2004), in a planned social change, the following several stages can be identified:

1.*Analysis*. People understand the need for change; they search for information both within and outside the organization.

2.*Planning*. Once either the problems or needs are reflected and identified, aims for a desirable change are formulated, plans are developed, resources allocated and people try to gain support from different interests groups at this stage.

3.*Implementation*. Change is implemented: either through learning activities, or during the introduction of new technologies. The process of implementation should be under permanent and scrutinized monitoring, which comprise of an important part of quality management

4.*Integration*. Implemented changes, e.g. higher sensitivity to multicultural context of learning, and associated behavior become a routine part of an individual's and organization's behavior, which now forms a new standard of the established practice.

Some authors argue that any change incorporates an element of unplanned issues. As Pettigrew (2002) states, it is very difficult to separate processes that have been started deliberately from those that were started under pressure, or as the result of a number of external factors. He states that change:

Is difficult to locate in a time scale, i.e. it is difficult to identify the exact time it started and finished.

Change normally takes place at several levels, e.g. students come from different contexts (e.g., in tertiary education: much more students come to other countries now under Socrates/Erasmus, than earlier), therefore teachers start implementing culturally sensitive practices. On the other hand, teachers have to receive support in order to master new methods. However, it could be argued that best teaching practices are introduced by those teachers who earlier had themselves been exchange students.

Change is almost inevitably associated with shifts of cultural patterns and therefore change almost always changes personal perceptions, attitudes, and even influences people's values.

Multicultural change is the change that needs an additional and sensitive attention, as it in its very essence involves the deepest structures of personality. Therefore any culture should start and promote discussions in the field.

Though citizenship, as Field (2002) notes, is a complex idea, which has its roots in antiquity, it acquired its contemporary significance during the 18-century revolutions and the Enlightenment movement. The development of the idea of citizenship as related to rights of an individual was especially prompted by British experience "even if at that time the terms 'citizen' and 'citizenship' were not much in use...still the writings of John Locke, and independence of American colonies were vital to their evolution of the liberal mode of citizenship and citizen's rights" (Heater, 1999; 5).

The idea of "citizenship" also refers to conditions under which people participate in the wider community, this tradition is sometimes called the republican one, and stems its origins from Plato writings, where functions within the state were clearly allocated and everyone was expected to follow the course of certain actions. Usually, and historically, the wider community is related to the entity - nation state. This relation was reflected and even emphasized during the processes of development of nation states in 19 century. In a number of instances relating an individual to one's political/economic/social context by means of identification as a 'citizen' of a certain entity, proved to be a powerful means of building those political/economic/social entities (Giddens, 1993). On the other hand, the means of relating through "citizenship", was also corrupted in many instances (Brookfield, 1995). It seems, *citizenship* has lost its intrinsic, un-reflected relatedness to values. Though historically 'citizenship' was equated to loyalty and responsibility, the equation sometimes lacked equilibrium. Duties and rights should be equally represented in the equation. If duties are overemphasised, individuals lose the ability to voice their authentic needs (Brookfield, 1995). Even if historical importance of citizenship in the formation of

national states cannot be overestimated, recent tendencies, referred to as postmodernism or late modernity, sometimes question the importance of national state for citizenship. It is widely argued that citizenship is being transformed, and possibly has lost its original meaning, under the impact of globalizing trends. Proponents of the idea note a shift of economic power particularly (Hargreaves, 1999). Increasingly, decisions are taken at the level of trans-national corporations; these decisions affect across national boundaries, and quite often decisions are unaffected by nation states. However, Field notes the controversy of these arguments. Even if there are clear signs that globalizing tendencies are weakening some roles of the nation state, there are also signs that nation states can regain their roles. One of the examples is formation of trans-national coalitions such as the EU. The coalition, sometimes referred to as supra-nation, assists in retaining and even strengthening capacities of national states. Field points out that these tendencies exemplify the strengthening of national states, rather than their weakening. Thus the claim that the strength of globalizing tendencies has changed the terms of engagement, and that nation states are therefore in an extremely unstable and uncertain situation can be viewed with some reservation.

In this context, the situation of the Lithuanian state exemplifies the issues revealed by the analysis. According to Article 17 of the Treaty establishing the European Community: “*Citizenship of the Union is hereby established. Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union. Citizenship of the Union shall complement and not replace national citizenship*”. Therefore, Lithuanian society faces multiple challenges, one of these being to balance nationally and internationally valid initiatives.

Summing up, we can conclude that post modernist localization (Field, 2002) of political life seems to be developing, and this seem to be the most articulated characteristics of a contemporary civic society. Contemporary citizenship seems to be related to individual rights more than it has ever been before. More often the process of localization is accompanied by the withdrawal of individuals from the exercise of traditional activities and by the engagement in new forms of activities, which also entails the design and administration of these new activities. It seems that in a contemporary society a balance between individualism and social integration should be sought. Retaining the personally meaningful and socially operative equilibrium of civil rights and duties (responsibility), considering wider contexts (international, historical) seems to be a possible starting working definition for **citizenship**, especially, in the context of multiculturalism.

As multicultural change is the change that needs an additional and sensitive attention, especially from the perspective of adult educator, an impact study was completed in Lithuania to identify dominating perspectives of future adult educators in the sphere.

Methodology

Survey was completed in two stages. Impact stage. In-depth discussions with future adult educators were carried out in order to reflect of changes in the world, and the responsibilities that adult educators will face. Seminars enabled to introduce ideas, controversial issues and challenges.

Second stage. 241 (in undergraduate studies: 135 in full time (18 – 20 years old), and 106 (25

– 36 years old) in extra-mural studies) student were asked to share their opinions concerning: “*Can learning solve the problems of social fragmentation?*” “*Why yes, and why no?*” “*What is intercultural education?*”, “*Why is it important?*”, and “*How can it be improved?*”? 106 students shared their opinions concerning possibilities to solve problems of social fragmentation via learning opportunities. It seems that majority of respondents are very conscious if not critical about the notion that learning is the only way towards social cohesion, Fig. 1:

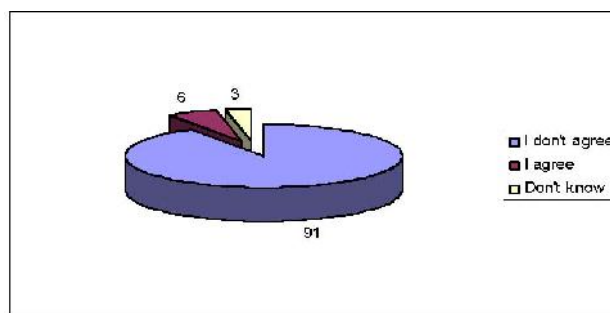


Fig. 1. Opinions concerning notion whether learning is the only way towards social cohesion

While asked to explain their answer, the majority of students, future adult educators, contributed the idea that growth of competence depends on the starting level of participants. Their contributions were grouped into certain groups. Students noted that those, whose competence is high at the initial stage (in our case – native inhabitants of the country, who, at least, would know the language of the state), automatically have higher opportunities to develop further (participate in continuing education, in-service training courses, or choose to join formal education), than those, whose competence is lower (for example, emigrants would not know language in many cases). Students noted that other activities, like provision with technologies (both learning, and for work) is important, also, provision with learning materials is essential, Fig. 2.

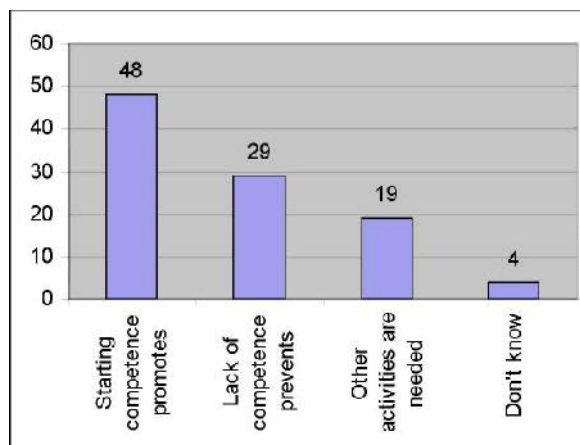


Fig. 2. Categories of contributions: why learning is not the only way towards social (intercultural) cohesion (in-percent)

Content analysis of students' contribution to open ended question "What is intercultural education?" enables authors to identify the following groups/categories and subcategories in some cases of responses, as in Table I.

It seems that sharing experiences at the individual level, learning from each other is of utmost importance for future adult educators, if intercultural education is considered. One of the students shared: "Intercultural education is opportunity for young people study in foreign countries, to get acquainted with traditions, values, perspectives that people in those counties cherish". It is interesting to note that many (14.9%) of respondents are aware of the importance of international organizations, and programs, which enable study visits. Priorities are illustrated in Fig. 3 (Note – 100% comprise those, who shared their opinions, in this case – 134 respondents).

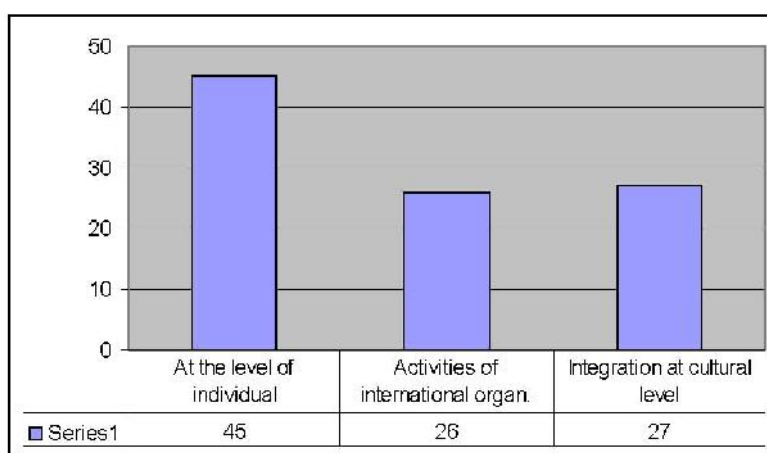


Fig. 3. Distribution of responses, in percent

While analyzing another aspect ("Why is intercultural education important?"), important and interesting findings were identified, Table II.

Results show that intercultural education is important, according to future adult educators, predominantly at the level of individual, that is, students of adult education are aware of the impact of changing world to individual's life, and possible dangers there; Fig. 4. (Note: n=133 – 100%).

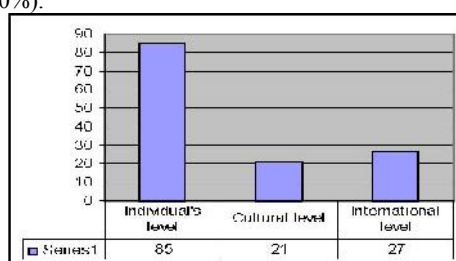


Fig. 4. Distribution of responses, in percent

Moreover, they suggest a number of ways to prepare individuals for these changes: development of social skills (12% of all respondents think it is important), building awareness those other perspectives may exist (2.25% of all respondents), also, education towards tolerance was often mentioned in this category (23.3% of all respondents), as was the changing world view (15.7%). As 18 years old girl shared: <Intercultural education is important>, because people can get acquainted with other culture, introduce best practices from these countries, and widen up their world-view, because if intercultural

differences are fully understood, then our own identity is safe”.

The fact that respondents in the study were predominantly young people (18 – 20), should be considered in order to explain the domination of personal perspective.

On the other hand, respondents mentioned cultural shock, and the necessity to help people to cope with it, therefore it seems, young adult educators are aware of other than positive impact of the situation when cultures meet, Fig. 5 (Note n=85 - 100%).

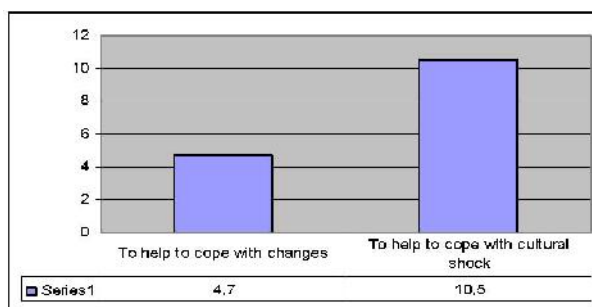


Fig. 5. Respondents about negative aspects of multicultural situations for individuals (in per cent in the category)

18 years old boy shared; “<Intercultural education> enables us avoid crises in the case of a sudden clash of civilizations”.

Second priority is given to impact at international level: respondents note the need to have good relationships with other countries (6.7% of contributions), to participate in globalization and scientific developments. It is interesting to note that respondents are aware of the need to co-operate at the international level in order to have an effective and innovative progress (3% of respondents). 18 years old student shares: “People travel so much now. Education, economy are organized together by many countries. If we don’t understand each other’s cultures, these development would be impossible”, or another: “People get acquainted with both culture and technologies, and often it is easier to introduce most advanced technologies in other countries, than understand people of these countries...” Other respondents mentioned sustainable globalization, which is characterized by improving living standards to everyone, rather than the chosen ones (4.5% of contributions).

However, importance of intercultural education for development of both native, and other countries, is also noticeable, as 21% of all responses have been grouped under that category.

Analysis of contributions about the ways to improve intercultural education revealed an open and genuine attitude future adult educators have, as there were many responses “you cannot improve what does not exist” or “hard to say” (15% of responses), and this is applicable for Lithuanian reality. Lithuania is still a very homogeneous society, e.g. according to the last census (Spring 2001), there are more than 82% Lithuanians, 9% Poles, 7% Russians, and people of other nationalities (Valstybės žinios/State News, 2002). Therefore responses revealed that students are aware of the lack of achievements in the field, Table III, on the other hand, that explains the lower number of responses, than in the case of previous items.

Results show that future adult educators are aware of the importance of informing both about the importance of mobility activities, and personal readiness (learning languages). It seems that students give priority to activities of co-operation, individual readiness (which is consistent with their opinions in a previous item, concerning “why” intercultural education is important). Also, need to institutionalize this field, and start organizing it professionally is mentioned often, Fig. 6 (Note: n=120 -100%).

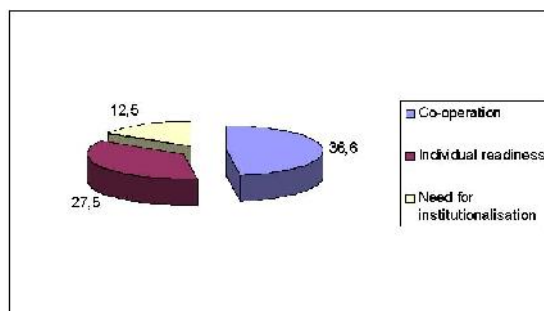


Fig. 6. Distribution of responses about the ways to improve multicultural education (in per cent from those, who shared their opinions in this item)

The fact that 5.8% of respondents think that professionals in the field should be trained, and that special study programs are needed (1.6%) illustrates students’ awareness of the importance of the activity. 18 years old student (boy) notes: “I think that intercultural education will be better organized, when new professionals: sociologists, psychologists, educators start their work. People, educated and experienced in the field, will be able to educate for tolerance”, other student (18 years old girl) notes: “I think there should be a special organization, function of which would be to organize intercultural education, and dissemination of best practices and ideas”.

Majority highlights importance of study visits (25%), also, traveling and learning languages (16.6% of respondents) seem to be important for students.

Results of this testing are consistent with the situation in Lithuania. According to The Law of Education of the Republic of Lithuania (2001, article No 30), every citizen of the Republic of Lithuania has the right to study in Lithuanian or one’s national language, if the educational institution according to its regulations is obliged to provide studies in national

languages. The fact of homogeneity accounts for the relatively small number of students, who study in languages of minorities, as indicated in Table IV.

Main geographical areas from where students come to study in Lithuania are Asia and Europe. The number of students in Lithuanian universities differ: in Kaunas Medical University study 44,5%, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University - 16% of all foreign students, in Vilnius Pedagogical University – 18%, in some other universities there are no foreign students. Table 3 presents the range and the areas of incoming students. Most of the students adopt English, French or German languages as their studies languages for the sake of convenience. At present students from 42 countries of the world are studying in Lithuanian HE institutions. Major part of them come from Lebanon – 151 (or 22% of all foreigners), from China – 55 (of 8%), Pakistan – 59 (9%), Poland – 36 (6%), Byelorussia – 67 (10%) (2).

Not many of Lithuanian students experience multicultural situation directly, however, as it seems from the testing results, they are aware of the positive and possible negative aspect of the situation.

Conclusions

1. The analysis is built upon the assumption that adult education, as a prerequisite for civic society, should be viewed in the context of contemporary post modernist trends, namely: pluralisation and segmentation. Lithuania, an Eastern European country of long history of democracy and a turbulent non-democratic recent past, is presented as a case study of social initiatives related to learning and education. The authors assume that Lithuanian society is a typical case of a society in rapid change, a change from a closed to pluralistic, civil society. The role of education in such a society deserves closer attention, as it may reveal tendencies typical of all societies in change, retaining, at the same time, deep-rooted national values and priorities.

2. It is important to emphasize the following issues that testing study revealed

Learning in itself cannot solve problems of social cohesion, systematic measures are needed.

- Study revealed that there is a wide range of concepts of intercultural education, and it varies in 9 subcategories from science to opportunities for employability.

- Responses to why intercultural education is important revealed that students think it is significant at the following levels: individual, cultural, international/political.

- In improving intercultural education, students note the importance of international co-operation, variety of measures promoting co-operation, however, here they also note the importance of activities in many levels: from individual to political, and the role of media.

3. While concluding the paper, it is important to note, that future adult educators think in a systemic way about issues of intercultural education. Personal, cultural and international levels have been both identified, and discussed further; also, respondents were very open while sharing about real situation in Lithuania. Intercultural education just starts in our country; however, respondents note the importance both to discuss these issues, and to start preparation for the situation, when our context will be multicultural one.

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Table page

Categories of responses concerning meaning of intercultural education (n) Table 1

Category	Subcategory	Total number of responses in category
Science		6
Function of formal education (schools, universities)	Latent function of formal education that emerges just at the moment (3)	17
	Development/improving system of formal education (14)	
Function of non-formal education	Clubs, students' organizations, etc., activities of NGOs (4)	4
Function that informal	Mass media (1)	

learning performs	Popular culture (the way issues of intercultural interaction are presented in movies, etc.) (3)	4
Sharing experiences at the level of individual	Sharing experiences, learning about other cultures (28)	45
	Getting to know other people (9)	
Activities of international organizations	Learning foreign languages (8)	26
	Study visits of students and teachers (20)	
Integration at the cultural level	International project activities (6)	27
	Interaction of cultures (5)	
Changes of perspectives	Learning about other cultures (22)	4
	Changes of world view (2)	
	Activities against racism (1)	
Activities towards better opportunities for employment	Development of philosophical attitudes towards tolerance (1)	1
Total	134 of those who shared their opinions	

Categories of responses concerning issues making multicultural education important (n) Table II

Category	Subcategory	Total number of responses in category	
At the level of cultures	Cherishing other countries via getting to know them better (4)	21	
	Cherishing and development of one's own culture, by getting to know other cultures more deeply (13)		
	Cultures develop in a sustainable way only in interaction (2)		
	Activities against stagnation and isolation (2)		
At the level of individual	Development of social skills (16)	85	
	Development of tolerance (32)		
	Changes of world view (21)		
	Awareness that different perspectives can exist (3)		
	Subcategory		Subgroups
	Individual and changes		Helps people to cope with changes (4) Helps people to avoid or cope with anxiety, cultural shock (9)
At international/ political level	Helps to cherish democracy (3)	27	
	Helps to foster good international relations (9)		
	Enables development of common EU area (3)		
	Activities against racism (1)		
	Enables sustainable globalization (6)	27	
	Enables sustainable and faster progress (scientific) at international level (4)		
	Promotes mobility of professionals (1)		
Total	133 who shared their opinions		

Categories of responses concerning possibilities to improve multicultural education (n) Table III

Category	Subcategory	Total number of responses in category
Various ways of co-operation/informing	Conferences, seminars, projects (14)	44
	Participation in mobility programs (30)	
Need to formalize/institutionalize activities for multicultural education	To train professionals in multicultural education (7)	15
	Establish organizations for activities in the field (3)	
	Develop curriculum in the field, especially, for teachers and adult educators (2)	
	Awareness that different perspectives can exist (3)	
Individual readiness	Learning more languages at different levels of education and informally (20)	33
	Participation in various art activities, traveling (2)	

	Educate for tolerance, and understanding, should start at school (11)	
Importance of media	Importance of media (7)	7
State policy	To provide immigrants with opportunities to study and work, however, the should be strict immigration quotas (3)	3
Hard to say	It does not exist, so nothing definite can be said (18)	18
Total	120 of those who shared their opinions	

Students in Lithuania according to the language of studies Table IV

	1999/2000		2000/2001		2001/2002		2002/2003	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Total number of students	84345	100	95593	100	106913	100	115244	100
Study in Lithuanian language	82413	97.7	94992	99.4	105943	99.1	113745	98.7
In Russian language	738	0.9	720	0.8	639	0.6	780	0.7
In Polish language	162	0.2	204	0.2	254	0.2	557	0.5
In Byelorussia	83	0.1	68	0.1	82	0.1	115	0.1

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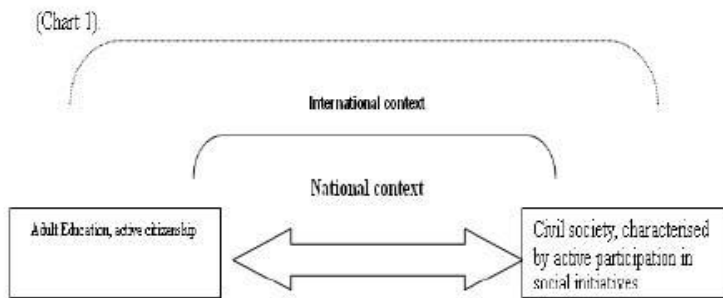


CHART 1. Citizenship and Adult Education as Prerequisite for Civic Society

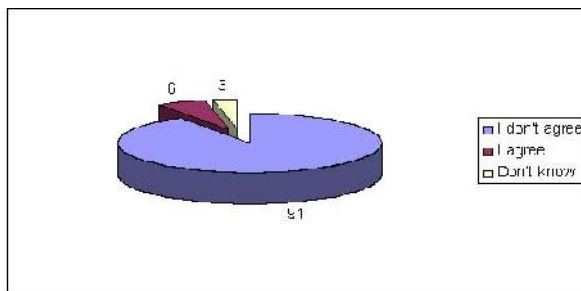


Fig. 1. Opinions concerning notion whether learning is the only way towards social cohesion

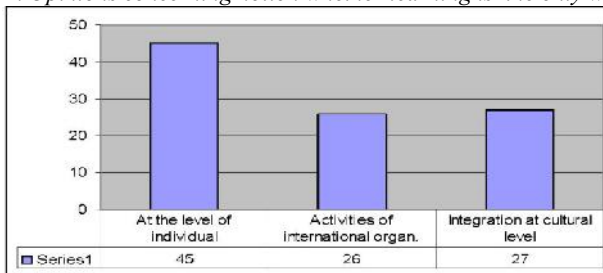


Fig. 2. Categories of contributions: why learning is not the only way towards social (intercultural) cohesion (in percent)

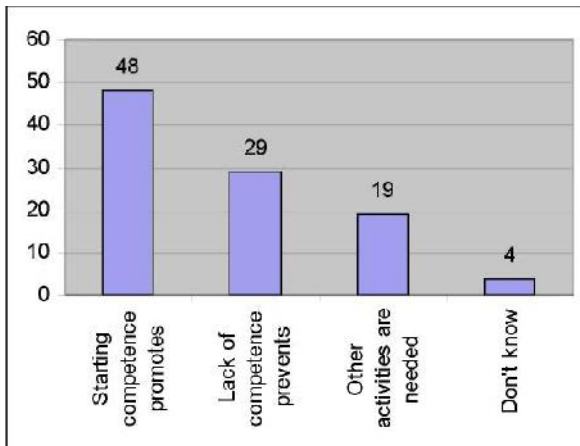


Fig. 3. Distribution of response, in percent

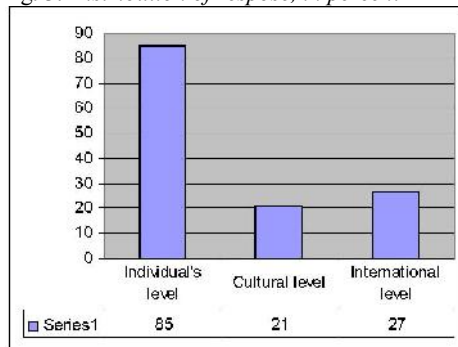


Fig. 4. Distribution of response, in percent

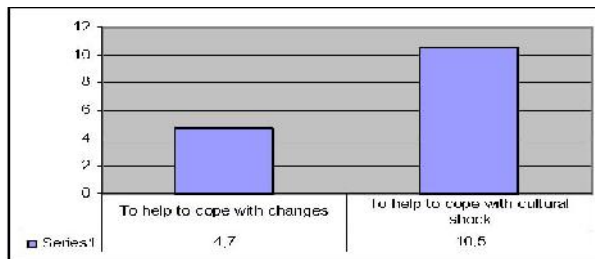


Fig. 5. Respondents about negative aspects of multicultural situations for individuals (in percent in the category)

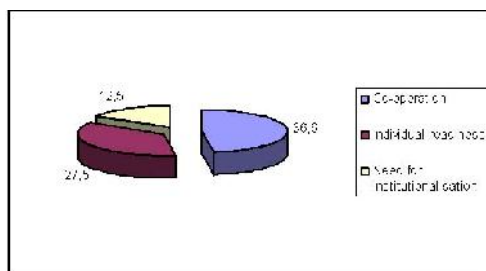


Fig. 6. Distribution of responses about the ways to improve multicultural education (in percent from those, who shared their opinions in this item)