

Professional Capacity dealing with diversity in Vilnius, Lithuania

Language diversity

Pedagogy

Report of the NAOS study visit September 2016

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STUDY VISIT IN LITHUANIA

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1 Introduction

1.1 NAOS: background and goals

Countries face challenges in catering for the diverse needs of migrant students and narrowing the gaps in education outcomes between native students and immigrant students. (Inter)national evidence (OECD 2010 Reviews of Migrant Education) suggest that strategies to raise education outcomes for migrant students need to focus on school level and system level, such as:

- preparing school leaders and teachers to meet the needs of diverse student groups;
- increasing student opportunity to learn language (mother tongue as well as language of instruction) in regular school lessons;
- encouraging schools to build capacity in the area of dealing with diversity;
- making collaboration between school and community more effective.

The central topic in NAOS is professional capacity concerning dealing with diversity related to migration (in all its different forms). Professional capacity includes innovative forms of cooperation between educational professionals and other professionals dealing with children. Bender Sebring, Allensworth, Bryk, Easton and Luppescu (2006) who view professional capacity as one of the fundamentals of school improvement define it as follows:

“Professional capacity encompasses the quality of the faculty and staff recruited and maintained in a school, their base beliefs and values about responsibility for change, the quality of ongoing professional development focused on local improvement efforts, and the capacity of a staff to work together as a cohesive professional community focused on the core problems of improving teaching and learning.” (p. 12).

The objective of NAOS is to strengthen professional capacity in the partner countries and their respective schools. With the ultimate goal to increase educational attainment and reduce drop out and unemployment among groups of migrant children. NAOS is a star that refers to the fundament of a Greek building. By choosing this name, we emphasize the idea that professional capacity is the fundament of good quality education.



The OECD country reviews in “Closing the gap for immigrant students” (2010) shows that developing policies and curricular adaptations at the national level is not enough for closing the achievement gap between native and immigrant students. It also needs institutional changes, made within every school, including changes in school leadership, teaching methodologies and school-home co-operation. NAOS wants to take a deeper look at what kind of institutional changes inside schools are needed by looking at the professional capacity in schools.

NAOS is complementary to the SIRIUS policy network carried out from 2012 - 2014. SIRIUS has promoted and enhanced knowledge transfer among stakeholders in order to improve the education of children and youngsters from migrant background. One of the focal points in SIRIUS was professional capacity. The difference between the SIRIUS activities in this area and the NAOS activities concern the specific focus on pre- and in-service modules for professional development as well as the inclusion of schools in the network.

The current project partners (see below) have been chosen on the basis of complex migration histories (Netherlands and Belgium), language instruction (Estonia and Lithuania), a variety of strategies for building professional capacity (Norway and Lithuania), economic crisis in combination with educational issues (Portugal and Greece) and new EU-countries facing future immigrants and educational challenges (Croatia and Cyprus). All partners in the NAOS network are centres of expertise which will yield critical, theoretical and empirical contributions to the development of knowledge and practice on professional capacity. In each of the countries, the centre of expertise will connect to a set of schools and support the NAOS activities.

The NAOS partners:



Name of the Organisation
Risbo B.V.
Forum za slobodu odgoja
UNIVERSIDADE DO PORTO
Public Policy and Management Institute
Tartu Rahvusvaheline Kool Tartu International School MTÜ
PAIDAGOGIKO INSTITOUTO KYPROU - CYPRUS PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE
University of Patras
UNIVERSITEIT ANTWERPEN
Algemeen Pedagogisch Studiecentrum
HOGSKOLEN I OSTFOLD

1.2 The study visit: content and procedure

Content

A review of the literature (Severiens, Wolff & Van Herpen, 2014) shows that strengthening professional capacity with the aim to stimulate school success among diverse groups of migrant students asks for expertise in five content areas.

1. Urban teachers (or teachers in classrooms with diverse student populations) should first know about language development in classes of pupils whose first language is not the language of instruction.
2. These teachers should be competent in using pedagogic and didactic resources that support the learning of all their pupils. Diverse classes need different didactic resources and different types of instruction than homogeneous classrooms. If schools and teachers are committed to encouraging the talents of all their pupils they should have knowledge of the use of teaching materials, methods and types of instruction designed for diverse classes.
3. Urban teachers should know about social psychology issues such as stereotyping, teacher expectations and ethnic-identity development issues.
4. Urban teachers that succeed in engaging the parents of their diverse pupils as well as



5. Cooperate with community organisations on a basis of equality will further support school achievement in their urban schools.

The review by Severiens et al concludes that if schools are committed to increasing achievement among migrant groups, and closing the achievement gap, they should facilitate high levels of professional capacity in these areas of expertise.

NAOS organizes ten study visits in a period of three years. The general aim of these study visits is to collect and exchange good practices between schools. These good practices concern one of the areas of expertise as described above. In this way, each area of expertise will be the topic of two separate study visits.

Each of the ten partners was asked to choose an area of expertise and indicate two schools with a good practice in this area. During the kick-off meeting the distribution of areas of expertise was made as follows:

Organizing Partner	Visiting partner 1 (writers)	Visiting partner 2	Theme
Belgium	Netherlands	Greece	School-community relationships/parent participation
Greece	Croatia	Norway	Social psychology
Norway	Netherlands	Cyprus	Language/pedagogy/social psychology
Croatia	Portugal	Lithuania	School - community relationships
Cyprus	Belgium	Netherlands	social psychology/School - community relationships
Estonia	Greece	Belgium	Pedagogy
Lithuania	Cyprus	Estonia	Language/pedagogy
Portugal	Estonia	Netherlands	School-community relationships/pedagogy
Netherlands	Lithuania	Croatia	School-community relationships/language
Netherlands	Norway	Portugal	Pedagogy

Some partners indicated that whereas the distinction in the five areas of expertise could be made on a conceptual level, in practice many schools combine different areas and conduct activities in several areas at the same time. For example, oftentimes parent participation and school-community relationships are combined, but other combinations are also possible. In the schedule above it becomes clear how the areas of expertise are combined in each of the study visits.

Procedure



The focus during the study visits is on the good practice itself, but especially on the in-service training or professional development activity that supported the development of the good practice. Two general questions guide the study visit:

1. What does the good practice entail?
2. How were the teachers prepared for this good practice?

In the first session of the study visit, these general questions are translated to more detailed questions that refer to the specific area(s) of expertise and are relevant given the context of the study visit. In general, a distinction is made between questions regarding the context, the goals of the good practice, the activities, the results and the professional development activities.

This more specific set of questions guides the school visits as well as the reflection during the final session of the study visit. The detailed questionnaires developed for the study visit in Vilnius are provided in the Annex to this report.

All participants take turns taking notes (observations and notes of interviews), which are shared with the partner responsible for writing the report. The writing partner analyses the notes and writes the report according to the general questions and the basic categories (context, goals, activities, results and professional development).

1.3 Focus and participants of the study visit in Lithuania

NAOS study visit in Vilnius, Lithuania, took place on the 22nd and 23rd of September 2016. The thematic focus of the visits was on language support and pedagogical practices when working with students from diverse backgrounds. The visit was organized by Public Policy and Management Institute (Lithuania). The visiting partners were Cyprus (who were responsible for this report) and Estonia. In total, a group of six visiting participants took part in the study visit:

- Cyprus: Tonia Spyropoulou and Elena Christofidou (Teacher trainers)
Estonia: Kristi Aria (Principal) and Elo-Kai Kurel (School teacher)
Netherlands: Tomislav Tudjman and Sabine Severiens (Researchers).

Figure 1. The NAOS study visit team in Vilnius Lithuanian House



The participants visited two schools that have experience in working with diversity: Vilnius Lithuanian House (Lietuviu Namai), which is a comprehensive school providing education from the 1st till the 12th grade, and Russian minority school 'Santaros', which includes two schools under one roof – pro-gymnasium (1-8th grades) and gymnasium (9-12th grades). During the study visit the partners interviewed school heads, teachers, parents and students to learn about their experiences and educational support available at school.

The interviewing participants were divided into three groups. The first group interviewed the principal(s) with Kristi Aria and Elena Christofidou, the second group interviewed the teachers with Elo-Kai Kurel and Tonia Spyropoulou and the third group interviewed the students with Tomislav Tudjman and Sabine Severiens. Kristi also interviewed the parents during the study visit in the second school. Hanna, Darius and Ruta had the role of the translators where needed. The writing partners Elena and Tonia (Cyprus) took notes during the whole procedure.



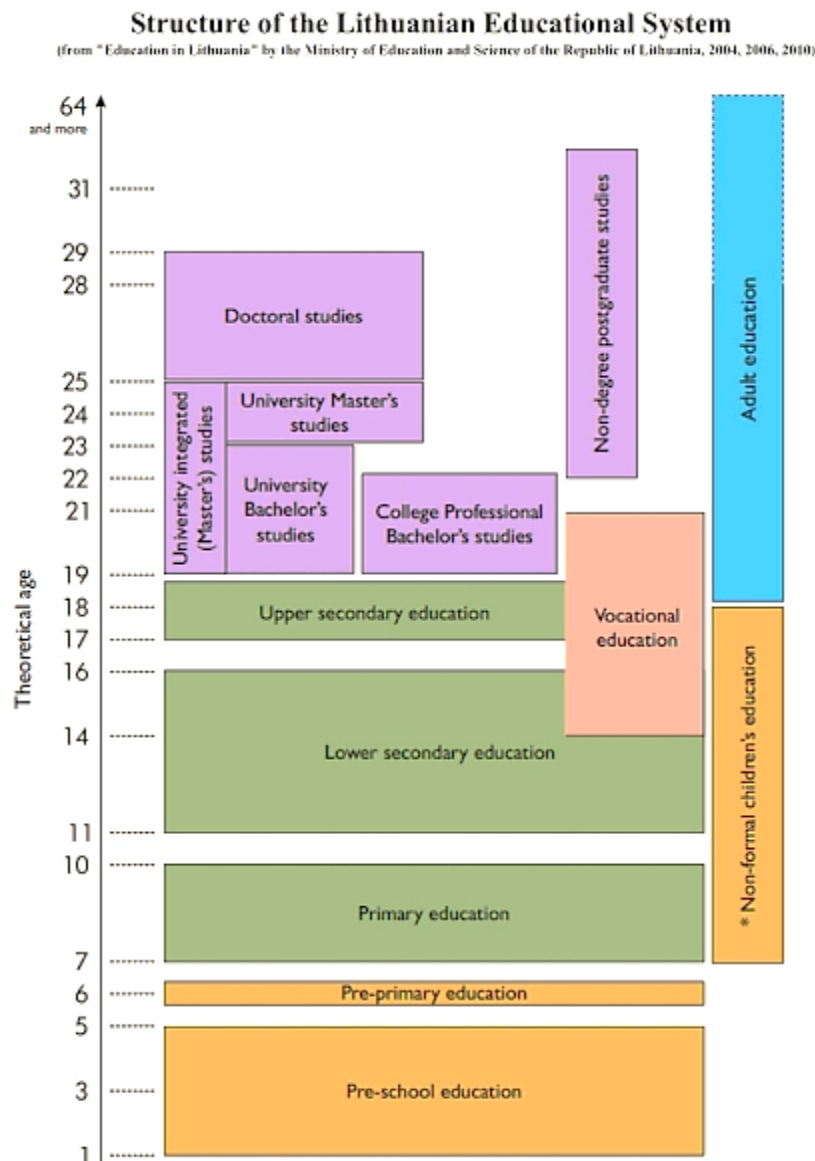
This report describes the findings of the study visit. It is organized in the following way: the first and second chapters introduce methodological approach and contextual information about Lithuanian education system; the third chapter provides analysis of the two school visits with the focus on teacher professional development and the fourth chapter provides reflections and concluding thoughts prepared by the group in a “debriefing” session.

2 Context

2.1. Education system in Lithuania

The development of the current system of education in the Republic of Lithuania started in the 1990s. Since 2003, the education system covers: preschool and pre-primary (ikimokyklinis ir priešmokyklinis); primary, lower secondary and upper secondary (pradinis, pagrindinis ir vidurinis), vocational (profesinis), higher (aukštasis) and adult education (suaugusiųjų švietimas) (please see figure below). According to the Constitution adopted in 1992, education is compulsory until the age of 16. Education at state and municipal general education schools, vocational schools and junior colleges is free of charge. Pre-school education is not mandatory; however, since September 2016, the pre-primary class (usually provided for children between 6 and 7 years old) has become compulsory. General education lasts for 12 years and is acquired in three stages: primary (pradinis) - 4 years (forms 1-4); lower secondary (pagrindinis) - 6 years (forms 5-10); and upper secondary (vidurinis) - 2 years (forms 11-12). Each stage can be followed in a separate independent institution or in one general institution. There are also other types of establishments providing general secondary education: gymnasiums (gymnazijos) and international baccalaureate (IB) schools. Gymnasiums admit all applicants who have completed eight grades in a general education school. Gymnasiums have a four-year curriculum. The IB schools have a 2-year curriculum and English as their language of instruction. General secondary education can also be acquired at youth and vocational schools of appropriate level. Youth schools provide lower secondary education to 12- to 16- year-old pupils who have trouble in adapting to society, learning problems or those who have interrupted their studies. Adults can acquire general secondary education at adult general education schools (mokymo centras) and in special classes at general education schools (klasė). The school year starts on September 1st. In certain districts, where national minorities dominate, the general secondary studies can be organized in the local language but the state language and certain subjects in

the state language (e.g., history, citizenship education) are still mandatory. For more detailed information on the school system, please consult the Ministry's website at: <http://www.smm.lt>



2.2. Diversity of student population

To understand diversity of learner population in Lithuania, one has to look at three different groups of learners: ethnic minorities, immigrants and returning nationals.



Given the overall European context, Lithuania is a comparatively homogenous state. According to the latest available census data (2011), 84.2% of inhabitants in the country are ethnic Lithuanians. Residents of Polish origin comprise 6.6% of the total population, Russians account for 5.8%, others – 3.4% (Statistics Lithuania, 2013a). The largest part of language minorities in Lithuania's educational system is comprised of **national ethnic minority pupils** (Mägi and Siarova, 2014). In the year 2014/2015, 7.8% of pupils in primary, basic and secondary education did not have Lithuanian as their main language of instruction. The share of Russian-speaking learners was 4.2%, Polish-speaking pupils constituted 3.4%, while 0.3% were taught in other native languages (Statistics Lithuania, 2015b).

Lithuania is among the few EU countries with negative net migration rates, even when considering the returning Lithuanian migrants. According to Eurostat, foreign citizens comprise 0.8% of the total population, while the share of population with foreign country of birth is 4.6% (Eurostat, 2015). Census data (2011) provided similar numbers: 0.7% of the population had foreign citizenship (0.4% were citizens of Russian Federation), and 5.9% were born abroad (Statistics Lithuania, 2013b). In 2015, only 3747 foreign immigrants entered the country: 1149 were from Ukraine, 696 from Russia, 387 from Belarus, with the rest coming from other countries (Statistics Lithuania, 2015a).

In terms of the recent refugee crisis, Lithuania has resettled three families (11 people in total, 7 coming from Syria and 4 from Iraq) by May 2016 as part of the European Agenda on Migration implementation packages agreed in 2015 (European Commission, 2015)¹. Overall, 496 asylum requests were received by the country in 2014 (500-600 persons on average ask for asylum every year). Citizens of Georgia (117), Afghanistan (99), Russian Federation (74) and Ukraine (70) were among the major groups of asylum applicants. Protection was granted to 177 persons in 2014, either in the form of a permanent refugee status or subsidiary protection granted for two years (EMN, 2015a).

Accordingly, the share of **immigrant learners** in the Lithuanian education system coming from both EU and third countries is low compared to the rest of Europe. In 2015-2016, the number of pupils with foreign citizenship in general education was 1128 (0.3% out of total population of pupils; MoES data). Similarly, at the time of PISA 2012, 0.2% of 15-year-old learners in general education were first generation migrants and 1.4% were second generation migrants (OECD, 2013). Of all migrant children in general education in 2013-2014, 44% were Russians, 13% were Belarusians and 11% were Ukrainians (MoES data).

¹ Within the current EU's refugee relocation programme, Lithuania has committed to take up 1105 refugees by the end of 2017.

Notably, returning nationals (persons with Lithuanian citizenship or ethnic Lithuanians) comprise a much bigger part of Lithuania's population inflows than foreign citizens: as shown by the latest available figures, returning Lithuanian residents account for 83% of all immigrants (EMN, 2015b). The share of **returnee pupils** is not tracked in Lithuania, as schools are not obliged to collect data on mobility profiles of their pupils. According to a representative survey of returnee migrants conducted in 2013, 31.8% of all Lithuanian returnees who had children upon their return had been living abroad with their kids and returned home together with them. At the time of the survey, this would have accounted for approximately 11-12 000 people (Budginaitė and Mašidlauskaitė, 2015).

Table 1. Examples of measures to support education of pupils with diverse background in Lithuania

Integrating returning pupils	Integrating minority pupils	Integrating immigrant pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - financial support of additional 30% of the regular pupils' basket for the period of one year for each returnee who has spent more than one year abroad; - linguistic support such as weekend classes, bridging classes and online learning for Lithuanians leaving abroad and intercultural education support such as weekend lessons for returning Lithuanian children in schools; - There are a number of schools in Lithuania (such as Lietuvių Namai) that offer qualified language support through integration classes and/or groups for returnees who do not speak fluent Lithuanian. - Prior to returning to Lithuania, families can apply for the online distant courses (provided by some schools, e.g. Ozo school) which 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - bilingual schools where Russian and Polish language is taught as a mother tongue and Lithuanian as a state (second) language. - Furthermore, these schools are required to teach at least 45% of secondary school curriculum in Lithuanian. - financial support of additional 20% of the regular pupils' basket for bilingual schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - mother tongue education in bilingual schools. Russian, Polish and Belarusian are provided constantly in bilingual schools (in respective minority school, 45/55 model); other languages can be provided upon need and availability of resources: as an optional subject based on parental wish or extra-curricular activities organised by immigrant groups. Availability of international curricula options (mostly private with high tuition fees). - Differentiated pupils' basket: (extra 20% for every minority pupil only in minority schools, extra 30% for every immigrant in every school during their first year at school. - Individual curriculum option; mobile groups and classes, schools can also implement additional language hours

provide Lithuanian language support and induction programmes to facilitate their re-integration.		based on needs and availability.
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Source: Magi & Siarova (2014).

Diversity poses new challenges for teachers in Lithuania. This is well illustrated by the fact that in Lithuania nearly 70% of immigrant children attend Russian minority schools² due to their greater experience in accommodating diversity (Mägi and Siarova, 2014). Nevertheless, minority schools mostly favor the integration of migrant children with corresponding ethnic background (e.g. Russian), and face serious challenges in accommodating the needs of migrant children of Chinese, Syrian, or other origin (SIRIUS, 2014).

2.3. Teacher professional development

Initial teacher education

The responsibility for education policy and teacher training in the country lies within the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science. Generally, for teachers in all sectors (from pre-primary to upper secondary), a) a higher education degree, b) a teacher qualification and c) a specialisation in a particular teaching subject or level of education (ECEC, primary education) are required to enter the profession. The most conventional way of becoming a teacher in Lithuania is to enrol in higher education degree programmes which integrate pedagogical and subject area studies and which award teacher qualification together with the degree. There are three main universities in Lithuania which offer this pathway include Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (Vilnius), Šiauliai University (Šiauliai) and Klaipėda University (Klaipėda)³. Carried out in addition to the subject area/specialisation studies, educational (pedagogical) courses (corresponding to 60 ECTS credits) awarding the teacher qualification consist of a theoretical component and a school practice component. Minimum length of in-school

² An official legal title used for minority schools in policy documentation is 'Schools in which instruction is carried out in ethnic minority languages'.

³ Moreover, Vytautas Magnus University offers bachelor programmes on Pedagogy of Religion as well as on Pedagogy of Music. Programmes on social pedagogy are also available in Mykolas Romeris University, Kaunas University of Technology, and six universities of applied sciences/higher education colleges (ISCED-5), including Vilniaus kolegija/University of Applied Sciences (VIKO), Utena University of Applied Sciences, among others. Occasionally, the latter type of educational institutions also provide study programmes on early childhood education and care as well as pedagogy in primary education. Notably, ITE for pre-primary and primary teachers in Lithuania is delivered within the framework of the concurrent model, while the consecutive model is used for secondary school teachers (ECORYS, 2016).



placement for teacher students (ISCED levels 1, 2 and 3) is 800 hours (30 ECTS) (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013).

As stipulated in the Regulation of Teacher Training (2012) (lt. *Pedagogų rengimo reglamentas*), those enrolled in a general university degree programme can complete educational (pedagogical) studies as an *elective academic minor module*; this way, in addition to the main degree, the student may acquire a Bachelor's degree of pedagogical direction as well as a teacher qualification. Furthermore, students who have already obtained a Bachelor's level qualification may start teaching provided they obtain the teacher qualification within the first two years of their work by enrolling in *pedagogical studies which do not award a degree*. Overall, 10 universities (including Vilnius University, Mykolas Romeris University and Vytautas Magnus University) and seven universities of applied sciences/higher education colleges are involved in initial teacher training in Lithuania, offering the total of 73 study programmes awarding the teacher qualification (Jevsejevienė, 2015, p. 3).

The Law of Science and Studies (2012) (lt. *Mokslo ir studijų įstatymas*) ensures that higher education institutions in Lithuania are granted with autonomy, which encompasses academic, administrative and financial activities. Following this, universities have a high degree of freedom in developing the curricula for ITE. Notably, the curriculum policy has to conform to provisions listed in the Description of the Study Area of Education and Training (2015) (lt. *Švietimo ir ugdymo studijų krypčių grupės aprašas*). The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (lt. *Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras*, SKVC) is the only body in Lithuania responsible for external quality assurance of ITE (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013).

As highlighted by Eurydice, in Lithuania initial teacher education providers have significant freedom to determine the exact qualifications required of their teaching staff, provided they meet minimum standards. Notably, teacher trainers do not have to have a teacher qualification (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013). It is required that at least 30% of teacher educators in universities would have practical pedagogical experience of at least three years; they are also required to regularly upgrade their scientific and/or pedagogical competences (MoES, 2015).

In Lithuania, there is no official requirement for structured induction programmes for beginner teachers. Reportedly, there is a lack of central level regulations or recommendations that ensure the provision of various support measures for new entrants, such as mentoring or assistance with the planning and assessment of lessons. Schools have the autonomy to decide which types of support they will provide, which may be detrimental to the amount of support that new teachers receive (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2013).



Students who are willing to study to become secondary education teachers most often have to pass three Matura exams (*Brandos egzaminas*) and participate in a motivation evaluation. In some HEIs, Matura exam results are sufficient to receive state-funded scholarship for Bachelor's studies. Master's studies admissions are most often based on previous academic achievements and an admission exam.

Focus on diversity during teacher preparation

Overall, the majority of ISCED-5, ISCED-6 and ISCED-7 level study programmes awarding teacher qualification or providing educational science background in Lithuania do not explicitly mention teaching in multicultural environment as one of their learning goals. Preparation for diversity is found mostly in the field of social pedagogy, rather than in teacher education for general curricula subjects.

On the provider level, developing multicultural competencies in initial teacher training through specific targeted courses is, in most cases, not mandatory, while relevant elective courses are lacking (Mägi and Siarova, 2014). The responsibility for developing teacher competencies in the area of inclusive education falls primarily on lecturers preparing specific study modules (The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, undated).

In-service training opportunities

In Lithuania, there is no central system or authority for in-service teacher training. However, the accreditation of the centres/institutions and programmes for continuous professional development of teachers is performed by Education Development Centre (EDC)⁴. Education Development Centre itself also offers limited number of education programmes and methodological support to teachers at different levels, e.g., study visits within Lithuania or abroad. In addition, EDC is now exploring new forms of teacher training at working place, e.g., supervision or participatory research, etc.

In 2014 there were 64 institutions accredited by EDC, which offer different kinds of in-service teacher training⁵. Most of these are regional education centres (which are part of municipalities), which offer the biggest variety of courses and programmes. There are also a number of individual enterprises and limited liability companies in the list. Re-qualification centres in

⁴ Education Development centre (EDC) was established on the 1st of September in 2009 after the re-organisation of Pedagogues Professional Development Centre (PPDC), Education Development Centre (EDC), Teachers' Competence Centre (TCC), Lithuanian Adult Education and Information Centre (LAEIC) and is the largest institution under the direct authority of the Ministry of Education and Science.

⁵ See the full list here:

http://www.upc.smm.lt/tobulinimas/institucijos/Akredituotu_instituciju_sarasas_2014.pdf



universities are also accredited by EDC, however, they offer very few in-service teacher training courses.

In general, there are very few programmes or in-service training courses on diversity and multilingualism in the classroom offered at the moment. Most of the courses available target broader issues like tolerance, citizenship education, school bullying prevention, etc. Examples of specific trainings aimed at preparing teachers for diversity and for teaching immigrant children include:

- 'My pupil is a foreigner' (Mano mokinys – uzsienietis). The course was offered to teachers and school leaders in 2011 once. There was no application for further accreditation of the programme due to the low demand.
- In-service training programme for development of professional competence to work with foreign children. The programme targets primary and secondary school teachers and school leaders. The programme is currently accredited and offered constantly upon demand either in group training or school visits (by experienced teachers from Vilnius Lithuanian House).
- In 2015 there were 37 accredited programmes that provide possibilities for teachers to participate in study visits abroad. The programmes are offered by municipal education centres and cover variety of topics such as individualization of curriculum, inclusive education, citizenship education, mixed-classes education, education innovation in many EU and ENP countries.

3. School visits

3.1. School 1: Vilnius Lithuanian House

Lietuvu Namai (English: Lithuanian House) was a special school and the first measure to integrate returning Lithuanians established as far back as 1990 with an intensive focus on Lithuanian language instruction and teaching Lithuanian culture and history. Originally the school served the needs of children of Lithuanian exiles and political prisoners during the Soviet times. Now the Lithuanian house is open to all children of Lithuanian origin coming or returning to Lithuania and offer Lithuanian language support in integration classes. (SIRIUS: European Policy Network on the education of children and young people with a migrant background, p.3). During the last 4 years the number of students increased from 186 to 340. Even though the

school tries to place newly arriving children according to their age, in some cases they are placed according to their achievements and prior knowledge to facilitate their integration.

The school comprises the following:

- **Gymnasium:** 1 teacher expert, 16 methodology teachers, 13 senior teachers, 13 teachers, 1 Senior social educator, 1 psychologist.
- **Dormitory:** 4 methodology tutors, 1 tutor
- **Educational center of Lithuanians living abroad:** 1 head of the center, 2 senior methodologists.

Figure 2. NAOS team visiting Vilnius Lithuanian House



3.1.1 Goals

The purpose of Vilnius Lithuanian House is to provide general, formal and informal education to children of exiles of Lithuanian origin, descents of political prisoners, foreigners and citizens of Lithuania who have come for a short time or returned to live permanently in the Republic of



Lithuania, and children of Lithuanian citizens living abroad. The school also provides assistance to other schools and teachers in preparing them for teaching the Lithuanian language to non-native speakers.

The school is functioning under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and is directly financed by the central government and not by the municipality, as the rest of the schools in the country. The school constitutes the part of the government programme 'Global Lithuania', aimed at attracting Lithuanian emigrants back to the country. The Ministry of Education provides the curriculum and material for the students. However, teachers can enrich the material, taking into consideration students' individual needs.

More specific goals set by the schools are:

- addressing the needs of students knowledge, development and self-expression as well as providing them with ethnic and cultural foundations;
- providing pupils with educational, social, emotional and informational support;
- ensuring a safe and healthy learning environment;
- providing conditions for the Lithuanian world community to organize educational and cultural activities;
- delivering formal and informal education programs for adults;
- providing information, consulting and organising qualification development activities for schools and teachers;
- organising training for people who do not speak the Lithuanian language.

According to the interview with the school principal, the school tries to promote Lithuanian culture and identity:

- Most of the students are active patriots; they celebrate national days, learn ethnic dances and seminars. Many activities integrate ethnocultural aspects.
- Tolerance is promoted as one of the main values in the school.

3.1.2 Activities

The main school activities comprise:

- providing high-quality primary and secondary education in Lithuania for the arrivals of the Lithuanian origin and youth,
- organizing extra-curricular activities: art, design, folk dances, choir, sports, technology, theatre,
- addressing children's cognitive, educational needs of expression, giving them the basis of ethnoculture,
- helping foreign citizens with Lithuanian origin who study in Lithuania to integrate into the country's social, cultural life,



- providing information, advisory, methodological and professional assistance to the educators and the students of Lithuanian schools in foreign countries (support is given to 9 schools abroad),
- providing teacher training courses for teachers from other schools,
- providing language courses for non-Lithuanian speakers.

Specific measures related to addressing the school's diversity include:

Linguistic support

"Majority of children enrolled at school do not speak Lithuanian at a required level B2, therefore a bridging class is organized for them for the period of one year. According to the school staff one year is enough to receive an appropriate level of Lithuanian language proficiency to be integrated into the mainstream class. There were no cases of failing the exam after the introductory year. At later stages children from the bridging class receive extra two hours of Lithuanian language as a support." (SIRIUS: European Policy Network on the education of children and young people with a migrant background, p.6). Students who attend the bridging class take exams at the end of the school year (reading, writing, listening and speaking). The exams are prepared by their teachers and the purpose of the specific exams is just for the school to evaluate students' level. "The teachers receive a special training to teach Lithuanian as a mother tongue but to those children who do not have a command of it." (SIRIUS: European Policy Network on the education of children and young people with a migrant background, p.6).

Academic support

When a child is enrolled at school he/she is placed into the class not according to his/her age, but rather according to his academic level. Children constantly receive academic support with homework and subjects. Children show quite good attainment levels and there were almost no cases of school leaving (there were a few cases but due to psychological reasons of being apart from their parents), as many children studying at school have their parents living abroad.

Outreach to parents

Due to the fact that parents of many children enrolled in school are living abroad the communication between school and them happens mostly through electronic means. There is an electronic diary which is filled in every day and allows parents following the progress of their children regularly. The school has connections with other schools abroad (mostly those that are focused on the provision of education to Lithuanian children living abroad). Unfortunately, there are no systematic networks between schools in Lithuania, as the experience of Lithuanian house could be a good practice example of a number of measures to facilitate integration not only of repatriating Lithuanians, but also minorities and immigrants. Collaboration between schools happens on the individual basis.

Intercultural education



The education aims at emphasizing Lithuanian culture and history, however, the diversity is also taken into account. The school organizes Intercultural days and weeks.” (SIRIUS: European Policy Network on the education of children and young people with a migrant background, p.6). According to the interviews, tolerance is an important value promoted by the school.

3.1.3 Results

The above mentioned activities implemented by the school lead to a number of positive results (according to the interviews conducted during the school visit):

1. Great motivation and engagement of students into learning process and extra-curricular activities:
 - Since all the students are of Lithuanian origin, they are in particular interested in Lithuanian culture and language, which is the primary focus at the school; However, at the same time the school actively supports the languages students are bringing with them.
 - ‘Family-like’ relationship between pupils and teachers, the links are often stronger than in other schools, as Vilnius Lithuanian house is a boarding school;
2. Multicultural and multinational environment:
 - there are 340 pupils from 34 countries
 - pupils are with different religions,
 - students are accepted to any class from 1st to 11th,
 - priority is given to the adoption of Lithuanians’ children who live abroad and the Lithuanian exiles descendants.
 - The school organizes a variety of cultural and language events, in which students actively participate.
3. The specificity of education plan is an exclusive focus on the Lithuanian – language teaching:
 - Lithuanian language teaching at bridging class – 22 hours,
 - An additional 3-4 hours for the Lithuanian language training in III - IV (G) classes,
 - 1 additional hour of the Lithuanian language teaching for students who are after the bridging class,
 - 2 additional hours of the Lithuanian language teaching for students who are after the bridging class
 - 2 additional hours of the Lithuanian language teaching are given to students who came from foreign countries and learn in mainstream classes
 - An additional hour of the Lithuanian language teaching is given to students from 5-12 (5-8, I-IV G) classes.



4. Students and teachers show tolerance, consuls, guardianship, respect and help each other. For this reason, bullying is not a problem for this school.
5. Positive academic results of the students:
 - Graduated the gymnasium 100%;
 - Entered universities and other high schools 100%, many students enter universities abroad.

3.1.4 Professional development

As outlined in Section 2.3 of this report, the initial teacher education in Lithuania does not include systematic preparation of teachers to work with immigrant or ethnically diverse students. The teachers in the school did not mention that they underwent any specific training related to these issues before entering the teaching profession. However, the school and the teachers are actively participating in in-service training programmes and projects. Here are the few examples:

- There is a special qualification department at school responsible for teachers' in-service training teaching Lithuanian to non-native speakers, not only at the specific school but for all Lithuanian schools abroad. Three people are responsible for this department focusing on the following actions:
 - ✓ They invite specialists from universities to give lectures to teachers teaching Lithuanian abroad, in other schools across Europe.
 - ✓ They organize classroom observations with teachers – mentors to other teachers.
 - ✓ They organize 4 – 5 seminars during the year for all the teachers to attend. These seminars are free for the teachers.
 - ✓ If a teacher wants to attend a seminar, he/she has to agree it with the Head. If the Head gives the permission to the teacher to attend the seminar, then 50% of the attendance fee is paid by the school and 50% is paid by the teacher.
- The school constantly participates in European exchange projects (e.g., Erasmus +) through which teachers have possibilities to visit other schools in Europe and learn from their experience.
- The school also participates in national training programmes, such as 'Improvement of teacher qualifications' (through which a variety of training events on different topics are organized nationally); project 'Teacher to Teacher', which promotes teacher collaboration across the schools; project 'Intercultural education', which aimed at increasing teachers' and students' competences about multiculturalism and diversity; Project 'Teacher competences for plurilingual integration' implemented together with European Center for Modern Languages and aimed at developing teacher competences in the area of interculturalism and plurilingualism.
- 'Learning by doing' approach, by collaborating internally and sharing their experiences of every-day practice. Diversity at the school is dealt through

communicative approach, cultural projects, extra-curricular activities prepared by teachers themselves, methodological solutions invented by teachers themselves.

- Cooperation among the teachers is encouraged. The school sets special meetings, where teacher can meet and discuss their challenges and share experiences, as well as elaborate specific solutions and approaches. Co-teaching is taking place informally.
- The secret of success is close relations with their students and openness to learn from students on what could be the best ways to address their diverse needs.

3.2. School 2: Vilnius "Santara" basic school/high school

Figure 3. Vilnius Santara school



The origins of Vilnius Santaros Gymnasium / Progymnasium is Vilnius Humanitarian Gymnasium, founded in 1921. The school continues the humanitarian gymnasium traditions and teaches students the multicultural space, where pupils are introduced to the Lithuanian, Russian, Belorussian, Jewish and other cultures.

In 1997, the school community chose the name 'Santara'. In Lithuanian language "Santara" means "agreement". The Santara school building accommodates two schools: pro-gymnasium (1-8 grades) and gymnasium (9-12 grades). There are two school leaders in the school (one for pre – gymnasium and one for gymnasium). However, everything is shared between the two schools: common building, common yard, teachers teaching in both schools, one strategic plan is built up in cooperation among the two schools.

In 2016/2017 academic year, there were 696 pupils in the progymnasium (26 classes) and 372 students in gymnasium (16 classes). The school accommodated 17 different nationalities (67% - Russians, 33% - others).



Students are taught by 87 teachers. These are highly qualified specialists: 5 experts, 9 methodologists, 44 senior teachers. Teachers systematically update and deepen their professional competences. The school is open to innovation.

3.2.1 Goals

General information

- Tolerance is the main value of the school.
- The main priority of the school is to effectively address parents' and students' needs. The main language of instruction is Russian, though there are a number of subjects taught in Lithuanian (in accordance with 2011 Law on education).
- Students are coming from variety of nationalities: Lithuanians, Russian, Ukrainian, Belarusian, Jewish, Azerbaijani, etc. But most of the students are able to speak Russian language and therefore, easily integrate into mainstream classes.
- Teachers are also from different nationalities and this enhances handling diversity, because it stands as a model for the students how to behave to each other.
- The school has created a learning / learning environment that encourages intercultural communication and collaboration.

School Philosophy

- Showing respect to Russian, Lithuanian and other world cultures, their values.
- School identity - the cultural value orientation (School is not just a service provider; it is an educator of a Human).
- Focus on Intercultural Competence - knowledge, skills, moral values.
- The school prioritizes the following competences in its activities: cognitive, personal, social, communication, creativity, learning to learn (see Figure 4 below).
- School's motto is 'Progress and success of every child'.

Figure 4. Focus on 6 competences in the school



School Mission

- To care for children of different origins while teaching, providing the conditions for students' and teachers' mobility;
- To develop an "Open School": to promote lifelong learning, to foster tolerance;
- The most important things in school life - agreement and cooperation.

3.2.2 Activities

The intercultural component is strongly integrated into all activities of the school and is further expanded through non-formal education. This is reflected in the variety of extra-curricular activities, such as design and exploratory work, orchestra, debate projects, etc.

The school community builds their schools as a 'friendly school' and that's why make a strong focus on the development of a tolerant community member's attitude towards people of other nationalities and their culture is. Traditional events are organized: European Day of Languages,



commemoration of the European Day, students are introduced to embassies residing in Vilnius, participate in various projects.

The school has ELOS⁶ classes 6b, 7f, 9c, 10c. Individual curricula for the development of these classes integrate the components of the European dimension of education: cultural (history of Lithuania, Europe and the world, culture, people), social (mutual assistance, support, active tolerance) and lifelong learning. The second foreign language was introduced into the curriculum of these classes: French, German, Spanish. These classes provide integrated training in geography, history and foreign languages.

The motto of the gymnasium / progymnasium is "Everyone's progress and success". The emphasis in the gymnasium / progymnasium is on students who need help. They can improve their knowledge in differentiated groups (5-10 classes - mathematics, 10 classes - chemistry). In the pro-gymnasium, there are 55 pupils with speech disorders, 26 pupils with special needs, who have adapted or individualized general education curriculum. 10 special needs students study at the gymnasium. A specialist team (speech therapist, specialist pedagogue, psychologist, soc.pedagog) provides these students with a special pedagogical-psychological assistance. Assistance is offered through a Child Welfare Commission and Pedagogical Assistance who provide special support like healthcare, psychological and assistance, special-pedagogical assistance, social and pedagogical assistance and Guidance Counselor.

In the gymnasium / progymnasium there is an interesting and rich cultural life. Students have many different classes at their request. One of the most popular is the Santara blowing instruments orchestra. From the beginning of its activities (2002), the orchestra represents the city of Vilnius and the Republic in various republican and international events.

School educational policy for immigrant children

The school educational policy is based on the Lithuanian law on education (17 March 2011 No XI-1281 Vilnius - Article 30) which states that students who study in Lithuania have the right to receive instruction in the state language and in the native language. The "Santara" school offers education to pupils who come from foreign countries by preparing an integration plan for those pupils who have completed part of or a full international general education programme and, if necessary, an individual education plan; the school also sets a suitable period for the pupil's adaptation. If the pupil is able to achieve a satisfactory level of knowledge and skills during the adaptation period, the school prepares his learning plan and provides educational assistance⁷.

Below there are examples of specific school activities related to diversity:

1. Learning the Lithuanian Language as the state language

⁶ <https://www.nuffic.nl/en/internationalisation/elos-education-stretching-borders>

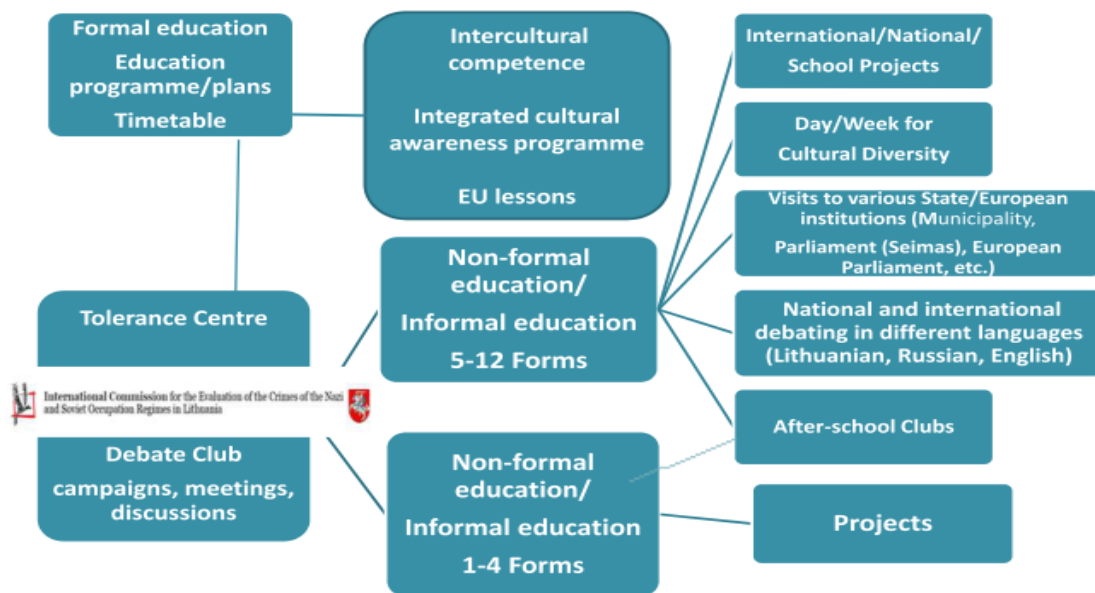
⁷ <http://www.smm.lt/web/en/education/1/education-of-pupils-who-come-from-foreign-countries>



- 1 Form: 3 lessons per week
- 2-3 Forms: 4 lessons per week
- 4 -10 Forms: 5 lessons per week
- 11-12 Forms: 6 lessons per week (Level B); 7 lessons per week (Level A)

2. Multicultural Education

Figure 5. System of multicultural education in Santara school



Development of intercultural competences is integrated into variety of activities:

- ✓ Integrated cultural awareness programme: 1-12 Forms: "Towards a culture of peace"
- ✓ International Projects on Students' and Teachers' Mobility: Poland, Spain, Norway, Belgium, Germany, Portugal, Croatia, Russia, Belarus.
- ✓ International debating

3. Foreign language teaching and learning

2-4 Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non-formal education (theatre; singing) • Summer Language School/Summer Camp
5-10 Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5-6 forms: A2; 7-10 Forms: B1 • CLIL • the second foreign language (German, French, Spanish) • ELOS programme implementation (Expanded Learning Opportunities for Students) • International projects/mini-projects/Olympiads/Competitions • Informal education (video/computer games; "home-reading", etc.)
11-12 Forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B1/B2 (3 lessons/4 lessons per week) • English Literature* • Business English* (English) • Debates* • Interpreting* • Developing speaking/writing skills (Elective subjects) • International projects/mini-projects/Olympiads/Competitions • Informal education (e.g., IELTS)

4. National Projects (2016 – 2017)

- Prevention programme "We'll Overcome Together" Uveikiame kartu")
- European Week of Sport 2016: ALCIS
- "Let's Be Together" (Šalies projektų konkursas „Būkime kartu“)
- Bullying Prevention Programme

5. International Cooperation

The school actively participates in a number of international exchange projects aimed at development of intercultural competences. Some examples are:

- Erasmus+ Action KA2: Ready for innovative teaching? "If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn."
- Erasmus+ Action KA1: "European School - European Teaching Quality"
- Comenius: "I'm a teen like u, c u on Facebook! ☺"
- Youth in Action: "Listen to Us!"
- "Learning to live and work together"

6. Parental involvement

The school has 4 official parent meetings a year. Furthermore, they use electronic diaries. They have the chance to think about the curriculum of the school and students are allowed to bring



their ideas on subjects. In (cultural) events around 70% of the parents are active. The head of the school board is a parent and in this board, parents, teachers and student have a seat. They have equal voting opportunities. If there is a disagreement in the board, they vote. Example when the topic was school uniform the teachers voted pro the uniform and the parents against. Together with the students they outnumbered the teachers' vote, so it was not implemented.

3.2.3 Results

Students are very positive about their school because they:

- get help from the very beginning to adjust in the school
- feel that everybody is friendly and helpful
- appreciate that their school has high academic achievements
- the staff of the school is highly professional promoting quality outcomes.
- Students with good mastery of the Lithuanian language help their classmates who are insufficient in the language.

The school has a positive image in the community and many minority parents would like to enroll their children in the school. The only wish is that the school gets better infrastructure, a sportsground and more outdoor space. Since the school is situated in the very centre of Vilnius, the municipality took away some space for other purposes.

Parents said that they have chosen the specific schools because they are all from different origins and they share a common language in this school. They learn the native language in a good way. They stated that they are very satisfied with the school because they have strong teachers and the quality of education is the best of Russian schools (they know), and furthermore they have high requirements for students. The three main aspects parents like best in this school are:

- Quality of education
- Discipline
- Safety

They consider teachers as family and the communication lines are open and have easily accessible. When a child comes home with 'problems', they can call a teacher anytime. A lot of parents choose this school because of the non-bullying program which works fine: there is a good atmosphere.

During the interviews it was interesting observe the integrated identity composed of many identities school community is coming from. One of the parents mentioned that they like the school, because it 'preserve the Russian soul' and added that there is no judgment in the school: 'We are all Lithuanian citizens, but at the same time we bring so many different cultures together and this is really rich experience'. They perceived all different nationalities in the school as one family and take it as a natural phenomenon.



3.2.4 Professional development

Similarly, to the previous school, the teachers in Santara school have not received any systematic training related to diversity during their initial education. However, the school community is active in constant learning and self-improvement. Teachers systematically update and deepen their professional competences. The school is open to innovation.

According to the school principals⁸, at the beginning of the school year - needs assessment for all the teachers takes place. Based on the information revealed from the needs assessment, a specialist (academic, lecturer, teacher trainer, etc) is invited to give a seminar to all the teachers. Professional co-operation links school teachers with colleagues abroad. Teachers shared their experiences in Israel, Great Britain, Germany, Holland, Belgium. International collection and dissemination of interdisciplinary material is ongoing.

The school is also active in national and international projects. E.g., the school participates in national non-governmental initiative 'I choose to teach' and host young motivated future teachers as a part of their training programme, which as a result is a mutual learning experience. Examples of other projects the school participates include: 'Professional help to the teacher in the school', Erasmus+ KA2 project 'Are you ready for innovations', 'Learning to live and work together', etc.

Furthermore, teachers constantly learn from each other by sharing experience (peer learning). When a teacher attends a seminar, he/she makes a workshop to share his knowledge and skills with others. Teachers are also active trainers themselves:

- Classroom observation and discuss the lesson with each other
- Teachers themselves give seminars according to their specialization.

Teachers rely most on their experience and also keen to learn from their students, often involving them into class preparation activities.

Interviewed teachers also mentioned other possibilities for their continuous professional development:

- Every three months seminars are organized called "methodological days" where teachers of the schools attend seminars concerning teaching methodologies or other pedagogical issues like "how to motivate students".
- Once a year seminars also are organized by the school for teachers who work for other schools.
- Teachers also have the possibility to attend seminars (five days per year) organized by other bodies apart from their school and are financed, according to Lithuanian law, by the government.
- At the end of the school year the school conducts needs analysis research of each group of teachers so that the school learns about the needs the teachers have for

⁸ The interview was held with the two principals, and with a translator, because the principals talked in Lithuanian and not in English.



next year. In the beginning of the next school year, teachers are able, if they want to, to offer seminars/workshops to their colleagues in the field they feel they have the expertise.

- The teachers are also urged to cooperate with each other during the school year and perform co-teaching as well (for example History teacher with Lithuanian language teacher).

Curriculum

- The Curriculum is provided by the Ministry of Education and it is the same curriculum used in Lithuanian schools. There is a little bit of flexibility concerning the content of the lessons. Parents are asked to sign an agreement so that students follow more classes per day (2-3 classes more per day) than students studying in Lithuanian schools.
- The materials and the books used are written in Lithuanian and they are given by the Ministry of Education. However, teachers themselves prepare extra material for the students.
- Interestingly, the new textbooks are offered only in Lithuanian, and therefore, often teachers have to use Lithuanian textbook even if the lesson is in Russian language.

4 Summary and remarkable observations

The study visit was very well organized and gave us a clear view of the educational system of the country and how they deal its population diversity. To understand diversity of learner population in Lithuania, one has to look at three different groups of learners: ethnic minorities, immigrants and returning nationals.

The schools are trying their best to address the existing diversity and implement a variety of projects and extra-curricular activities. The study visit demonstrated the interesting interconnection of different identities present in the schools' population. There is no particular identify standing out, but the mixture of them is perceived as a rich resource.

Even though there is a long-standing diversity in Lithuania (especially in terms of national minorities), there is no systematic initial teacher preparation to deal with this diversity in the classrooms and society.

Nevertheless, we have noticed some very good practices applied in the schools like the fact that in Vilnius Lithuanian House there is a special qualification department at school responsible for teachers' in-service training teaching Lithuanian to non-native speakers, which provides assistance not only to the teachers within school, but to other schools in Lithuania, as well as Lithuanian schools operating in other Member States. A good practice is the close link between teacher and students in "Santaros" school, where students are also perceived as 'teachers' for



their teachers. There are also some similarities with what we have experienced in other countries like the fact that the initial training for teachers in the country does not include social training courses or other courses connected to the education of immigrant students. What offers them some in-service training regarding the issue is the participation in European projects, attendance of seminars at school, learning most through everyday practice in school and from their students, cooperation among the teachers and co-teaching which takes place informally.

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