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Nordic Council of Ministers

# Cultural Boundaries to Media and Information Literacy Teaching

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Applying Scandinavian Best-practice Models in  
Lithuania

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**Abstract:** The modern understanding of literacy describes it as a nuanced spectrum that above all is context dependent. The ability to read words matters little if it is not put into the appropriate context. Because of this the importance of Media and Information literacy has risen to prominence in recent years, but it is still a new field that is not all too well understood. Although several international organizations work towards development of educational tools and global improvements of media and information literacy there is still no well-established framework for transnational adaptation of media and information literacy education. This thesis addresses the issue of attempting to apply media and information literacy teaching materials across national borders. Based on a pilot project that applies Swedish teaching material in Lithuania, the adaptation process is analyzed and the challenges are explored. On the basis of Hofstede's cultural dimensions model questions arise about the adaptability of foreign teaching material and eventually hints at an unanticipated relationship between media and information literacy skills and a certain set of cultural values. Finally a series of recommendations are given which aim at further studies of the nature of media and information literacy and how to develop skills and knowledge of it. The research is done through a combination of a comparative analysis of the original and the adapted teaching material and a series of expert interviews with project affiliates and uninvolved subject matter experts. The interpretation of data relies on the naturalistic inquiry method of directed content analysis.

**Keywords:** International Communication, Cultural dimensions, Hofstede, Media and Information Literacy, Lithuania, Sweden, Transnational Adaptation, Education.

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## Introduction

In the year 2000, as part of the Dakar Framework for Action, a goal was set by the UN to achieve 50% literacy among the world's adult population (Bates-Eamer et al.: 2012). This goal was preceded by an ambition to increase the youth literacy (People aged 15 to 24) considerably from the 83% in 1990 until the end of the Millennium Goals project in 2015. By 2015 this figure had increased to 91% and the inequality in literacy between genders had decreased as well (UN: 2015). Meanwhile the concept of literacy has become more complicated to measure as UNESCO has recognized that the concept should be perceived as a continuum rather than a duality (UNESCO: 2013). In addition it is becoming increasingly well understood that the perception of literacy as a set of cognitive skills necessary to recognize and produce language in writing, is inadequate. Rather literacy needs to be understood as a complex and flexible concept that involves the civic engagement of the population (UNESCO: 2006). Recently the pluralities of literacy have been recognized and these are being collectively referred to under a variety of terms. The term used by UNESCO is Media and Information Literacy (MIL) (UNESCO: 2013).

In several Scandinavian countries the importance of MIL has been recognized several years ago and it has already been institutionalized to different extents depending on the country (Carlsson: 2013). In Lithuania this realization is of a more recent vintage and it is therefore yet to be incorporated on an institutional level of the Lithuanian education system. However, the interest in the topic is evidently increasing as the Education development Center is now conducting a pilot project in collaboration with the Nordic Council of Ministers. That project is the focus of this research.

### The client

The Nordic Council of Ministers is an inter-governmental institution that was formed in 1952 to promote regional cooperation on matters of mutual interest. The region encompasses five countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) and three autonomous regions (Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland). The latter are represented through associate memberships as they are not independent countries, but territories within the member countries. The Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and

Lithuania) hold an observer status allowing them to sit in on meetings, but without the right to participate in the decision making process.

Hence the Baltic countries are not members of the Nordic Council of Ministers, but local offices of the council are located in each country. This presence is primarily oriented towards efforts of public diplomacy promoting the relationship with and knowledge of the Nordic countries in the Baltics. The Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Lithuania is the client of the herein conducted research. Their work is hinged upon two factors: Collaboration with at least one local partner organization, and the involvement of at least two of the Nordic countries in any given project. Most often these projects are oriented towards parts of Lithuanian society learning from Scandinavian experts and organizations with a proven track record in their field. One such project that was initiated recently is the MIL teaching project. The project is intended to establish a platform for dialogue and cooperation between Lithuanian and Nordic organizations involved in MIL education. The project also seeks to promote Nordic values including critical thinking and civic engagement. The purpose of the project is to lay down a foundation upon which to develop a systemic approach to MIL education inspired by the Nordic best-practice models<sup>1</sup>.

The project is not exactly the first of its kind, but previous attempts at developing a systemic approach to MIL education on an institutional level have not yielded successful results. As such MIL is not currently an integrated part of the curriculum in formal education in Lithuania. The project was initiated in April 2015 and is intended to run throughout the year and conclude in the beginning of 2016. The Nordic countries involved in the project are Finland and Sweden. The material provided from Finland revolves predominantly around children's safely online, whereas the Swedish material focuses on the processes related to the critical engagement with media and information. Therefore this research exclusively concerns the Swedish MIL teaching material. Hence forth the Finnish teaching material will not be considered and any mention of original MIL teaching material refers to Swedish material unless otherwise indicated.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.norden.lt/projects/336#media-and-information-literacy-education-project-in-lithuania\\_element\\_845](http://www.norden.lt/projects/336#media-and-information-literacy-education-project-in-lithuania_element_845)

## The problem

When a method is developed to serve a certain purpose it is naturally made to fit into a specific set of conditions and solve a particular problem. This altogether is the context of the developed material, and it comprises a handful of influencing factors such as the political, economic, social, ethnic and cultural situation of the country in question.

All of these facets are important in their own right, but depending on the working area some will play a more central role than others. In this case, as the working area is the formal education system and the effectiveness of teaching material developed in a foreign country, the cultural aspect is of particular importance. Culture defines a population's self-perception and interaction with the world around it.

The Lithuanian culture and the Swedish culture are distinctly different from each other. They share similarities on some points, but on other points they are as different as can be. In general it is obvious that solutions that are developed to fit the context of one country cannot simply be assumed to fit the context of the other without being adequately adapted. This suggests that a framework of national cultural values would be a valuable tool for determining in what ways and to what extent certain parts of the material might need to be adapted.

In the project description there is no specific mention of adaptation processes that will be used to ensure applicability. Additionally there are no examples of previous, similar projects to draw experience from. The problem that will be investigated in this research is derived from the hypothesis that:

***Teaching material developed to fit the cultural values of one country must be adapted to fit the cultural values of another country in order for it to be implemented there and be equally successful.***

In this research the original MIL teaching material will be compared to the material that has been adapted to the Lithuanian context on the basis of adherence to the respective cultures. The importance of culture's influence on the project's effectiveness will be assessed through a series of expert interviews.



## Objective

This research aims to uncover the influence of national culture in the specific MIL teaching project. The findings of this research will add to the body of knowledge and understanding of cultural dimensions as a general phenomenon. As the existence of cultural dimensions cannot be conclusively deduced, but rather is a matter of inductive reasoning, it relies on an abundance of independent research confirming the suggested implications of cultural dimensions as proposed by the theoretical framework in question.

As will be elaborated on in the literature review, this research is based on the theoretical framework of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. On this basis the research sets out to discover how pertinent to the MIL teaching material the cultural values are, and how these impact the quality of it. If the teaching material is deeply anchored in cultural values then it should require a careful adaptation to the receiving country's national cultural values in order to preserve the effectiveness of the material. Another question arises from this first one, namely whether the quality of the original teaching material is connected with the cultural values upon which it is based. If this is the case then adaptation would be a fiendishly complicated task as the goal will be divided: Preservation of the quality of the original material or adherence to the cultural values of the receiving country.

Hence the overall objective of this research can be summarized in the following sentence:

***To determine what implementation issues occur due to cultural differences between Sweden and Lithuania, and how the Swedish model should be adapted to take these cultural differences into account while preserving the quality of the original MIL teaching material.***

In the pursuit of a satisfactory resolution to the objective posed above, this research will attempt to answer a series of questions that each are perceived to retain crucial insights into the constituent factors that make up this complex issue. There are two types of questions being posed below. Some are questions that are expected to have a straight-forward answer which has, however, not been possible to obtain through publically available channels. Other questions are only possible to answer through a more immersive analytical process. Furthermore the research questions belong to three distinct categories: (1) Questions that can be answered on the basis of the literature review, (2) questions to

which the answer should be found in the presented results, and (3) questions that will be answered as a result of the data analysis process.

Research questions:

- Is the Lithuanian environment suitable for the Scandinavian MIL models?
- How well do the current adaptation measures align with the literature?
- What goals have been set for the MIL project?
- How is the effectiveness of the project measured?
- What has been the result of implementing Scandinavian best-practice models - successes, failures, continuous challenges and lessons learned?
- How could the application of the theoretical framework used in the dissertation improve the outcomes of similar projects in the future?

The body of empirical data will be comprised by two distinct types. The first is the MIL teaching material. The original and the adapted material will be analyzed and evaluated and this will provide part of the foundation for the second part of the data gathering. The Main focus of the research will be on a series of expert interviews which is again divided in two groups: (1) People who have been involved in the MIL education project and (2) MIL experts with no involvement in the project. The specifics of the data gathering process and analysis will be explained in more detail in the methodology chapter.

In summation the novelty of this research stems from the fact that it has not been possible to identify any previous studies that describe the cultural adaptation between Sweden and Lithuania. It has not even been possible to find literature that describes the cultural adaptation of MIL teaching methods from one country to another at all. The relevance of this research is clearly reflected in several aspects. The very topic of MIL is of such recent vintage that the majority of literature on the subject is less than five years old. The digital age has ushered in an era of such rapid development that information is rendered obsolete or, at best, insufficient in a matter of but a few years. This is particularly true of statistical data on ICT literacy and usage (Statens medieråd: 2013). In addition the client's desire for research to be carried out on the topic speaks for itself.

## Literature review

### Definitions of MIL

Media and information literacy (MIL) is defined as “The ability to access, understand and create communications in a variety of contexts” (Ofcom, 2006 pp.2) although, in no small part, due to the recent vintage of the field, there is not a single prevailing definition of the term. According to UNESCO “MIL is defined as a set of competencies that empowers citizens to access, retrieve, understand, evaluate and use, create, as well as share media and information content in all formats, using various tools, in a critical, ethical and effective way, in order to participate and engage in personal, professional and societal activities”<sup>2</sup>. The definitions largely agree on the fact that MIL concerns the development of the cognitive skills necessary for consumption and production of communication in various mediated contexts. The differences among definitions mainly lie in the scope of the field. As seen in the above, the definition used by UNESCO includes references to such features as critical thinking, ethical use and effective communication. Such considerations are not made for a traditional understanding of literacy which tends to distinguish people with and without the ability to decipher and produce text. This new view of literacy distances itself from the traditional binary definition and recognizes that few people will be entirely illiterate or entirely literate. The nature of literacy should rather be regarded as a continuum on which each individual is a certain degree of literate (UNESCO: 2013). This follows in no small amount from the expanded understanding of literacy as a complex concept within which several specific literacies have been distinguished. Media literacy, news literacy, computer literacy, games literacy, information literacy are but a few of the terms that are being used by various people and institutions. MIL is regarded as an integrated-transversal literacy that is meant to encompass all these terms and provide a more generic, and at the same time more comprehensive, understanding of what the term covers and how to approach it (Wilson et al.: 2011).

In spite of the expressed desire for literacy to be perceived as a continuum rather than a binary phenomenon, it is challenging to set up goals in such a fashion. In the UN 2030 Global Goals for Sustainable Development plan, 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) have been set, and one of

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<sup>2</sup> Source: <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Communication/Pages/information-literacy.aspx>

them is called *Quality education*. Under this goal one of the targets is to “*By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.*”<sup>3</sup> This statement clearly exemplifies the issue with viewing literacy as a spectrum. We have no unit of measurement for it, so we cannot set clear goals. Hence, the phenomenon is continually referred to as a matter of either or.

The field revolves around the empowerment of the population and development of integral citizenship, and is focused on developing critical thinking and creative problem-solving skills (Erstad & Gilje: 2008). This has been the traditional role of media education until the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Only in the last fifteen years has the digitalization reshaped the mainstream media landscape to such an extent that the focus of media education has had to reevaluate itself and shift its focus to fit a broader perspective, namely that of today’s media and information literacy concept. It is mainly the surge in popularity of the web 2.0 based media that has caused this shift. The term Web 2.0 refers to media that allow, or in some cases even rely on, user-generated content. These new media have blurred the line between producers and consumers of information to such a degree that understanding how different media work has become intertwined with traditional information literacy (Erstad & Gilje: 2008). The need to scrutinize any information regardless of its source of origin has arguably increased with the easy access to unrestricted publishing tools and outlets, posing no formal requirements in terms of qualification of the author or the quality of the published content. This has been simplified and exaggerated into the recommendation “Don’t trust anything you read on the internet”, but such a statement is not useful when the internet is rapidly becoming one of the dominating platforms for searching for information. Hence there is a need to understand how people use the various new media formats in order to evaluate their ability to navigate through the vast flow of information. It is crucial to keep in mind that while the increased accessibility of information may shift the classroom balance of expertise between teacher and students in some respects, this does not impact the importance of the teacher’s role in the classroom (Kuiper, Volman & Terwel: 2005). While the teacher will to a lesser and lesser degree function as a fount of knowledge, the aim of MIL will be to shift the focus towards paths to knowledge, rather than simply the ability to retain knowledge (Kuiper et al.: 2005).

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.globalgoals.org/global-goals/quality-education/>

What is now being recognized by UNESCO is the need for an approach to MIL that recognizes the influence of the social, cultural, technological, economic and political context (UNESCO: 2013). This dynamic understanding of MIL supports the idea that best-practice models from one culture cannot simply be transferred to a different culture without an adequate adaptation process.

The impact of MIL on the social and political engagement and participation is emphasized in UNESCO's Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework (2013):

The various types of literacy cited above are essential for citizens, children, youth, women and girls, persons with disabilities, indigenous groups and ethnic minorities, as they enable them to be informed, involved and engaged in societal, economic and political development as equal contributors. Information, media content and any digital products/services also have a tremendous influence on personal, social and professional life. (UNESCO: 2013, pp. 30)

Hence it follows that MIL should provide a measure of improvement on the core issue described in the previous chapter, laying the foundation for the relevance of the herein conducted research.

For assessment of MIL competencies UNESCO has developed the most consistent and applicable framework - a global assessment framework which, firstly, distinguishes MIL readiness and MIL competencies, and then breaks down the competencies into several categories under *literacy*, *competencies* and *environment*. The distinction between MIL readiness and MIL competencies is made deliberately for avoiding unreasonable comparison of countries on different social, political, economic or technological levels.

The MIL competencies are assessed on the bases of a competency matrix that distinguishes three separate components: *access and retrieval*, *understanding and evaluation* and *creation and utilization*. These components are each made up of several constituent parts. Access and retrieval consists of *articulation/definition*, *search/location*, *access and retrieval/holding*. This component is a crucial part of the overall competencies because it contains the recognition of the need for data retrieval as well as the ability to identify useful information. Understanding and evaluation consists of *understanding*, *evaluation*, *assessment* and *organization*. This component provides the deeper understanding of the retrieved information, evaluating it relative to other available information and assessing the underlying

ideologies and values, as well as distinguishing facts from opinions. Creation and utilization consists of *creation, communication, participation* and *monitoring*. This component chiefly allows the user to produce information in a clear and comprehensive way, but also aims to ensure the ethical use of media and information. (UNESCO: 2013)

Together these components make up the essence of MIL competency and in extension are contributing factors in the development of an informed, involved and participating population.

In spite of the novel nature of the field of MIL, it is subject to a hasty development. For this reason it is paramount that the sources that one relies on are as recently published as it is possible. The boundaries are constantly being pushed and as such data from only a few years back might likely turn out to be outdated and misleading. For instance the average age at which children start using the internet in Sweden was nine years in 2005. In 2013 the average internet debut age had dropped to three (Carlsson: 2014). Probably the most recent development is the online use of mobile devices. In 2010 only 12% of Swedish 15-year-olds used their cell phones to connect to the internet. In 2013 this number was 94% (Statens medieråd: 2013).

### Key concepts and theoretical approaches

As described in the previous section, when assessing media and information literacy, the UNESCO framework operates distinctly with the concepts of *Country readiness* and *MIL competency*. This distinction is being drawn in order not to confuse results related to the national state of development with results that stem from the competencies of the individuals in question, thus giving a fairer assessment to all nations (UNESCO: 2013). In this thesis the specifics of country readiness will be omitted and only MIL competency criteria will be considered. This is doable because the intention is not to score each country, but rather to provide a comprehensive understanding of the key concepts of MIL.

When describing an individual's MIL competencies one can, as indeed with most competencies, distinguish three main aspects: What they know, what they are able to do and how they make use of their potential -*Knowledge, skill* and *attitudes and values*. In relation to MIL, however, the competency area is described within the three distinct constituent parts: *access and retrieval, understanding and evaluation* and *creation and utilization*, as briefly mentioned in the previous section. Each of these

components covers an area that is limited in scope, but fathoms deeply into the knowledge, skills and attitudes/values of the subject.

The first area, access and retrieval, concerns the subjects competencies in regards to the acquisition of information. As such it is a fairly limited area of concern, but within this competency is understood the ability to *“Determine and articulate the nature, role and scope of the information and media (content) through a variety of resources [...] Search and locate media content [...] Access needed information and media content effectively, efficiently and ethically as well as media and information providers [...] Retrieve and temporarily hold information and media content using a variety of methods and tools”* (UNESCO: 2013, pp. 59). In the assessment of an individual’s MIL competence several performance criteria are used in association with the respective core components, so the individual will be given a complex score giving a minutely detailed overview of the MIL competency of the individual. The framework consists of 113 performance criteria divided between 12 competencies under the three core components.

In turns these performance criteria for MIL assessment also correspond with the topics found in UNESCO’s Media and Information Literacy Curriculum of Teachers (2011) which makes them a fitting tool for describing what is central in the teaching of MIL.

In terms of theoretical approaches it is striking that MIL is approached with a particularly western mindset even though it is consistently being proclaimed to be based on global values. No doubt the universality of the UN’s Universal Declaration of Human Rights (of which MIL is strongly related to article 19, the right to freedom of expression and the right to information) is somewhat compromised, but these are the values that MIL competency is frequently associated with. These are ostensibly western values that reflect the highest rung of Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. While the UNESCO MIL competency assessment framework is constructed with the separate Country readiness element, the curriculum for teachers has no such distinction. This would give rise to the assumption that highly developed countries with western cultural values would find a minimal need for national adaptation of the curriculum compared to countries that do not share this profile. While national adaptation is encouraged and even actively supported, it may be remarked that this might well reduce the quality of the curriculum, but

essentially this is why literacy is meant to be thought of as fundamentally context dependent (UNESCO: 2013).

The survey 'EU Kids Online' has made some findings that illustrate the point made above. While they find that the children in the most progressive countries regarding the unrestricted internet use among children and youths (Scandinavia + the Netherlands) are exposed to the highest risk factors, they eventually conclude that it is recommendable for other European countries to strive toward the parental attitude of these countries. Namely active mediation is the recommended approach over passive or restrictive mediation, as the active mediation is found to make the children more media and information literate and hence better equipped to deal with the risks they may be exposed to (Helsper: 2013). As such the prevailing theoretical approach in the contemporary literature appears to bend in favor of the progressive and egalitarian tendencies of the Nordic cultures.

### The Swedish models

As mentioned, the Lithuanian MIL teaching project is inspired by the teaching models that were implemented in Sweden by the Swedish Media Council. This teaching material was developed on the basis of theoretical MIL frameworks found in two publications: UNESCO's *Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers* (2011) and *Medie- och informationskunnighet I Norden* (2014). In the following segment this theoretical foundation will be described.

UNESCO's *Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers* is a publication that is intended as a global set of guidelines on how to structure MIL teaching. It is a framework that is meant to be adapted to national conditions where ever it is implemented, so it is designed with this flexibility in mind. It focuses on several core topics including *media functions and operation, critical information evaluation, verification of information, media- and info-ethics, expectations to media and information providers, location and retrieval tools, creation and presentation of information* and much more (Wilson et al.: 2011).

The publication is based on the key concepts and theoretical approaches portrayed in the previous section, also developed by UNESCO. More than simply providing a theoretical framework of what topics should be covered in the teaching of MIL, the curriculum has been developed with core- and non-core



modules of specific approaches to relevant topics as well as activities for teaching. Hence the curriculum is the first global tool for application of MIL teaching that is virtually usable with little or no further development, other than the national adaptation, needed (Wilson et al.: 2011).

The usefulness and applicability of the curriculum will be analyzed and discussed further in the beginning of chapter 5.

The Scandinavian publication *Medie- och informationskunnighet I Norden* is largely based upon the UNESCO curriculum, but in contrast it provides a clear picture of the current state of the MIL competencies and needs in the various Nordic countries (Carlsson: 2014). It is stated that MIL is not explicitly mentioned as a separate discipline to be taught in Swedish schools, but plays a transcending role throughout the primary and early secondary school curricula. For example "*With the subject of Swedish students should be given the opportunity to seek information from various sources and evaluate them.*"(Carlsson: 2014, pp. 205). This is a clear example of the level of national adaptation that is provided in the publication. It is also asserted that the increased access for individuals to modern media and information sources in Sweden is not only increasing the amount of well-informed people in the population, but also the amount of ill-informed people. This is due to the nature of the new media as described in the introduction of this chapter, and it is estimated that this greatly increases the need for MIL teaching as this will make the population better able to evaluate their sources of information and hence engage and participate critically in society (Carlsson: 2014).

However, unlike the UNESCO curriculum, the Nordic publication does not provide concrete, applicable approaches or activities, but is rather resigned to giving recommendations on the national adaptation considerations to be taken in order for successful implementation of the UNESCO curriculum.

Hence the use of these two publications in combination allows for the implementation of a comprehensive and clearly defined MIL teaching model that can be easily adapted to the national context of the Swedish MIL competencies and needs. The model has been developed with slight alterations that are not mentioned in any available sources, but only appear in internal work documents with the responsible organization, the Swedish Media Council. However, as the Swedish media council

has played a central role in the production of the publication *Medie- och informationskunnighet i Norden* this should provide a sufficient body of literature.

## Introduction to cultural dimensions

Communication between people is anchored in many different aspects. The way we communicate with each other is defined by our age, gender, educational level, social group and many other things, as well as whether we share these characteristics with our conversation partner or not. The most overarching feature to define communication is probably our national culture. Not only is it evident in communicating with people from foreign cultures that we do not necessarily share norms, rituals or symbols, but the differences have been meticulously mapped through years of thorough research. National culture was first studied as a part of anthropology by Edward T. Hall in the 1950's, but has only come to be recognized as a field of study in its own right several decades later. The field was revolutionized by Geert Hofstede who introduced the concept of cultural dimensions – a concept through which national cultures could be identified and defined arbitrarily and not in relation to any other national culture. This practice has enabled scientists to study national cultures without the bias of evaluating them relative to their own culture. Instead each culture is measured along a set number of dimensions which are found in every national culture, but to varying extents. Hence each culture is scored absolutely rather than relatively and it is possible to objectively view the differences between national cultures.

The paradigm of cultural dimensions has received contributions from many scholars and with varying degrees of compatibility. Several scholars have come up with similar frameworks that however remain incompatible with each other. Most notable among these are Edward T. Hall, Shalom H. Schwartz, Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars and Robert J. House and his GLOBE project. As most of these theoretical frameworks are regarded, at least by their respective authors, as fundamentally incompatible, the most logical approach for applying such a framework in new research would be to compare them amongst each other and select the one framework that appears to be most applicable to the intended research.

Geert Hofstede was pivotal in developing the field with his work *Culture's consequence* (1980). He first introduced the conceptual paradigm of measuring national culture along several cultural dimensions.

Edward T. Hall had similarly described national cultures through the use of high context and low context. A high context culture, he described, is one in which large parts of the communicated content is implicitly indicated from the context or expected to be apparent to the recipient, rather than being conveyed explicitly through the spoken code. Oppositely, a low context culture is one in which the communicator, to a larger extent, needs to state their message explicitly as less meaning is conveyed through non-verbal gestures, social and situational context or other external means (Hall: 1976). The concept of high and low context shows significant overlap with one of the cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede, namely *individualism - collectivism* (Hofstede et al.: 2010). While the concept of cultural dimensions has today become fundamental for comparison of cultures, most of the frameworks that have been developed within this paradigm, as mentioned, have little or nothing in common. The GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness) project (2004) was developed with the intention to model Hofstede's dimensions, but showed very limited compatibility and was subsequently criticized by Hofstede himself for confusing concepts, phrasing questions in its questionnaire confusingly and using particular terms to mean other things than Hofstede has done in his works (Hofstede et al.: 2010). So even though the GLOBE project was meant as a replication study, designed to build upon the framework that Hofstede developed and is structurally similar, the two should not be used together. For instance Hofstede's dimension individualism - collectivism was also used in the GLOBE project, but it was divided into *institutional collectivism (IDV)* and *in-group collectivism* and these were further divided into the two categories "*as is*" and "*as should be*", creating four categories expected to correlate with Hofstede's IDV. The strongest correlation was found with in-group collectivism "as is", while the remaining three measures of collectivism showed little or no correlation with Hofstede's IDV. Besides this was the strongest correlation between similar dimensions of Hofstede and the GLOBE project. (Hofstede et al.: 2010)

Similarly Fons Trompenaars has contributed significantly to the field with his own framework of national culture in the publication *Riding the waves of culture* (1997). His is a seven-dimensional design in which the dimensions, unlike those of most other designs, are divided into another categorical layer. The dimensions identified by Trompenaars fall within three categories of which the first is a large cluster and the other two are separate dimensions. The large cluster consists of dimensions that are all related to relationships with people. The dimensions that belong to this category are: *universalism - particularism*,

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*individualism - communitarianism, neutral - emotional, specific - diffuse and achievement - ascription.*

The two dimensions that do not belong to this category are *attitudes to time* and *attitudes to the environment* each dimension thus making up their own category (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner: 1997). In his book *Riding the waves of culture* (1997) Trompenaars bases his figures and results on data which is not disclosed and, according to Hofstede (2010), has not been peer reviewed and is therefore not reliable. The framework has, however, constituted the foundation of other peer reviewed articles that have relied on considerable bodies of original data. The most notable among which may be Smith and Dugan's (1996) research, the results of which confirmed the validity of the seven dimensions developed by Trompenaars. More recently a study yielding similar results was done by Smith, Peterson and Schwartz (2002).

Furthermore, one of the most celebrated models of cultural dimensions is the one developed by Shalom Schwartz. With considerable influenced from the works of American psychologist Milton Rokeach, Schwartz developed a framework of cultural dimensions in which he isolated a number of *value domains* that appear to correspond to certain cultural dimensions. The domains are *enjoyment, security, achievement, self-direction, restrictive-conformity, pro-social, social power* and *maturity* (Schwartz & Bilsky: 1987). When applying these values to a national level rather than an individual level it became clear that it would not apply without modification. The framework that Schwartz eventually developed used seven cultural dimensions to describe national culture: *Conservatism, hierarchy, mastery, affective autonomy, intellectual autonomy, egalitarian commitment* and *harmony* (Schwartz: 1999). There are strong correlations to be found between this framework and that of Hofstede, particularly with IDV. One point of criticism by Hofstede about Schwartz' framework is that it does not account for national socio-economic situations (Hofstede: 2010).

Hofstede, however - who laid down the very foundation for the paradigm of cultural dimensions to develop - did so with his original publication *culture's consequences* (1980). It contained samples of the data from which his results had been produced. In more recent editions of the work the body of data has been omitted for clarity. This was done to add to the more mainstream appeal of the book (Hofstede et al: 2010). Hofstede originally identified four cultural dimensions: *Individualism - collectivism, masculinity - femininity, uncertainty avoidance* and *power distance*. Later, in recognition of the supplementary work done by Michael Bond and Misho Minkov respectively, two additional

dimensions were assimilated into Hofstede's framework. These were *Long-term orientation - short-term orientation* and *indulgence - restraint* (Hofstede et al.:2010). Although Hofstede was instrumental in the development of the cultural dimension paradigm which to this day remains the prevailing one for describing cultures in an unbiased and absolute manner, his contribution has not managed to steer clear of criticism either. Schwartz (1999) has for instance pointed to the insufficient nature of questionnaires as a means for identification of culture and values. However, Hofstede's framework is still one of the most central, reliable and most frequently replicated works in the field. Besides, the availability of the research results in the form of scores of more than a hundred countries makes it an incomparable tool for comparing cultural values and developing transnationally adaptable training and teaching materials.

Fig. 1 shows the national scores of Lithuania and Sweden:

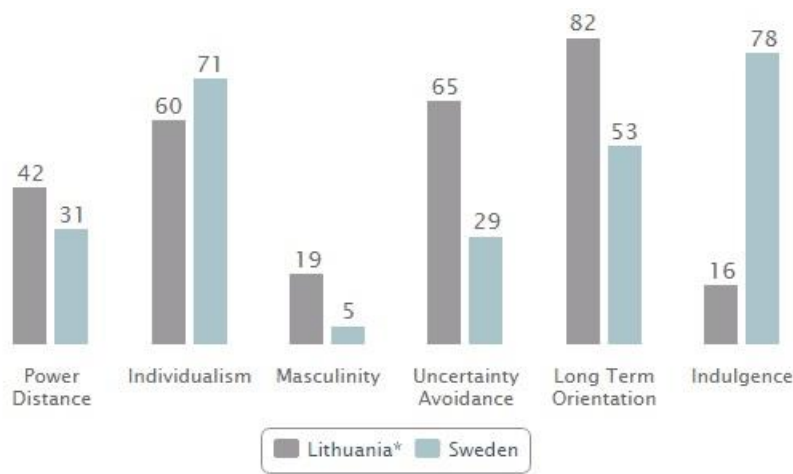


Fig. 1: National scores on Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Data: <http://geert-hofstede.com/countries.html>

While Sweden and Lithuania have quite similar scores on some dimensions, they differ widely on others. This data provides pivotal insights about which areas of MIL teaching to focus on and what to expect to find there. This will be elaborated on in the following sections.

## Power distance

The first of the cultural dimensions identified by Hofstede is power distance. It describes the prevalence and importance of hierarchical structures in society. Hierarchies exist to some degree in most cultures, but their importance can vary from playing a central role to being virtually superfluous, they can even cause more problems than they solve if used in cultures of very low power distance. The presence of this dimension has been indicated in several replication studies (Hoppe: 1990, Merritt: 2000, Mouritzen: 2002). In a culture where power distance is high it is of greater importance for people to observe their place in society and not stray from it. There are strict divisions between people of higher and lower status and these are reinforced through the use of symbols, gestures, rituals and the like (Hofstede et al.: 2010). Examples could be a manager indicating his status through expensive merchandise such as a Rolex watch or a luxury car (symbols), addressing your superior by title rather than name (gesture), or students standing up when the teacher enters the classroom (ritual). In cultures with low power distance these values will not be viewed as fitting. Indicating superiority through obvious symbols can be interpreted as arrogance, addressing others by title might be awkward and uncomfortable to the addressee as this will likely not wish to draw attention to their status, and rituals tend to be more inclusive rather than divisive. Certain aspects of power distance are particularly pertinent to learning environments. In high power distance cultures, teaching is usually centered on the teacher, while the students are the center of low power distance teaching. The teacher in a high power distance culture is treated with a high level of respect and is usually not publically contradicted, criticized or argued with. By contrast the students in low power distance cultures are often encouraged to intervene during lessons by asking questions or otherwise contribute to the teaching (Hofstede et al.: 2010).

Both Sweden and Lithuania score relatively low on the power distance dimension (31 and 42 respectively), yet the class room cultures of the two countries are in quite stark contrast. In Sweden the culture reflects the above description of a low power distance culture, but the Lithuanian bares much closer resemblance to the high power distance culture. This may be explained by the influence of certain other cultural dimensions that will be described in the following sections. Particularly uncertainty avoidance and indulgence are likely to influence the teacher - student relationship typical to learning environments.

## Individualism

Individualism is the second cultural dimension identified by Hofstede. This dimension describes to what extent the individual derives meaning and personal identity from how they behave and think and feel in and of themselves or within a collective context. In high individualism cultures personal success and achievement is valued and standing out from the crowd is often appreciated. Adversely, collectivistic cultures, those of low individualism, tend to discourage uniqueness, and rather value the ability to fit in with the crowd. The individual to a larger extent derives their identity from their role within a group dynamic. Individualist cultures also tend to communicate more explicitly than collectivist cultures (De Mooij & Hofstede: 2002). While individual success is appreciated in collectivistic cultures it must not be prioritized over the dynamics of the relevant social group. In individualistic cultures it is common to strive for personal success, and this may often compromise social, familiar or other collective relationships. One might study abroad or abandon social groups for personal opportunities. In a collectivistic culture this type of behavior will yield little prestige as the individual who does not appear within a social group is likely to be viewed as a failure or an outcast (Hofstede et al.: 2010).

In a school environment it is common for students in individualistic cultures to wish to be noticed by the teacher through being active and doing well - performing outstandingly, so to speak. In a collectivistic culture students are more likely to hold back even if they are able to answer the teacher's question, simply because they do not wish to separate themselves from the group.

Both Lithuania and Sweden score towards the high end of the individualism dimension (60 and 71 respectively). As Sweden's score is marginally higher than that of Lithuania one might expect to see certain differences, but if any are to be found they will likely be fairly subtle. This dimension will not be one of key interest to the project adaptation process.

## Masculinity

The masculinity dimension, with femininity at the lower end of the spectrum, is one that is rooted in gender roles and task division in accordance with these. In masculine cultures there is a strict division of which roles are assigned to men and which are assigned to women in different social contexts. In feminine cultures these distinctions play a far less important role and it may even be regarded as

chauvinistic to suggest that certain tasks can be managed better by someone based on their gender (Hofstede et al.: 2010). Masculine cultures are also strongly associated with assertiveness whereas feminine cultures generally tend towards modesty. An example could be a situation where an individual is required to describe themselves and their feats of achievement. In masculine cultures one is expected to sell one-self and the self perception is far more competition driven. In a feminine culture this type of focus on personal accomplishments is likely to be perceived as arrogant boasting (De Mooij: 2010).

Particularly in learning environments there are quite significant differences between masculine and feminine cultures. While Masculine cultures emphasize achievement, feminine cultures strive towards average performances and to a much lesser degree celebrate excellence. Students are naturally encouraged to perform to the best of their ability, but success is measured in terms of inclusiveness rather than individual achievement (Hofstede et al.: 2010).

Both Lithuania and Sweden are very feminine cultures (their scores are 19 and 5 respectively), but even so, there is quite a considerable gap in-between the two. Sweden is ranked as the all together most feminine culture of all the cultures that have been included in the 2010 edition of Hofstede's data. This is clearly reflected in the progressive steps the country has taken in pursuit of feminine values. An example of this is the introduction of the gender-neutral 3. person personal pronoun '*hen*' (s/he) that officially entered the Swedish dictionary in 2014<sup>4</sup>. That being said, this dimension is unlikely to cause an overwhelming need for cultural adaptation as the Lithuanian culture is also found in the cluster of the most feminine cultures.

### Uncertainty avoidance

This uncertainty avoidance dimension describes the extent to which a culture values the ability to assess risk and is willing to tolerate situations of ambiguity. In highly uncertainty avoidant cultures structure and formality is highly valued while less uncertainty avoidant cultures might perceive strictly regulated procedures and hierarchical structures as unnecessary and frustratingly inflexible (De Mooij: 2010). In terms of high uncertainty avoidance, the existence of risk may be perceived as a positive thing. This is

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<sup>4</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hen\\_\(pronoun\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hen_(pronoun))



because unlike uncertainty, risk can be quantified. An uncertainty avoidant culture may well be quite risk willing as the risk can be quite strictly determined. The same culture may however be much less willing to engage with situations that pose significantly less risk, but include an element of uncertainty that makes the outcome much less predictable. This is typically the case for initial investments in exploratory research and such. There may not be much to lose, but it is largely impossible to evaluate exactly what the risk of that loss is.

This dimension has significant implications in a school environment. Both in terms of teaching structure and the student - teacher relationship, cultures of high and low uncertainty avoidance value highly different things, and it may prove overwhelmingly challenging to attempt to consolidate both of them. In highly uncertainty avoidant cultures the students are likely to expect, and in turns respond more positively to, rigidly structured teaching with a single right answer and a highly structured procedure to follow in order to find that answer. In less uncertainty avoidant cultures the students will respond much better to more open ended questions in which the objectives are not clearly defined, but rather must be approximated by the participants themselves. The case of the teacher being uncertain or not knowing the answer to a question is no cause for concern in a culture of low uncertainty avoidance. The teacher is a person like anybody else, and their intellectual capacity and knowledge is naturally limited. In highly uncertainty avoidant cultures this is not the case. The teachers are expected to be experts in their fields and should have all the answers. Pedagogy is set aside for expertise in these cultures as it is common for the use of highly complicated, technical or academic language to be seen as a sign of quality (Hofstede et al.: 2010).

On this dimension Lithuania and Sweden score remarkably differently (65 and 29 respectively) which makes the consequences of the values related to uncertainty avoidance especially important to be aware of in terms of the adaptation of the present project. Additionally this may, at least partly, explain the inconsistency that was briefly mentioned on the impact of power distance in the Lithuanian school environment. Student - teacher relationships are not determined exclusively by power distance. Uncertainty avoidance also influences this relationship as teachers are expected to yield a large amount of authority through the merit of their position (Hofstede et al.:2010).

## Long-term orientation

The long-term orientation describes the static or dynamic nature of virtues in a culture. The dimension initially discovered by Michael Bond (1988) in his Chinese Values Survey is (negatively) related to that of Misho Minkov (2007) called *monumentalism - flexhumility*. The dimension describes how cultures of short-term orientation have virtues that are invested in very static societal institutions that therefore prescribe a certain attitude or behavior consistently and regardless of circumstances. Long-term oriented cultures are more prone to context dependent virtues and tend to value humility in their practices and attitudes (Hofstede et al.:2010). Short-term oriented cultures also characteristically operate with a dualistic scheme of right and wrong or true and false in which the two are each other's antipodes and something must be one or the other, but cannot conceivably be both. Long-term oriented cultures operated with a more flexible attitude towards the topic. Things are not perceived as intrinsically right or wrong, but instead this can depend on the context. Often even the combination of what is considered to be true and false can together lead to a higher truth than any of the two could reveal on their own (Hofstede et al.: 2010).

Long-term oriented cultures are usually more concerned about the future than the past. It is common to display a high level of adaptability and preparation for times to come, while short-term oriented cultures are more anchored in the past and hence are reluctant to change their customs and behaviors (Hofstede et al.: 2010).

It is worth observing that this dimension was not one of Hofstede's original four dimensions, but was added to the framework later as Michael Bond's and Misho Minkov's work in the field was acknowledged and recognized as consistent with that of Hofstede. This means that the dimension was not apparent until the Chinese Values Survey was conducted, and for the same reason it can be difficult to recognize when comparing two European cultures as is the case in this thesis.

While none of them is particularly short-term oriented, there is a significant difference between the scores of Lithuania and Sweden on this dimension (82 and 53 respectively) indicating that Lithuania is far more long-term oriented than Sweden. This would imply that while Sweden is most likely a somewhat balanced culture, Lithuania is strongly prone to save for the future and invest in education and

development. On the scale Lithuania is part of a cluster of ex-Soviet countries which may provide an explanation for this. For the educational environment these scores mean that it would be important to be aware of teaching elements that include related values such as the attribution of success to effort or luck.

## Indulgence

The final dimension in Hofstede's framework is indulgence. Like long-term orientation this dimension was added to Hofstede's framework after it was identified by Minkov (2007). On the opposite end of this dimension is restraint. The dimension describes how prone a culture is to desire immediate gratification. In indulgent cultures people are generally more optimistic, extroverted and loosely connected with one another (Samovar et al.: 2013). Restrained cultures adversely tend to be more pessimistic, cynical and morally disciplined. Such cultures are typically more tightly connected within themselves. They will value thrift and hard work, while indulgent cultures care less for thrift and free time is an important aspect of life (Hofstede et al.: 2010).

The level of indulgence in a culture may have a significant impact on the education environment. In high indulgence cultures there is usually a focus on comfort in the learning environment as well as the importance of a work/leisure balance. In cultures of restraint the learning environment is not a place where comfort is valued. Rather, it is dominated by formality and structure, and quality is measured by performance rather than satisfaction. In indulgent cultures it is common for learning situations to be student centered and rely on engagement and student participation, where restrained cultures are likely to rely on the more traditional role division where the teacher is the center of the learning environment, and students speak only when they are spoken to (Hofstede et al.:2010).

On this dimension Lithuania and Sweden have remarkably different scores (16 and 78 respectively). This is the cultural dimension on which the two countries differ the very most, and therefore it is crucial to keep the values related to indulgence and restraint in mind when considering the adaptation of the MIL project that is the topic of this thesis. Interestingly the implications of Lithuania's low score on indulgence appear to provide an explanation for the type of school environment which is so dissimilar to the values associated with the low power distance score as presented in that section above.

## Outcomes of the literature review

In this chapter the prevailing theories of the relevant fields have been introduced and discussed, the theoretical frameworks deemed most suitable have been picked out and explained in more detail including how they relate to the topic of this thesis. It should now be clear that MIL competency within the UNESCO framework focuses on the three pillars of knowledge, skills and attitudes which are (1) access and retrieval, (2) understanding and evaluation and (3) creation and utilization. Each part contains several unique competencies and in a later chapter the suggested implementation of these will be evaluated in relation to the cultural dimensions of Lithuania and Sweden as they have been presented throughout the latter half of this chapter. It has been emphasized how of these cultural dimensions, ones to stay most keenly aware of are (1) indulgence, (2) uncertainty avoidance, (3) masculinity and (4) power distance, and the cultural values that are associated with these. This is because these values are the ones that are most likely to determine how successfully a social construction such as a teaching project will fare in the society where it is implemented. These particular dimensions have been picked out because they relate closely to the learning environments or teacher - student relationships that are customary within given cultures. Out of these dimensions one should expect to see the clearest cultural contrasts emerge along the dimensions of uncertainty avoidance and indulgence because they are the dimensions that present the most considerable differences between the two cultures in question. It is anticipated that the bigger cultural differences are going to cause obstacles for the smooth implementation of the Swedish MIL teaching model in the Lithuanian society. With these different cultural values in mind it will be analyzed and evaluated how well the model has been adapted to the Lithuanian culture in accordance with this theoretical framework.

## Methodology

In this chapter the applied methods and techniques related to research ontology, epistemology, data gathering, data processing, and analysis will be presented. As stated in the introduction, the main objective of the research is:

***To determine what implementation issues occur due to cultural differences between Sweden and Lithuania, and how the Swedish model should be adapted to take these cultural differences into account while preserving the quality of the original MIL teaching material.***

## Research design

This thesis is based on a body of research that adheres to a naturalistic inquiry based methodology under the qualitative research paradigm. This was decided as the desired outcome of the research is perceived to be in line with and obtainable through the practices of naturalistic inquiry. The qualitative paradigm is very often employed in the fields of social science and humanities (Denzin & Lincoln: 2005). This is because it inherently focuses on why a certain phenomenon occurs, rather than how it does so. The influence of the cultural dimensions that this research aims to uncover is unlikely to appear at the surface level of the research object, and therefore it is deemed more useful to investigate through qualitative methods. This will provide in-depth information about the subjects' thoughts and feelings about the MIL project and its implementation. A quantitative study could likely measure the success rates of the MIL teaching models in the two countries, but the influence of the underlying cultural values could only be inferred from such a study. A further reason for the research to rely on qualitative rather than quantitative research is that a quantitative study would not necessarily reflect the depth of the students' acquired knowledge and skills. In education systems that are geared towards so-called regurgitation of information, the assessment systems typically are as well, meaning that the students show positive results without necessarily comprehending the taught material in depth.

The research has been conducted around two separate data sources. The first is the actual material that has been applied in the MIL teaching projects in Sweden and Lithuania. The material in the Lithuanian adaptation has been compared to the original Swedish material, on the basis of the framework of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Practices and approaches that reflect culturally anchored values specific to Sweden have been identified in the original material and these elements have subsequently been sought out in the Lithuanian adaptation. In this way it was possible to identify the areas in which application issues might occur due to one of the following conditions: (1) Practices or approaches still reflect the original culture and are incompatible with the adopting culture, (2) the adaptation process

has notably impacted the quality of the approach or practice, or (3) it has been omitted entirely from the adapted material.

The second part of the research is a series of interviews that have been conducted with several subjects representing different stages of the adaptation project. The two groups of subjects represent: (1) People who have been directly involved in different stages of the MIL project. This group includes advisors from the Nordic Council of Ministers, administrative and development staff under the Education Development Center (UPC) and project participants. (2) The second group consists of national experts on the subject of MIL who have knowledge of the situation relating to the state and needs of MIL in Lithuania, but who have not been directly involved in the project. The use of unaffiliated experts should provide a measure of scientific rigidity as they are expected to have the same general knowledge on the topic, but no personal stake in the success of the project.

## Method

The method employed in this research is directed content analysis as this approach allows for the analysis of the implied subtext of communication (Krippendorff: 1989, Hsieh & Shannon: 2005). In order to ensure the validity of the produced results, a technique of data triangulation has been used – obtaining data from different sources and at different times. The interviews have been scheduled in an attempt to mix the two informant groups in time and the data analysis has been carried out as the data has been available, thus creating an iterative data gathering and analysis process. Due to limited flexibility and time constraints it has not been possible to mix the order of interviews perfectly, but the extent to which it has been done has been sufficient for the effect to transpire through.

The body of original data has been gathered through a series of semi-structured expert interviews. The guiding principal of the interview style is to begin with open-ended questions and then follow up with probing questions that relate to the theoretical framework (Harrell & Bradley: 2009). The data gathering has been an iterative process of moving back and forth between interviewing subjects and revising interview questions. This technique is meant to deter situations where the subjects are being primed or somehow adjust their responses to fit the interviewer's expectations, thus ensuring a certain measure of

reliability in the research data. The interview questions have remained largely unaltered throughout the course of the data gathering process.

Following the data gathering process, the data has been processed through a rigorous and iterative process of coding and categorizing the information into manageable, meaningful results. The coding has been done by using a set of initial categories provided by the theoretical framework as well as a set of categories that have emerged during the coding process.

### Interview questions

- Establishing questions:
  - Name
  - Position
  - (Role in MIL project)

#### Questions designed for informants involved in the MIL project

- What was the reason for implementing the project?
  - What is the purpose/goal of teaching MIL?
  - Why was the Swedish model chosen?
    - Did you anticipate any issues with using Scandinavian practices?
- How was the project adapted from the Swedish model?
  - Social, political, cultural, economic considerations?
  - Influence of theoretical concepts?
- What were the results of the first project?
  - How was the success measured?
  - Any adaptation for the second project?
- What have you learned from the project?
  - What was challenging for staff/students?
  - Were you surprised about the results of the project?

#### Questions designed for local experts?

- What is the national need for MIL?
- What are the challenges for MIL teaching in Lithuania?

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- Should Lithuania model their MIL teaching programs on other countries or develop their own?
- What are factors that influence MIL and critical thinking?
- What is the future of MIL in Lithuania?

Naturally the probing questions used in each interview differ as they are based on the individual situations and answers given by the informants.

## Expectations

Prior to conducting the research it was hypothesized that findings would confirm the existence of elements related to national cultural values in the Swedish MIL teaching material and that these would need to be adapted to the Lithuanian culture in which the material was implemented. The assumption was that any culturally anchored elements that were not adequately adapted to Lithuanian values would impact the success of the implementation. The impact of the failure to adequately adapt culturally anchored elements was expected to be proportional to the distance between the scores of the two countries on the relevant cultural dimensions within Hofstede's model.

## Results

### UNESCO's MIL Curriculum for teachers

The curriculum developed by UNESCO is, as mentioned, meant to be universally applicable on the condition that it is first adapted to the national culture and MIL readiness of the country in question. It follows naturally that some countries may need to adapt the curriculum more than others. However, adaptation may have an impact on quality depending on the extent and nature of the adaptation. It is clear that the pedagogical approaches suggested in the curriculum are designed to emulate the learning outcomes of the curriculum itself: Techniques such as *issue-inquiry approach*, *problem-based learning*, *cooperative learning*, *simulation* and *production* are techniques that revolve around crucial MIL skills, particularly regarding *understanding & evaluation* and *creation & utilization*. They are also inherently student-focused techniques that rely on engaged and critically thinking students in order to yield successful outcomes (Wilson et al.: 2011). The question of whether the content reflecting structure of the teaching material is intrinsic to the success of the teaching model takes a pivotal role in this case.



National adaptation to a culture such as Lithuania's would mean moving away from the student-focused, engagement/active participation-based teaching methods, and towards more teacher-focused methods with less open-ended assignments and vague objectives. This structure is in stark contrast to the content taught within the MIL curriculum, so the question remains *how to structure MIL teaching material to work in a country where MIL does not naturally emerge as a consequence of the national culture?*

Furthermore the UNESCO 'Media and Information Literacy curriculum for teachers' is, as the name suggests, meant to equip teachers with MIL skills in order for them to be able to incorporate it in their teaching. The project in Lithuania is aimed at children in middle- and high school. This means that the pedagogic approach of the curriculum tends to address the students as adults and assume a relatively high level of independence and competence. Particularly in cultures where the teacher-student relationship in middle- and high school is highly unequal, this approach will need fundamental adaptations in order to be successful. Such adaptation should of course be possible, but again it is worth considering what impact the adaptation of the teaching material will have on its quality.

### Teaching material

The material that has been analyzed has been selected through the following process. A few representative teaching modules from the Lithuanian material have been identified. These have been developed on the basis on the Swedish MIL teaching material as well as other influences. As the nature of the referencing is quite sparse, it has not been possible to identify exactly which elements from the Swedish MIL teaching material have been used. Instead matching sets of teaching material have been found from the cited sources, and these have provided the basis for the comparative analysis at hand. The Lithuanian and Swedish materials have been categorized in pairs to see which culturally anchored elements occur in each set. This provides a basis for analyzing the content of each one and evaluating the adaptation from the Swedish culture to the Lithuanian culture.

### Results of teaching material review

In the three selected sample chapters from each set of teaching materials we have found the emergence of certain patterns. Features that are related to cultural values occur in both sets of material, but

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crucially they are, in the Swedish material, consistently in line with the country's national score. In the Lithuanian material the reflected cultural values are much less coherent. The majority of culture related features identified were inconsistent with Lithuania's national scores on the related dimensions (see appendix 3). The Dimensions that were found to cause inconsistencies were *indulgence* and *uncertainty avoidance*. Most of the suggested exercises and activities were found to revolve around student involvement and active participation, which is generally associated with a significantly higher indulgence score than that of Lithuania. Similarly the Lithuanian teaching material is on several occasions employing open ended questions and debate or discussion structures which are traditionally found in cultures with low uncertainty avoidance scores. A few examples from the Lithuanian teaching material follow below:

*Question for the whole class: How can you ensure access to information for everybody, and why is it important to consider change in society? – Lithuanian article #02*

Above we see how the learning outcome is intended to be derived from a discussion rather than the teacher simply explaining the topic. Ultimately this depends on the way the exercise is executed by the teacher, but from the material it is suggested in a fashion that is incompatible with Lithuania's low indulgence score.

*Do you agree with the message of the film? – Lithuanian article #03*

Here we see an element that has an uncharacteristically ambiguous nature. Students of an uncertainty avoiding culture can be expected to be reluctant to answer such a question because it is notoriously unclear what the correct answer is. Indeed there is not a right or a wrong answer and so the teacher will not be able to provide the desired clarification about this.

*Visual presentations of theoretical material. The teacher presents (10-15 min.) Slides "Media Influence on the public" (see. Appendix 1) in which students will receive the information necessary for further debate. The stated objective of the discussion is to analyze and assess fully the role and influence of the media in various areas of public life. – Lithuanian article #02*

This example follows the prescription of an uncertainty avoiding culture more than the previous two. There are several examples of elements that follow the national culture of Lithuania, but this brings up

the next question of interest: Are the cultural values of Lithuania compatible with the behavior and skills that are being taught through MIL? It is indicated that the exercise will comprise elements of debate, but also it is stated that the teacher provides the information that needs to be applied. Again the outcome of this exercise may depend heavily on the teachers approach and interpretation, but it appears that the level of uncertainty avoidance is inversely proportional to the success of the MIL learning objectives. The very suggestion that the teacher provides the information seems to reduce the MIL learning value especially in the areas of access and retrieval, and understanding and evaluation. As the teaching material is only suggestive and ultimately depends on the teacher's interpretation it is impossible to evaluate the exact value of the learning objectives, but it certainly seems to be the case that uncertainty avoidance and MIL education are inversely proportionally related in this case.

With regards to the covered MIL topics, the Swedish material appears to cover each area more equally while the Lithuanian material is more focused on the areas of *understanding and evaluation and creation and utilization* and pays little attention to the area of *access and retrieval of information*. The heavy focus on creation and utilization of information is surprising because it tends to rely on student involvement over teacher focus, again a feature that is inconsistent with Lithuania's indulgence score. However, most of the suggested exercises in the Lithuanian teaching material relied on applying knowledge that was provided either by the teacher or through the course material. By contrast, the Swedish material balances the use of exercises that recognize content and apply acquired knowledge with exercises that concern a more structural approach to the topics. The latter are exercises where the way to the answer is what matters rather than the actual answer itself. This finding is somewhat consistent with the national cultural values of the two countries as Lithuanian culture would be expected to focus more on more stringently directed tasks with clear goals as this is the norm for cultures that score highly on the uncertainty avoidance dimension. The Lithuanian approach may turn out to yield poorer results than that employed in the Swedish material as the concept of learning structures of knowledge acquisition rather than mere fact retention is at the center of MIL (as discussed in the literature review).

In summation the teaching material that has been adapted for implementation in Lithuania does not follow the prescriptions that have emerged from the literature review. There are several examples of the Lithuanian material having been significantly altered in order to accommodate the Lithuanian

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culture better than the original Swedish material would, but central elements of cultural values that are essentially incompatible with the dimensions of Lithuania's national culture remain. There are multiple examples of student-centered and participation based teaching suggestions that clearly reflect a high level of indulgence which is found in Swedish culture and not in Lithuanian culture. Similarly the Lithuanian teaching material frequently involves vaguely defined objectives and open-ended questions that appeal to open discussion rather than clear answers that can be learned, memorized and regurgitated at will. According to the theoretical framework this approach can be expected to work well in a culture of low uncertainty avoidance such as Sweden's, and significantly less well in a culture of high uncertainty avoidance such as that of Lithuania.

### Expert interviews

The informants for this part of the empirical data have been selected for their personal engagement in MIL on a general level. They have not been involved in the MIL teaching project that is the subject of this thesis, but are somehow engaged in the topic. They are all either journalists, university lecturers or both. Some informants from this group have either a western ethnicity or a long-term association with a western culture. One might expect for this to generate different perspectives on similar topics, causing disagreement on whether or not certain content is being successfully taught as well as what issues need to be addressed, and how.

The Informants are:

Romas Sakadolskis:

Position: Journalist and editor. Former lecturer at the Institute of Journalism, Vilnius University.

Virgis Valentinavičius:

Position: Journalist and editor. Dean of Mykolas Romeris University. Former editor-in-chief of Lithuanian online news outlet Alfa.lt.

Ruslanas Irzikevičius:

Position: Journalist and editor. Founder and editor-in-chief of Lithuanian digital news outlet Lithuania Tribune. Former political and economic advisor to the Swedish embassy in Lithuania.

Ana Sosnovskaja:

Position: Student. Chairman of LMS Vilniaus Mokinių Savivaldybės Informavimo Centras (MSIC) (Municipal Student Information Center of Vilnius, Lithuanian Student Council).

Donatas Puslys:

Position: Journalist and Editor. Editor-in-chief of Lithuanian online periodical Bernardinai.lt.

As indicated in the interview questions in the previous chapter, the informants are expected to give a general impression of the MIL situation in Lithuania, the challenges to teaching MIL and their view on national culture's influence on the matter. The informants are not meant to be familiar with the theoretical framework of Hofstede, but rather to provide information that will contain valuable insights about national culture. The idea is that the informants will talk about culturally anchored topics or give culturally loaded answers without themselves being acutely aware of this.

### Results of expert interviews

From the expert interviews some clear patterns have emerged in relation to the influence of cultural dimensions on media and information literacy and the teaching of this in Lithuania. There are also several statements that, largely in agreement with each other, exemplify the MIL situation and the challenges of teaching MIL in Lithuania. The interviews share many traits in relation to their content, expressed needs and desires and situational perceptions, but at the same time they clearly reflect the backgrounds of the informants in question. This reflection could be an indication that the informants are biased towards their own desires, or it could simply mean that they are more keenly aware of the challenges that are pertinent to their own situations. Either way, no conclusions are being drawn on the basis of individual statements. The aim of the research is to uncover the cultural trends that may influence the process of teaching MIL in Lithuania. And indications of cultural traits are abundant in the data. The first thing that all informants have indicated is the tendency for the Lithuanian population to trust media without scrutiny - a trait that is immediately indicative of a highly uncertainty avoidant culture (Tavanti: 2013). This is stated when talking about the current need for MIL in Lithuania. There is a possibility that the informants exaggerate the national situation, but their complete agreement shows that there certainly is a measure of truth to this statement. When talking in more detail about the

reasons for the lack of independence and critical thinking in the Lithuanian population the informants tend to focus on the areas that are closer to their own niches, showing that they draw the same conclusions based on different perspectives.

When talking about the major challenges of teaching MIL in Lithuania the informants again clearly reflected their own areas of expertise. Informants with extensive knowledge of foreign countries were more prone to expressing a desire to follow foreign examples or to reach foreign standards. One informant with a journalistic background found the biggest challenges in the area of journalism and found this to be an essential challenge for MIL. Another informant with more of a historical interest would tend to explain the challenges through the cultural heritage in the country. Both factors are likely to have an influence on the MIL situation of Lithuania, and they were touched upon in all interviews, but the focus of each interview clearly reflected the background of the informant. The two overarching issues that were pointed out were that (1) the population trusts the media too much, and (2) the media is not trustworthy enough. As causes for the first issue the informants mentioned the long cultural history of repression of media and free speech in the region, making the population less prone to expect nuanced media coverage. As for the belief in the word of the media the suggested causes are either that the repressive culture has forged a level of acceptance or that today's media represents democracy and freedom and therefore is not subjected to scrutiny. The two suggestions are somewhat contradictory, but not mutually exclusive, and regardless they are both indicative of a highly restrained culture.

It is not inconceivable that a part of the reason for the population's tendency to believe the national media is born out of a long history of subdued freedom of information where asking critical questions and attempting to scrutinize authorities would jeopardize personal security rather than ensure it. Especially seeing as this has been the case in Lithuania for generations, even way before the occupation by the Soviet Union. Likewise it is plausible that modern media bears a strong association with the values of democracy and civil liberties, and that the country's relatively limited experience with these principles has inadvertently promoted the perception that expressing dissatisfaction with the quality of media equals a general disregard for the values it represents.

The given explanations for the lack of nuanced reporting in Lithuanian media rely on two separate issues. One is the suggestion that journalism and media education in independent Lithuania was still

built on Soviet practices which has severely limited the anticipated development towards a transparent and objective media landscape.

*The development of independent media was always an issue. After 50 years of soviet occupation the new media that was born in Lithuania, after independence was restored, was again based on Soviet models or some romantic notion of pre-war models, but there is no tradition of free media in Lithuania, so the past 25 years have been kind of an experiment. – Interview #02*

The other issue is the unfortunate overlap of owners and editors-in-chief of the biggest national media outlets. When the owner of a newspaper is also the editor-in-chief it is easy to imagine the kind of conflicts of interest that can lead to compromising the newspaper's journalistic integrity.

*Basically Moguls created this unhealthy tradition of direct involvement in the editorial process because in many cases the owners are the same people as the editors-in-chief and they are pushing their business interests in the editorial room. - Interview #03*

All the informants expressed excitement about the future prospects of MIL in Lithuania. The tendency is to expect a civic progression that goes towards a more literate and more critically thinking and engaged public. The positive attitude may be correlated with the fact that the informants are personally engaged in the field and largely without any other motivation than their own initiative, so this fact alone does not provide much general information. They do, however, agree that this potential is largely due to the small amount of MIL work that has already been done.

*It [civics] exists in some schools depending on the teachers involved etc. but there is no systemic approach in Lithuanian education. – Interview #02*

*You could do text analysis; you could count words, positive and negative, and so on. A lot of work lies ahead. But for now the fact reservoir for such a course is quite limited. – Interview #03*

*In many cases we still haven't evolved into this different teaching style. And unfortunately this generational change didn't really happen that successfully, because the teachers are "gods" unfortunately. – Interview #04*

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Hence it appears that general MIL skills are severely limited in Lithuania and that this is in no small part the result of the absence of a cultural tradition of critical engagement with the sources of information i.e. the authorities. The statements that relate to the relationship of the Lithuanian population with media and information sources also retain valuable information about the culture of Lithuania through the views of the informants themselves. It is clear how informants who have spent a significant amount of time outside of Lithuania and have been exposed to different cultural values, have different ideas of how MIL can be perceived and how it can be taught. Informants who have not been emerged in a western culture have a tendency to suggest MIL teaching that is based on very conventional Lithuanian methods. The effectiveness of this approach has been addressed above.

### **Interviews with project affiliates**

The second group of interviewees is a heterogeneous group of informants who have been directly involved with the MIL teaching project which is the subject of this thesis. The informants represent a wide array of involved parties: people from the Nordic Council of Ministers' office in Lithuania, the project coordinator from the Education Development Center UPC (Ugdymo plėtotės centro), a subject matter expert involved in the adaptation of the teaching materials as well as the vice director of one of the participating schools.

#### Šarunas Radvilavičius:

Position: Deputy Director of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Lithuania.

Project affiliation: Involved in continuation project.

#### Brigita Urmanaitė:

Position: Adviser for culture and education at the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Lithuania.

Project affiliation: Project initiator.

#### Egidijus Jurgelionis:

Position: Journalist and communication specialist.

Project affiliation: Project expert responsible for adaptation of teaching material to Lithianian context.

#### Paulius Mieželis:



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Position: Vice Director of Vilniaus Jėzuitų Gimnazija (Vilnius Jesuit High School).

Project affiliation: Project participant.

Rasa Jančiauskaitė:

Position: Project coordinator at Ugdymo Plėtotės Centras (Education Development Center).

Project affiliation: Project coordinator.

From the data gathered from this group there are two specific expected outcomes: (1) Some of the plainer questions that have not been answered from the publically available material should be answered in a tangible manner. These include the goals of the project and the tools used to measure the effect of the project. (2) The second group of expected outcomes is data that will be useful in the pursuit of an answer to the question of intercultural adaptability of the MIL teaching material and hopefully how to improve the material to optimally fit the Lithuanian context in which it is implemented.

### Results of interviews with project affiliates

The first group of results from the data gathered through interviews with the members of the group labeled project affiliates contains those that refer to the more tangible questions posed earlier. First and foremost the tools used for measuring the effectiveness of the project have been established. Conveniently the effectiveness of the project is to be measured by use of a set of surveys based on UNESCO's *Global Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework*. The evaluation is meant to be done by carrying out a survey of the media and information literacy of the staff and pupils of the participating schools at the beginning of the project, and then another one at the end of the project. The comparison of the two sets of scores is expected to provide insights into the effect the project has had on the MIL skills of the staff and pupils. It is worth noting that the results of the project are not representative of the national MIL level in Lithuania. The project involves the voluntary participation of 62 schools out of some 200 applicants. The participants are selected on the basis of their previous experience with similar projects and their perceived commitment to the project. This means that the scores are likely to exceed national levels significantly. It also includes the possibility that appreciation of the material is significantly higher than it would be if a similar project were carried out on a national level.

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The goals of the project have not been specified in any measurable way. When talking to administrative staff and asking specifically about the goals of the project, they are described in general terms that focus on raising awareness, changing attitudes and improving skills as the quotes below illustrate.

*The goal was to present MIL as an integrated aspect in formal education. The ministry of education and science even set a goal to have an education program for teachers as an obligatory program for gymnasium teachers. Our goal was to present Nordic experience in MIL education. – Interview #05*

*For me the goal was to make people understand that they should not trust media. That was the main goal for me to say it in an easy way. To make them understand how the media work and that sometimes it's not true what is written. – Interview #06*

*...we had our goals of what we wanted: we wanted the different age groups of school children, and then we thought about what we can take for primary school, for middle school or for high school. Then we looked at it and we chose this material. – Interview #08*

As seen the goals are vague and descriptive of the direction of the project, but they do not describe the goals in measurable terms. The description of the current situation is similarly being consistently described in vague and intangible terms. At present the national MIL level has not been measured which does make it intrinsically difficult to say something meaningful about in terms of development. There is simply no foundation to build upon yet.

On the question of why the Swedish MIL teaching model was chosen as a basis for the project, the informants have given somewhat consistent answers. There is general agreement that the involvement of the Nordic Council of Ministers facilitated the use of Nordic experience. Other suggested reasons for this choice include the perceived cultural similarity between Lithuania and Scandinavia, and the Scandinavian leadership in the field of MIL. The latter arguments were only hinted at whereas there was unanimous agreement about the involvement of the Nordic Council of Ministers facilitating the use of Scandinavian experience. Other than this it is clear that Sweden and Finland were found to be more relevant to the Lithuanian situation as they have nationally institutionalized MIL teaching programs. The

cultural adaptability of these countries with Lithuania does not appear to have been an influencing factor.

In terms of data that is useful for determination of intercultural adaptability of the MIL material, there are several interesting results to present. Several striking tendencies have emerged from the interviews and these will be subjected to subsequent analysis. First is the tendency to acknowledge the usefulness of student-centered, inclusive teaching methods in MIL teaching. As indicated in the literature review these tendencies are typically associated with cultures such as that of Sweden, and not that of Lithuania. A strong tendency to describe teaching styles in terms of development has been observed in several interviews with project affiliates as well as experts. This perception uniformly identifies the teacher-centered, one-way communication based teaching style, typical to cultures such as Lithuania's, as old fashioned or traditional. Adversely the student-centered, two-way communication based teaching style, typical to cultures like Sweden's, is being described as modern or progressive and favored especially by younger teachers.

*There are now teachers that study and graduate this year, maybe they are more innovative with their methods and more creative in the way they teach students, but the older teachers, maybe 60 plus, they are more 'old-school', using methods where they just stand up and say the material they have and I don't think there is such a problem with young teachers who are more innovative and interactive and so on. – Interview #06*

On the question of whether such a teaching style as the one described above as 'modern' can be found in Lithuania, there were highly conflicting statements. Within the group of project affiliates there were several statements found to indicate that this teaching style is either lacking or at least not sufficiently used in Lithuanian formal education. However, there were slightly more statements that indicated that this teaching style is in fact being used in Lithuanian formal education, and that there is no shortage of this (see appendix 3). Interestingly there was only a single mention of this teaching style being used sufficiently in the formal education system of Lithuania, in the group of interviews with local experts. This finding will be expanded upon in the analysis and will provide the basis for suggestions with far-reaching implications.

## Analysis & discussion

### Situation

As indicated in the previous chapter the informants agree unanimously that the Lithuanian MIL situation is in need of improvement. The results show that the experts' views of the situation tend to reflect their background or particular field of interest. The reflection of personal interests should also be expected from the informants who have been directly involved in the MIL teaching project. Regardless of these personal interests it is clear that the need for MIL education is there. Nobody has hinted at Lithuania having long established traditions of critical engagement with media, so the overview of the situational background as presented in the data can be assumed to be at least fairly accurate. The data that suggests a more positive trend in MIL teaching also largely attributes this to a relatively recent development in the field of teaching, so it is reasonable to conclude that the MIL situation is indeed at a fairly rudimentary stage in Lithuania compared to Scandinavian countries. Several statements given by experts imply that media is largely unreliable because it is biased and lacks nuance and transparency, and that the lack of critical engagement with the media is at least in part due to this situation.

*Q: What do you think are the factors that influence the ability to think critically and to learn MIL?*

*A: That you can't trust everything you read. – Interview #04*

*Well there is a quite serious national need for MIL in Lithuania because the older generation still remembers the soviet system which was 100% controlled and 100% propaganda. – Interview #03*

The reason for the population's high trust in media is of course hard to determine and surely stems from a complex plethora of conditions. Therefore it is not possible to draw conclusions about this aspect, but the repeated suggestion that the public's high level of trust in media is negatively correlated with the media's trustworthiness is surprising to say the least, and surely deserving of increased attention from a scientific point of view.

## Goals

Due to the lack of clearly defined goals described in the previous chapter, it will be challenging to evaluate the success of the project in a meaningful way. If the final survey shows any amount of improvement, no matter how significant, the project can be said to have met its goals. From this follows that the process of developing suggestions for improving the MIL teaching material, will be very complicated. It is still possible to identify areas in which current practices conflict with the approaches suggested by the theoretical framework (this will be done below) as well as approaches that have a positive or negative impact on the teaching of MIL (this will also be done below), but the possibilities of estimating how successful the current practices are and how successful an adaptation to the theoretical framework of this research would be, are rather limited. Only at the end of this project will there be tangible results that indicate a measure of MIL in the project participant staff and pupils. Even these results will only provide a vague sense of approximately how the national MIL situation looks. As mentioned in the previous chapter these results will hardly be representative of the MIL situation on a national level as the participating schools are voluntarily participating and they have been selected as the most desirable candidates from a pool more than three times as big (62 participating schools out of more than 200 applicants). On the basis that MIL is generally estimated to be quite undeveloped in Lithuania, as established above, it is unlikely to imagine that there is any considerable plurality of apt MIL teachers hiding among the schools that did not apply. Rather more likely is it that the participating schools represent those most engaged in MIL education. If that is the case then it is safe to assume that the national MIL situation among school staff and pupils is significantly poorer than the results of the project will indicate. Similar expectations were expressed by Dr. Albinas Kalvaitis, developer of the project's MIL assessment survey, at the *conference on Media and Information Literacy education* on November 7<sup>th</sup> at Litexpo, Vilnius.

The MIL teaching methods that are being suggested in the project are mildly speaking not in line with the Lithuanian cultural values. This was presented in the previous chapter as a result of evaluating the Lithuanian adaptation of the MIL teaching material. This inconsistency has been confirmed by projectaffiliates who have indicated that the student-focused and inclusive, participation oriented nature of the teaching material is intentional.

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*I think this is the ultimate goal: to see how the students are taking it. If they are okay with my methods, if they understand and if my methods help their learning. One thing is that I tell something, because a lecture is also a method, but I need to understand if they have understood and if they have learned anything. Maybe they have different opinions so I need to understand how it settles in their minds. This is the basic principle that should be used in teaching. Then of course the teacher chooses the methods to his or her experience or possibilities and then the children take it or they don't.*

*E: Alright, so it sounds like you're aware that the material is quite progressive and maybe pushing some teachers who haven't quite realized that it is important to involve the students, so it's a deliberate choice to make the material like that?*

*R: Yes, we tried to make it more interactive, but I think that if a teacher takes it then they can really use it in a flexible way and choose their way of using it. – Interview #08*

The further implications of this aspect could have pivotal consequences for the approach to MIL teaching, and will be discussed further in this chapter. Judging by the theoretical framework of cultural dimensions alone one would expect poorer results from employing the described methods in Lithuania than in Sweden as the methods reflect Swedish cultural values and not Lithuanian ones. On the other hand, the results in Lithuania may be more positive than expected because so little has already been done. In other words there is comparatively much left to be gained in the Lithuanian context. Purely measuring results without accounting for the national MIL readiness level will of course obscure the view of the actual effectiveness of whatever methods are utilized, but interestingly this is not the only argument against adapting the MIL teaching material to the Lithuanian teaching environment.

### **Teaching situation**

One very interesting pattern that emerged from the analysis of the MIL teaching material is the suggestion that certain teaching methods may have an intrinsic relation to the effectiveness of MIL teaching. The point being made is that MIL teaching effectiveness is dependent on alignment of the teaching methods and the content of MIL education, rather than alignment of the teaching methods with the national cultural values. This suggestion has been the basis for the development of a new set of

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codes aimed at assessing these relationships (See appendix 3). Indeed the suggestion that a student-centered, inclusive, participation oriented teaching style is almost unanimously implied to have a crucial positive impact on the effectiveness of MIL education. Out of all the data, a single statement suggested that the teaching methods might not bear any relation to the effectiveness of MIL teaching, while a staggering 13 references were made to this type of teaching methods being a pivotal element. There is hardly any difference between the references to this influence from the two groups of informants. Not only do they both appear to agree on this, but the number of references to this matter is almost identical in either group - six and seven respectively.

The second part of this new layer of code concerns the presence of the teaching style described above, in the educational environment of Lithuanian formal education. Here the sentiments are clearly divided among the two groups. Among the group of experts without involvement in the project the tendency was clear: With the exception of a single statement the view was that such teaching style is not sufficiently present in the formal education system of Lithuania. Among the project affiliates, however, the picture was significantly different. Statements that suggested the presence or absence of the described teaching style were divided almost equally with a slight majority in favor of the suggestion that it is sufficiently represented in the Lithuanian formal education.

This division of opinion along the barrier of project involvement may be caused by the reflection of personal interests as described above. Those involved in the project are likely to desire positive results of the project and this might affect their judgement of the teaching situation. Similarly the unaffiliated experts have nothing to lose by criticizing the MIL situation. On the contrary, the worse the situation is the more important their work will be. Several members of the expert group have experience in the formal education system of Lithuania, so the difference in sentiments should not have arisen from their ignorance of the actual state of affairs. Regardless of the accuracy of this last measure, the emerging tendencies are abundantly clear. The student-focused, inclusive, participation oriented teaching style is (1) of crucial importance to effective MIL education and (2) not sufficiently present in the formal education system of Lithuania.

## The inertia of culture

In accordance with Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory, culture is a phenomenon that is not subject to rapid changes. Culture is described, and this is supported by repeated research over time, as a highly inert phenomenon. If national cultures change at all, they take a very long time to do so. One should not expect to see significant development over the course of a single generation. In fact, in some cases the basis for certain cultural features is suggested to be thousand-year-old phenomena. Hofstede suggests that the different scores on the *power distance* dimension for European countries might be explained by whether they were a part of the Roman Empire or not (Hofstede et al.: 2010).

This is in stark contrast to the assumptions that were made by the informants. Generally the described trend is that the new generation of teachers brings a different teaching style with it. This is the style described above, which generally reflects Swedish national cultural values, and much less so Lithuanian cultural values.

*There are now teachers that study and graduate this year, maybe they are more innovative with their methods and more creative in the way they teach students, but the older teachers, maybe 60 plus, they are more 'old-school', using methods where they just stand up and say the material they have and I don't think there is such a problem with young teachers who are more innovative and interactive and so on. – Interview #06*

Furthermore the tendency displayed by the majority is to expect great changes in the foreseeable future.

*... It's just one example of things that are happening in Lithuanian schools that are very problematic, but eventually, will the situation change? Yeah, I suspect so. – Interview #02*

*People start to evaluate media in a more critical way. Maybe not trust it, but to check what they are saying and not to trust headlines. – Interview #06*

After having established the relationship between the content of MIL education and the methods used for teaching it, it is reasonable to induce that in expecting a positive development in the future of MIL



education in Lithuania lies an implication of expecting that a cultural development towards the use of more indulgent and less uncertainty avoidant teaching methods will occur.

Moreover the fact that, as discussed above, a significant amount of the informants involved in the project claim that this development is already occurring in Lithuania, may be a reason to revise the theoretical framework of national cultures as described by Hofstede. On the other hand Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions has been confirmed by several subsequent replication studies (Hoppe: 1990, Merritt: 2000, Mouritzen: 2002 etc.), so it is quite likely to be correct. The perceptions described by the informants may just as well be wrong. In the end it is necessary to make a choice for the future approach to the topic. If Hofstede's theory is accepted to be true, then it is foolish to anticipate any considerable change in the Lithuanian teaching environment. If the suggested relationship between teaching method and the content of MIL education is held to be true, then a logical approach would be to try to educate the Lithuanian population in an environment where the reliance on authorities plays a less important role. This could for instance be through the use of online platforms where users are able to create, share and critically assess information in a non-hierarchical network. EU Kids Online's *Country Classification* puts all the Scandinavian countries (along with The Netherlands) in the same category in regards to use of digital media and online risk exposure, in spite of the fact that these countries have widely different approaches to MIL in their respective formal education systems (Helsper: 2013). This suggests that MIL skills could be developed in a non-school environment.

Another possibility would be to continue the development of a MIL education project based in the promotion of more indulgent and less uncertainty avoidant teaching methods, but such an approach would be wholly outside the scope of this research.

The last alternative is to defy the results of the data presented here and insist on aligning MIL teaching material with the cultural values of Lithuania. This approach would appear most regressive and presumably unfavorable as most of the informants have described the teaching style representative of Swedish cultural values as *modern* and *a goal for Lithuania to aspire to* (Interview #04, Interview #08).

## Risks

Due to the scope and approach of this research there are some inherent risk factors that should be taken into account when evaluating the implications of its findings.

Selection bias has almost certainly influenced the data gathered in this research as well as the results of the project that is the subject of this research. In order to get a more objective representation of the MIL situation in Lithuania it would be necessary to conduct a survey of randomly picked schools. Similarly the insights from the expert interview data would be more universally representative if the experts had not been selected specifically for their engagement with MIL education.

Confirmation bias may occur when a subject already holds a conviction. Subjects are likely to pay more attention to information or events that confirm their already held beliefs. As mentioned this may have influenced the views portrayed in relation to the question of the current teaching style in Lithuanian formal education.

Due to the qualitative nature of the data gathering method employed in this research there is an inherent risk of encountering an availability cascade. Once the subject is asked to talk about a certain topic, this may invoke memories of similar experiences and cause the subject to suggest an overrepresentation of such events. This effect was attempted counteracted by the use of objective phrasings are descriptions.

## Opportunities for continuation

On the basis of the findings within this research there are several ways in which the further work with transnational MIL education could be continued. First and foremost the suggestion to develop MIL education opportunities outside of the formal education environment ought to be explored. This would be the logical advance based on the findings of this research as central conflicts between effective MIL education, Lithuanian cultural values and the cultural features of the teaching environment have been identified. From the point of view of the herein employed theoretical framework, the continued deployment of methods which are inconsistent with the national cultural values in the hope that these will soon change and conform to those of the teaching material, is unlikely to yield satisfactory results.

This research has provided a series of useful insights for the further development of a national MIL education program. At this point a quantitative study on a national level into the MIL skills and the effect of MIL education would be highly desirable as this in combination with the present findings would provide useful knowledge of exactly what the challenges of MIL education in Lithuania are and how these can be most effectively overcome.

## Conclusion

The production of this thesis has been a long process of continuous learning. Along the way several interesting insights have emerged – Some that answered questions posed from the start, some that answered hitherto unconceived questions, and some that raised new questions for further investigation in this as well as related fields.

From the literature review it has become apparent that there are indeed significant cultural differences between Lithuania and Sweden, and that these differences in culture can be expected to have a considerable influence on the respective teaching environments. The cultural dimensions in which Sweden and Lithuania differ most significantly and which also influence the teaching environment are uncertainty avoidance and indulgence. There is also a significant difference in the respective scores along the long-term orientation dimension, but this dimension does not appear to have as direct an impact on the teaching environment in this case. The differences found to relate to this dimension are to do with attribution of success to effort or circumstances. This does not appear to be an influential aspect in the design of teaching material. The impact of this dimension has not been ignored throughout the study, but if present, it has avoided detection. The literature suggests that in a culture like the Swedish there is a preference of inclusive, student-centered teaching that relies more on student participation and contribution. The cultural features of Lithuania imply a preference for more teacher-centered teaching in which the role of the students is to more passively absorb the knowledge that the teacher provides. In the Swedish school system there should be a higher level of acceptance in situations where the teacher does not know the answer to a question and a preference for open-ended questions and more vaguely defined tasks. In Lithuania this should not be expected to function as well. Here the cultural values favor more clearly defined tasks and objectives and there is a general expectation that the teacher must have all the answers.

On the basis of the cultural values described above it is clear that a fair amount of adaptation will be necessary in order for teaching material developed in Sweden to yield comparable results when implemented in Lithuania. This suggestion is supported by findings from the analysis of the Swedish MIL teaching material. From it several examples have been given of tasks, objectives and pedagogical approaches that clearly reflect the cultural values of Sweden and conflicts with those of Lithuania.

Several important answers to the research questions posed in the introduction have been answered in the results section without them needing a thorough analysis to pry the value from them. One such answer relates to the goals of the project. Several respondents who have been involved in the project have relayed their views about this, but there are no clear, tangible goals set for the project. The goals are defined in general phrases about promoting MIL and improving the knowledge and understanding of the topic, but there are no measurable goals for the project.

The evaluation of the project's effect is meant to be measured through the use of a set of surveys distributed among the participating school staff and pupils before and after the project. The difference in results will show the immediate effect of the project. The survey is based on the UNESCO *Media and Information Literacy Assessment Framework*. Unfortunately in combination with the lack of measurable goals mentioned above, the project's success cannot really be determined by the survey results. Certainly any measure of positive results can then be called a success, but this does not provide a reliable basis for estimating the results of a similar project on a national level. Additionally the participating schools in the project do not provide a representative sample of the national MIL level as they have been selected on the basis of their previous experience and engagement with MIL.

When comparing the MIL teaching material adapted for the Lithuanian context with the original material, it is clear that a certain measure of adaptation has occurred. At no point has it been indicated that the adaptations were made in accordance with a theoretical framework similar to the one used in this research. The analysis shows that several examples of elements that are consistent with Lithuanian cultural values occur in the adapted material. Such elements are not nearly as present in the original material. However, the adapted MIL teaching material still shows a heavy focus on methods and elements that rely on values inconsistent with the national culture of Lithuania. This design has subsequently been confirmed by the project coordinator who has clarified that this is a deliberate

choice. Regardless of the purpose the adapted MIL teaching material is inconsistent with Lithuanian cultural values according to Hofstede's cultural dimensions.

The conducted series of expert interviews have resulted in a few minor revelations. The assumption based on the theoretical framework used in this research is that culture is a very inert phenomenon and should generally not be expected to change radically within a matter of years or even decades. This assumption has consistently been contradicted by interviewees, involved in the project or not, who expect for the Lithuanian teaching style to become more similar to that of Sweden within a foreseeable future. Adding to this expectation there is wide agreement that the successful teaching of MIL relies heavily on the use of teaching methods that are similar to those used in Sweden. The suggestion here is that central learning outcomes of MIL education are related to the areas of access and retrieval of information, understanding and evaluation of information, and creation and utilization of information, and that a prerequisite for teaching these skills is to apply them in the teaching environment. In a traditional Lithuanian teaching environment the pupils will mainly be informed about the skills related to MIL, but they will not learn to use and improve them. In the traditional Swedish teaching style the use of these skills plays a much more central role in the success of the education. Interestingly the opinions of the informants are clearly divided on the question of whether this Swedish teaching style is sufficiently present in the Lithuanian formal education system. The experts with no affiliation to the project strongly indicate that it is not the case while those who are involved in the project give a less coherent picture of the current situation.

All in all it is clear that there is room for improvement and that, according to the interviewees, this improvement should come in the form of a less uncertainty avoiding and more indulgent teaching style. The relationship between successful MIL teaching and uncertainty accepting, indulgent teaching methods has made a valid case for itself in this research, and is undoubtedly deserving of much further research into the depths of this relation, the implications and the possibilities and limitations that this implies. Rather than contradicting the prescriptions of the cultural dimensions model used in this research it would be highly recommended to seek out alternative platforms for the dissemination of MIL knowledge and skills. As the teacher-student relationship in Lithuania is not, as in many other cultures, a result of a high power distance, one might expect that this yield to authorities is not necessarily a global condition of the culture. Hence the recommendation for further development will be to seek

environments where the population feels more empowered and able to participate on equal terms. Online communication platforms could potentially provide such an environment. Social media allow for users to create and distribute their own information and this in turns requires the critical assessment of the received information in such an environment. An example of this type of platform is the application *siulykantraste.lt* through which users can suggest alternative headlines for news articles. From the point of view of this research the formal education system does not provide the optimal environment for learning MIL skills. Confining MIL to an extracurricular activity, it has been suggested by interviewees, could result in a widening gap between the media and information literate population and the rest, but such considerations go beyond the scope of this research.

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## Appendix

### 1. Teaching material

The analysis of the original and adapted teaching material is based on corresponding sample chapters from each material. Three chapters have been chosen from the adapted material and three corresponding chapters of the original material have been chosen for comparison.

All adapted material has been retrieved from <https://sodas.ugdome.lt/metodine-medziaga> on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

#### **Lithuanian article #1:**

Medijų ir informacinis raštingumas. 13 tema: MEDIJOS IR STEREOTIPAI

#### **Lithuanian article #2:**

Medijų ir informacinis raštingumas. 15 tema: MEDIJU VAIDMUO VISUOMENEJE

#### **Lithuanian article #3:**

Medijų ir informacinis raštingumas. 19 tema: NAUJOSIOS MEDIJOS IR SOCIALINIAI RYŠIAI

All the original material has been retrieved from <http://statensmedierad.se/larommedier.365.html> , formerly <https://mik.statensmedierad.se/finna-analysera-kritiskt-vardera-information>.

#### **Swedish article #1:**

Kvinnor är hårda och män är mjuka – eller?

Retrieved from <http://www.mediekompass.se/lektionstips/kvinnor-ar-harda-och-man-ar-mjuka-eller/> on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

#### **Swedish article #2:**

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Hur vet man att det är sant? Se till att kolla källan!

Retrieved from <http://www.mediekompass.se/lektionstips/hur-vet-man-att-det-ar-sant-se-till-att-kolla-kallan/> on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

### Swedish article #3:

”Facebookare” mindre lyckliga än andra – eller?

Retrieved from <http://www.mediekompass.se/lektionstips/facebookare-mindre-lyckliga-an-andra-eller/> on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015.

## 2. Interviews

### Interview #01 Project affiliated expert Šarunas Radvilavičius

E= Emil, S= Sarunas

E: For the record I'm gonna ask some establishing questions: What is your name?

S: Sarunas Radvilavicius

E: and your position in the Nordic council?

S: Deputy Director of the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office in Lithuania

E: Alright, and what is your relation to the initial Media literacy project?

S: Rather limited. I was not directly involved in the planning or implementation, I got acquainted with the project when we started to plan the new project on MIL among ethnic minorities. But of course I knew about it and I was involved at some stage, discussing the possible activities and that kind of stuff.

E: and you are more involved in the second project?

S: Yes.

E: Okay. What was the reason for the implementation of the project? Why was it decided that it was a good idea?

S: Now we're talking about the first project?

E: yes

S: The whole topic was relatively new. We have played with the idea of MIL exactly because it was so new in Lithuania and we had heard in different conferences that... I remember when I heard for the first time that in Finland MIL is part of the curriculum in schools, I was really surprised and shocked. I thought it was great. Already at that point I thought that we should increase awareness about this issue in Lithuania because back then it still was a very much unknown topic. Another reason was of course the worrying situation with the very high level of trust in the media according to polls and surveys, while at the same time the media content and quality, in my own assessment, is rather low in Lithuania. I thought this is a very worrying tendency – the mismatch between the tendency and the results.

E: Okay. Why were the Finnish and Swedish teaching models chosen?

S: I don't know. I did not participate in this process.

E: Okay. That's fair enough. I suppose you have experience with using models from Scandinavian countries as example in Lithuania, not specifically for MIL, but generally for implementing projects that are modelled on Scandinavian examples. Do you anticipate any kind of issues when implementing this kind of Scandinavian projects in Lithuania?

S: General issues that are not related to the topic? Yeah of course. If we are talking about the 5 countries and 3 autonomous regions, then it is not very often that we are using Iceland unless we know that Iceland is really good at the specific topic. That is of course mainly a geography- and cost related issue. In the same way it is extremely seldom we have anything to do with Greenland. Faroe Islands a little more, but basically very little, and that's again

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a cost issue because our activities are very often connected to bringing people from or taking people to the country. And then in Lithuania we don't have these kinds of communities. We don't have sparsely populated areas far away, so experiences of countries or territories like Greenland or Iceland is a bit farfetched. Taking the Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and Finnish examples, it is all about who is best in a certain area so then of course it depends on the topic. Of course if it is about agriculture then Denmark will be more interesting. If it is about oil industry then naturally it would be Norway.

E: How was the model adapted from the Swedish model?

S: I don't know.

E: Okay. Do you know about the results of the projects and how they are supposed to be assessed? How you will know if the project is successful?

S: In the case of the first project I know there was a survey among teachers and, I think, also students in the beginning of the project and then the idea is that some kind of survey will be done at the end of the project so in this way you will be able to see the trend. That is actually a good point. We still haven't discussed how we will assess this change in our new project. This is definitely a good question.

E: I don't think I need to get in to technical things like what the assessment is based on and such, I know UNESCO has an assessment model, but I guess...

S: We don't have an assessment tool at the NCM.

E: No. Maybe it is too early to talk about, but are there any adaptations or any lessons learned from the first project onto the second?

S: Well there were certain things that we learned, but that was mainly about the fact that when you ask people about the issues of MIL and usually when you come into the discourse of propaganda and political issues then very early on from the original project we got some warnings that we should be careful when talking about these issues with minorities. That was the first signal that we received from them: This is a difficult topic to talk about with these schools. That was their experience, so yes, we already brought something from the old project into the new one.

E: Okay. What is in your opinion the need for media literacy in Lithuania?

S: I think there is a huge need to make this topic a mainstream topic. I think ideally we should have it included as an obligatory part of the curriculum. Maybe not on its own, but as a part of other classes, but I think the Lithuanian population is still very bad at recognizing the manipulations in media. Since Lithuania is a target of very different types of manipulation, both political, economic, commercial, ideological, whatever, I think this is one of the basic skills, especially having in mind that Lithuanian population still trusts media in such a high degree. Of course this has been diminishing, but still... I don't have numbers of trust in media in the Nordic countries, maybe it is even higher, but the difference in quality is also quite essential.

E: What do you see as challenges to teaching MIL in Lithuania?

S: When we talk about propaganda there is a certain controversy in that people take sides, so for example if we're talking about the Russian speaking population where quite many of them would take a pro-Russian side in a geopolitical conflict, so they would maybe look at the whole issue of MIL as something ideological and simply reject to believe that this is something useful because it belongs to "the other side". That is a challenge. Another challenge is connected to the general perception of such issues as transparency and corruption. I think there is a higher level of acceptance of these things and that's why people might not see this as a very big crime – certain things that are done in the media – They would think that this is a part of the game and just something you have to accept. In the Nordic countries I think the level of acceptance is different. This is definitely a challenge. Then a challenge is of course that we have a rather limited media landscape. The media, especially printed media, but also in general, is in the hands of a few big commercial entities who own them, so the competition is not that big. And then of course these commercial entities are not very interested in consumers who would be more intelligent, and at the same time we have quite a diverse internet media landscape. That is maybe an interesting challenge in a more positive way. There are probably a lot of things that could be done, especially since printed media is losing its importance. TV is still a part of it, but it is becoming a generation issue, so it definitely is and will be such that internet is the major issue here. That, of course, both gives interesting possibilities, but it is also extremely

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challenging as it has a different character as a media compared to traditional media. This, I think, certainly needs a lot of changes in the approach to MIL. It is no longer about newspapers as it was maybe 5-10 years ago.

E: A big part of MIL is about evaluating the validity of the sources of information, being critical about the authority of the sources of your information. Do you think that could be controversial in Lithuanian class rooms - To teach children not to trust the sources of their information or to be more critical?

S: I don't see any problem with that. You mean in a more general sense that you should trust the authority?

E: I'm thinking about the teacher – student relationship. Do you think it could have an impact on that or that this might somehow hold people back?

S: From my personal point of view, I would like to challenge this view as much as possible. And that goes for any authority, whether it would be a media outlet or your country, your government or even your parents. That is maybe more my libertarian nature, but I don't see any problem in that. I think it develops very important skills in a young person. For example in this issue of propaganda and anti-propaganda I would very much like for our students to recognize not only the propaganda coming from other states, but also propaganda coming from your own state. This is equally important. And this is not very much underlined in the policies of anti-propaganda.

E: What factors do you think influence MIL and critical thinking?

S: In general? I think one factor which we already mentioned is the ability to challenge authority. You can call it by different names like democratic tradition or pluralistic tradition how ready or encouraged to do that, the society is in general. That is of course where we see big difference between the Nordic countries and Lithuania. This tradition in Lithuania is very young. I think it's important to remember that only 25 years ago you would be punished for expressing your opinions, not only discouraged, but you would be punished harshly. This has been a part of Lithuanian history for the past 1000 years basically, so it is not that simple not to expect that people just open their minds and criticize everything and everyone. So this kind of cultural background is a factor. Then of course in Lithuania there is clearly also a geopolitical factor. That is where we see the differences between the Nordic countries and Lithuania are quite big, because of course the Nordic countries also have certain processes going on, but they are not that dominant, while in Lithuania we are much more exposed to the influences coming from other states and that is maybe also the price to pay for being able to read and speak in different languages. That is how the Russian media comes in to the picture. In fact also Polish media, so that is a challenge. And then I think there is the challenge of being a small country and a small market which is limiting our choice of media and sources. If we would join the English speaking market to a much higher degree then it would be different, but that is unfortunately not happening as rapidly as I could expect.

E: What do you think is the future of MIL in Lithuania and internationally?

S: It is definitely a topic which I think will stay very high on the agenda because it seems that our lives are being more and more affected by media and especially by the internet. All our ways of thinking, our actions, our social relations they are depending on this more and more. That means that we have to be more and more careful about how we use media. At the same time it is becoming more and more complex, so you have to look for new and very sophisticated ways of how to tackle the problem since our media consumption is changing so dramatically. I think this is a big challenge for MIL as such, how to adapt to this situation – how to change from the more easily understood kind of media like the newspapers into this huge world of multi-layered internet. I think this is a huge challenge internationally. I'm sure this is the same problem all over the world.

### **Interview #02 Expert Romas Sakadolskis**

E=Emil, R=Romas

E: What is, in your opinion, the national need for MIL in Lithuania?

R: Lithuania, like all the other countries as well – every modern democracy, should have a literate society. Societies differ. In the case of Eastern Europe in general and Lithuania specifically there was always a dearth of sophistication in terms of mass media. Lithuania, during its independence, for most of the time had military censorship. The development of independent media was always an issue. After 50 years of soviet occupation the new media that was born in Lithuania, after independence was restored, was again based on Soviet models or some romantic notion of pre-war models, but there is no tradition of free media in Lithuania, so the past 25 years

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have been kind of an experiment. What happens when you don't have a long tradition of independent media, you don't have independent media users either. There is no way that you can have one without the other, so Lithuania does not enjoy a very literate society as far as news and media in general is concerned, and the geopolitical situation is such that it can be, and I think is, easily manipulated, by Russia and perhaps some other neighbors as well or for that matter not even neighbors. The point is society is not that sophisticated as far as media usage is concerned. Technically kids know how to use mobile phones etc., but that's technical literacy. There is some confusion as to Media literacy versus technical literacy in the media, so technically you have a generation that is growing up just like the rest of Europe – technically literate, but the specific problems in Eastern Europe and Lithuania in particular involve the ability to discern what is useful, what can be trusted, what outlets or information that is available on social media or other platforms, how that can and should be used, and in that respect Lithuania is pretty weak so the need is pretty obvious.

E: Do you think there are gonna be specific challenges in terms of using Scandinavian experiences to model our media literacy teaching on?

R: I don't know. I am not all that familiar with Scandinavian models. I know the Scandinavian model for media, the consensus building, the sort of thinking which is more adversarial than the Anglo-Saxon models etc. I know of those things, but I don't know... Usually MIL reflects the society in which it is. If that is the case then Scandinavian society is very different than Lithuanian society, and the application of Scandinavian tools to a Lithuanian environment, well I can only try and guess, but I'm really not an expert.

E: Alright. What are the factors, in your opinion, that influence MIL and critical thinking?

R: That's a very tall question. Well, first of all these are skills that can be taught, and they are not. So, if you're talking about critical thinking that should begin in preschool, in kindergarten and all through grade school and high school, and that is really not where Lithuanian education is at. There are some individual teachers who do a fine job with critical thinking skills etc., but that would be one factor; one problem certainly. Another one would be the kind of habits we have. People read less than one would expect of a sophisticated society, and rely more on television. Reliance on television means that they get their information emotionally rather than cognitively. Study after study has shown that television news for example is the worst way to deliver news because you don't remember. You remember the feelings, you remember what the person looked like, but you remember less of the information that was provided. So people watch a lot of television while they should be reading, and they're not. This lack of cultural reading, I think, is probably a factor in this overreliance on television. In the United States more people get their news through television than any other way. One of the problems in Lithuania is of course that the periodical press, well now everything is changing because of the internet, but for a long time and still now the newspapers are awfully expensive so you have to invest a lot. Another problem is that if you look at the library system in Lithuania you will find very few libraries that engage citizens in terms of critical reading skills or civics. In Lithuanian education in general Civics is rarely taught and when it is, often it is a kind of primitive patriotism or nationalism which is not a substitute for citizenship. In many other countries you will find that civics is a very important part of the curriculum. If you look at England and the United States, Germany I'm sure is like that as well. In Lithuania there is this problem, and critical thinking and civics often go hand in hand simply because critical thinking skills are necessary for someone to be a successful citizen in a society, so there is this whole approach that civics, media literacy, critical thinking all tie together because a person has to function in a modern society. This approach does not exist in Lithuania at least not that I am aware of. It exists in some schools depending on the teachers involved etc. but there is no systemic approach in Lithuanian education. Those are some of the factors that affect the rather poor critical thinking skills and lack of media literacy in Lithuania.

E: Critical thinking is very much about challenging authority, so thinking about that do you think that influences the teachers' reluctance to instruct their students to be more critical?

R: I'm not sure it's the case that you challenge authority, what you're doing is you're checking it which is not quite the same thing. Challenging authority is a bit different because it presupposes certain things whereas checking presupposes other things. So, I would change it to checking authority, but is there a mindset in the case of Lithuania? In most of post-Soviet states I suspect there is, so yeah that would certainly be a contributory factor. There is also the question of the way education is organized and what the expectations are. Critical thinking

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assumes certain cognitive skills and a certain freedom to be able to evaluate independent thinking with critical reading, critical thinking skills etc. In the case of Lithuania and many other countries especially in the post-Soviet, but also in the west as well, there is an economism, an ism involved. In other words children are being prepared to become good workers. This is evident in institutions of higher learning as well. People who are attending college and university, instead of exploring things they want to know what the job is “where am I gonna end up working?” It’s all about the job, and this sort of thinking goes against critical thinking skills. You don’t need a lot of critical thinking skills in order to be a good cog in the wheel. In fact you probably don’t want too many critical thinking skills because you want someone who does a good job in the specific area and that’s it. This sort of approach to education is a real problem and it changes the dynamic. That has to do with how society is organized here. Success is seen as - and people work toward securing a job and the financial. It’s this sort of thinking as opposed to exploring and looking at your options. The way society is organized in Lithuania and other places in Eastern Europe, there is this appeal to that sort of thinking. Usually in societies the educational model reflects the society rather than the educational model changing society. Of course the challenge is for the educational model to change society and that’s very difficult to do. So, in Lithuania if you have a society that’s under this economism, this kind of libertarian approach, then you shouldn’t be surprised that you also have an education system that reflects this.

E: What do you think is the future of MIL in Lithuania and globally?

R: Well, there’s no other place to go but up as far as Lithuania is concerned, because there is very little being done here - Just scratching. I have lived here more than ten years, and when I came to Lithuania ten years ago I was asked to be a member of a committee that was looking into media literacy in the schools and we put together a program and goals. We worked a whole year on it and then it disappeared among 1002 things that other committees had done. No one was really serious about it. Now people are a little more serious because you’ve got a new generation of teachers and you’ve got this realization of the disconnection between the school and what’s happening in the kids’ lives which is more evident today than ever before. You really cannot ignore social media if you wanna be a successful school. You can’t do that anymore. Whether you like it or not people are forced to take another look around them. More and more teachers, and young teachers, become more exposed to the west, they learn about something called media literacy and critical thinking and these things, and so they bring a lot of these things back, so they are a little more serious in Lithuania than they were ten years ago. Back then it was practically a joke, I think. Today it is probably not a joke anymore, but there is still not a systemic approach. That’s the next step. Will Lithuania adopt... It can’t adopt a model from another country because the society is different. It can use things from another country. You don’t have to reinvent the bicycle, but you must adapt the bicycle to whatever rocky road you’re on because otherwise your bicycle will break. You have to make some adaptation, but that’s where I would be looking as far as Lithuania is concerned. In Europe in general a lot of these things are Bureaucratized unfortunately. The more bureaucracy you have the less critical thinking you have, I think. So, I’m not sure where Europe is going in general as far as media literacy is concerned. A lot of people want to put little check marks and they are doing it, and very successfully, and they are taking a lot of money to do that and everybody is happy, it’s win-win, but is there an improvement in media literacy? I’m not sure there is. Globally it’s a little bit different. If you look at Asia you will find that there are different traditions and different ideas of what critical thinking is etc. I’m not a sociologist, so I wouldn’t be able to say anything as far as globally is concerned. If by globally we mean western democracies, then yeah, there are some advances. If you look at the United States and in particular Canada, the UK and some other countries in western Europe, you will see that kids are now engaged in making media, in making editorial decisions regarding media, they take a look at form and content and that is the basis for critical thinking skills because they have to make decisions. Making things really changes the dynamics. There are very few kids making things here. They may be doing it on their own, but the school environment doesn’t really participate in that as far as I know. In Western Europe and certainly across the pond you will see a lot more of this. This is kind of an engagement of kinds from 1st grade through 12th and beyond. I think it changes and kids are much more savvy. As far as media is concerned in those countries. Here there is probably less movement than a lot of people wish there was. Maybe a lot of people think we’re doing these things, and yeah you are, but we’re doing it so slowly that I’m not all that optimistic about Lithuania in the near term. Eventually somebody will come up with some kind of a systemic approach in Lithuania that we have to improve

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critical thinking or whatever you call it, and then perhaps there will be something, but at this point you still have kids that are learning rote things, which is ridiculous when you think about it. They're still learning dates, they are learning the old fashioned way. They still have no memorize names, they still don't know how to search for things. I'm not talking about googling something, but a little more than that. But they still lack a lot of the skills and they do so because the teachers lack a lot of the skills. So you have cut/paste happening all over high schools and some teachers encourage it because it looks good, but then you go to college and the kid can be thrown out of school for cut/paste even though it's the same thing he did while in high school. It's just one example of things that are happening in Lithuanian schools that are very problematic, but eventually, will the situation change? Yeah, I suspect so. I suspect that kicking and screaming, Lithuania will be dragged into the 21st century.

### **Interview #03 Expert Virgis Valentinavicius**

E= Emil, V= Virgis

E: What do you think is the national need for MIL in Lithuania?

V: Well there is a quite serious national need for MIL in Lithuania because the older generation still remembers the soviet system which was 100% controlled and 100% propaganda. That would assume the majority of the population already has some sort of media literacy and does not believe what the media says, but the problem is that they don't. In soviet times quite many people were sincerely believing what newspapers were saying. Now it reproduces itself in new generations of much younger readers who have no knowledge of soviet realities, but they are caught in a manipulative media society and many without any kind of help or explanation. Many just tend to not get it entirely right, so you need some deconstruction and deciphering in a media and communication dense environment you need to give some basics in how modern communication in a modern society works. As I said we have some specific problems with Lithuanian media. In my view the major points in this respect are that there are some quite corrupted practices of selling space to businesses and politics, especially in old style printed media. A couple of Lithuanian printed media moguls created, 20 years ago, a culture of basically doing business with selling favorable news to businesses and politics, also in some other sectors of media including the internet. This culture of sell-out mentality is quite penetrating. On the other hand there are sectors of media which are clean in this respect. I think this difficulty with Lithuanian media is caused by ill designed relationships between owners and editors of newspapers. Basically Moguls created this unhealthy tradition of direct involvement in the editorial process because in many cases the owners are the same people as the editors-in-chief and they are pushing their business interests in the editorial room. Correspondingly, the third weak link is ethics which allow such things to happen. Since media ownership is not separated from news production, ownership similarly is involved with the self-regulation of media. We basically do not have media's own regulatory board. We have the owners' and journalists' ethics commission on which owners and journalists sit together to make decisions on media ethics. That means that decisions are simply not made critical discussion about the quality of media and media ethics in some sectors of Lithuanian media is simply suppressed by the media owners. Basically universities are the only places where some teachers discuss these issues of media ethics and media literacy in general.

E: But you say some teachers, so it is on an individual level? There is not a structured system for teaching this in university?

V: As I mentioned, in my courses I usually attempt to give some element of media literacy as I understand it, but it is basically my own initiative. When I entered university I found programs which are already functioning, but there are no special courses on MIL. Maybe later I will attempt to create my own program. Maybe one of the options is to create a media literacy course. That would be a very reasonable thing to do, but as far as I know, in other universities it is a quite similar picture. In my own university I have a colleague from Radio Liberty, Gintaras Aleknonis, a professor who teaches communication at university as well. He is pursuing similar goals of using his course to give some elements of media literacy to students. But it is more of a personal initiative or enterprise than an institutional one. But again, at least at our university I think I and Gintaras Aleknonis and other colleagues, we will think of more serious institutional steps in that direction.

E: What do you think are the challenges of teaching MIL in Lithuania?

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V: Challenges are lack of research, proper research, because when illegal trade of newspaper space is involved it is usually very difficult to prove. On one hand you could tell students “Look, here is an article which was obviously paid, because you see the guy is crystal clean, he is nice and only good things are told about him and so on”. But you could never prove that in court. The main difficulty is that usually you have a shortage of hard evidence. It’s very speculative and you do not have much help from institutions that control media. But that does not mean you couldn’t endeavor your own investigation. You could do text analysis; you could count words, positive and negative, and so on. A lot of work lies ahead. But for now the fact reservoir for such a course is quite limited. Let’s say it has just started because it is not institutional, because it relies on separate individuals.

E: Do you see the challenges of teaching MIL in relation to the students, teaching staff or more of an institutional problem?

V: I would say the major problem still is the state of Lithuanian media. Unfortunately media was one of the issues that was left to the national government in the process of access talks with the European Union. In all issues where the European Union was involved, they basically dictated all the changes that were necessary, for instance to reform the prisons or the court system, or the economy. Lithuania made much bigger progress. In places where it was left to the national government, usually the regulatory mechanisms were failing or failed to be created at all. So for the time being it does not work. And we are in a very vicious circle. Journalists on their own are unable to create sufficient regulatory instruments because they are too dependent on owners. After the 2008 crisis, unemployment among journalists is very high. The market is shrinking. Basically journalists were more active ten years ago, more proactive and had more ideas about how to improve the media situation. Now their initiative is disappointing. In some sectors, usually the separation line is between foreign-owned media and Lithuanian-owned media. Foreign owned media, usually Scandinavian, Swedes, Estonians, outlets like business news, Verslo Zinios, Baltic News Service and 15min. It they are clean and not involved in corrupted practices, but Lithuanian owned [news media] usually are keeping a tight grip on journalistic initiative and somehow there is no way out. Because on the other hand, when I was in government for example it was quite obvious that the government cannot do that for media, because it is not normal for a government to create self-regulatory bodies for the media. That would rightly be considered interference with the freedom of press, so basically that is not an option. So for the time being, except education I see not possibility to make progress in this respect.

E: In regards to the education, do you think it’s useful to use models that have been developed in western cultures such as Scandinavia, or do you think it should come out of Lithuania itself?

V: As I said, out of Lithuania itself is very difficult to imagine at present. And again, it is already happening in news outlets which are owned by Scandinavians. They are much better. It is simply more honest media. And when you talk with students about the media situation in Lithuania, you give examples of how it works in Sweden, Denmark, Germany or the United States. And you could show that one of the crucial rules is to separate ownership from the editorial process. So for the time being the Import of good practice from abroad is the only option we have.

E: Apart from the quality of journalism in Lithuania, what other factors do you think influence the ability to think critically here in Lithuania?

V: On the part of students I think this was a part of the previous question. There are some problems not only with media literacy, but generally with literacy. Generation Y or whatever it is now, they read less and they view more pictures. And that is a part of a natural process, but in this respect the very substance of media literacy changes. Earlier it was always related to some text and the critical perception of that. Now you need to have a broader picture which should still be considered critically. It is involving pictures, showing how this video culture could be manipulated by itself. I do remember when I was editor-in-chief of the news website alfa. It we were considering changing the design of the page, and one option was proposed by an Estonian programmer or web-designer. There were a lot of pictures and much less headlines and texts than in our website at the time. And look, pictures sell. Increase the visual side, make it stronger and the less text the better. So I’m telling students such examples of how it really evolves in modern media and what challenges journalists meet. They encounter such consumer culture, so you as editor-in-chief need to find the right balance between the amount of pictures and some meaningful use. Pictures or text, but still you are responsible for people receiving quality news in the form which is best for them to take the message in the right way.



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E: So this is about the shift from an information seeking population to a more entertainment seeking population? They want more immediate stimuli?

V: Surely, it takes place all over the world and also in Lithuania, and you should take into account that it is a sort of objective trend. That does not mean that objective quality news are not possible, but they need to be adapted to certain skills of your reader. I believe, after Jurgen Habermas, that there is a nucleus of best-quality-readers in any situation, be it mass society or 17th century English coffee house customers who were the brightest at that time. So the quality reader is here, but he also changes together with society. The best job a good journalist could do is to best serve this best-quality-reader.

E: What do you think is the future of MIL in Lithuania and Internationally?

V: The future, I think, is bright because the possibilities are wide open. It is an untried field. Few people are doing it now, but for instance Romas Sakadolskis is doing it and I trust he does it very efficiently. His students are growing, they are entering media and the process will go on. But still, I think the important thing is to make MIL sort of permanent as an official society agenda. This is important and you cannot be media illiterate in the same way as you cannot be illiterate in general. So far we do not have such a sure understanding of the importance of the phenomenon, but I hope we will advance to that stage in the course of two to five years.

#### **Interview #04 Expert Ruslanas Irzikevicius**

E=Emil, R=Ruslanas

E: What is, in your opinion, the national need for MIL in Lithuania?

R: It is a very very big need. We're talking about fighting propaganda, we're talking about understanding the world around us and the media is one of the most important parts of the democratic system. In order for democracy or the state to function, we need to understand what we see in the media, and in Lithuania it used to be, at least 20 years ago, maybe 15, maybe 10 years ago media had a very high profile. People trusted what they read on the paper – back when it was paper. Now the situation is changing, we have internet portals, we have a lot of people watching television or somehow obtaining video from the television, but still they have to understand the media and how to see it, because unfortunately you cannot trust everything that you read in papers. Not everything you see on television or hear on the radio can be trusted. But still in Lithuania it has quite a high profile. What you get and what you see in public, that means truth. What you read in a book that means truth. So of course we have to teach the people to understand how the media works, how to read it and how to understand it, because we are still very much behind. We've had 25 years of independence without any particular effort to educate our people, so we've basically lost a generation, an opportunity for a new generation to be media literate. Education should already have been concentrated on that a long time ago, but I suppose the common sense was that we have to trust media because media is pure and democratic and we don't have to pay much attention to the processes in media, but unfortunately with this information world that is coming into every Lithuanian home we start understanding that media is not only about informing, but it is also an instrument of manipulation. Only literate people... even though some media literate people could also be manipulated because the way manipulation works is always improving, so yes we are in danger of our minds being poisoned by various instruments in media. We already lost one generation, so we have a lot of things to catch up.

E: What do you think are the challenges of teaching media literacy in Lithuania?

R: Well, we have to start from zero basically. From what I understand we don't really have any program or curriculum in the education system, so we basically have to start from zero. We have to look at best practices around the world. Maybe we should look especially at Scandinavia, because it is one of the freest and most transparent media environments in the world so they have very good examples to learn from. We have to look not only at the media legislation, but also the education that is actually present in the schools – what materials, how they are using it and what they're using. I think we have to learn from the best examples and try to adapt, having in mind that we have a very big problem. So we have to adapt, look at the best examples and take them to Lithuania and start from scratch.

E: Alright, that was gonna be my next question. This idea of learning from other western countries such as the Scandinavian countries and the adaptation: do you think it's doable to use the models that are being used in

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Scandinavia considering that they have a different environment and so they may have different challenges to deal with?

R: Sure. We have a different environment and a different time scale. Democracy in Lithuania is only 25 years old, so this is still a very fresh environment and so far we have done extremely well having in mind that we were part of the Soviet Union, not the Warsaw pact like Poland and Czech Republic, we were actually behind the curtain. That very high, very strong curtain – thick curtain. So in comparison we've done extremely well. In some respects we should pay more attention and we should take the best bits and adopt to our system, but we can't take the whole thing and copy/paste to our system, because our system is on a different development level and we can't start teaching MIL from grade 10 to our 1st graders. I suppose the Scandinavian education system has been developing and has been investing into media literacy for a very long time and we have not done that, so we are on a completely different level. We should maybe ask our Scandinavian friends to help us to construct the best ways of teaching MIL at schools, see what they have done, when it started, how it started. Maybe it started 20 years ago, maybe 50 years ago, maybe already 100 years ago there was something done in that regard, so we have to go back because our society, just like all societies, needs media literacy to start from the top level of organizations and government, but also from the bottom. Those problems have to be different, but if we're talking about long-term, we should take the best and adapt to our circumstances because our circumstances and our mindset is quite different because we developed in a very different environment.

E: What do you think are the factors that influence the ability to think critically and to learn MIL?

R: That you can't trust everything you read. You have to look and understand that there are interests, political interests, media interests, who is the owner of the media, what affiliations there are. This also comes to Lithuanian media which claim that they represent all political parties so there is no clear political affiliation. This makes it more difficult to read the opinion pieces and stuff, so we have to start at almost the basics of journalism: what you're looking at in texts - Just two or three opinions on the issue, one in favor, one against – facts, positive, negative. We have to start teaching people from distinguishing texts that are written from propaganda or some political interest, purposes or objective journalism. We have to start teaching how to distinguish texts by putting propaganda texts such as political or business propaganda next to an objective text to compare, and start deconstructing – just these practical things about what you have to look at. Also in a program that you watch on TV or listen to on the radio we have to start from the basics. Deconstruct the text and show that it is not a good text or what is missing in the text in order to make it objective journalism, or this is a good text because it has all or almost all the necessary parts of objective journalist.

E: What do you think is the future of MIL in Lithuania and internationally?

R: If we have the political will to educate and prepare the population to survive in a democratic society where the media is free, but nothing is free. Obviously you have political interests and various manipulations. This is everywhere – Latvia, Estonia, Sweden, Denmark, you have those things everywhere. So we have to start realizing that this is very important and go back to basics, and this is a very bright future for the education direction. MIL has a very bright future in Lithuania because there are a lot of things to do. Basically it has to be started from scratch, and those organizations that are going to start shaping it and do it in a clever way, adapting to a difficult environment and mindset, they will do very very well. I think if organizations are going to come here and start lecturing and say "no, everything you do is wrong, you know nothing" that doesn't work. You have to adapt to the local environment, and if those organizations are going to do it right they have a very good possibility to set an agenda. I hope it is going to be some Nordic organizations that are going to be setting the agenda for the media or at least will play a big part for media education.

E: One of the things I find interesting is that a very essential part of MIL is being critical to the sources of your information, and when you try to develop a program of teaching MIL of course you try to teach the students that, but the teaching environment in Lithuania is very teacher-centered and there is very much trust in what the teacher says. So in a way you're kind of deconstructing the teaching environment in which you teach it. I think that could pose a problem for the adaptation.

R: Of course. A lot of things have to be changed because the authority of the newspaper – of the printed word – at least used to be very strong, very important. It was not the fourth estate, but maybe number two. It was one of

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the most important in Lithuania. It used to be very important and it's the same with teaching. In many cases we still haven't evolved into this different teaching style. And unfortunately this generational change didn't really happen that successfully, because the teachers are "gods" unfortunately. At lectures you come not to discuss the lecture, but you come to listen – Without discussion. Of course there has to be some structure to the lecture, but we don't teach that creative thinking and creative environment where through the questions you are going to find your answers – not only what the teacher tells you, but you have to find the answers with the teacher's help. That should be encouraged.

E: So maybe the adaptation should not only be about adapting the taught material to the national culture, but also adapting the national culture to be more ready?

R: Absolutely. This is part of the educational reform of which we have had so many done, many failed and many succeeded. I don't think this should be adapted, I think this should be changed! The curriculum or subject should be created in a different manner of asking questions – not only teaching, but also encourage participation in the information finding. If it is just going to be teachers teaching, saying "this is that, this is this, this is that" without any discussions in the classroom and without questions, that is not going to work. Maybe that could also be an opportunity to influence the practices that are now in Lithuania - Bad practices.

#### **Interview #05 with NCM staff member Brigita Urmanaitė**

B=Brigita, E=Emil

B: Some schools have tried to discuss and plan something for the future, others have just been waiting for instructions from the project manager and have not really done anything yet. This "MIK för mig" in Lithuanian and the Finnish material is still not available... Now the project is ending and these translations are somewhere, but they are not publically available for teachers at this point, so at this point the teachers do not have experience with it – they have not yet tasted it so to speak.

E: Okay, so maybe I should go and talk to the experts who have been involved in the project and the adaptation process instead of hoping to get actual information about experiences from the teaching staff.

B: You will get some information at the conference on Saturday [Mokykla be sienu, 2015].

E: It is around 60 schools all over Lithuania that have been involved in the project, right?

B: Yes.

E: Okay. I was also told by Sakadolskis that I should try to talk to Faustas Meskuotis, history teacher from the Jesuit high school here in Vilnius. He is teaching civics and he is quite involved in MIL on his own as I understand. I was trying to get a hold of him as well, but he has not responded yet.

B: Okay. Him and his new colleague Paulius Miezelis, he is vice director at the same school...

E: Is he the moderator at the conference this Saturday?

B: Yes. And he was our first contact at the initial state of development. He unfortunately left the education development center and started his new career as vice director of the Jesuit high school, but I think he might be good to contact.

E: Yeah. I'll try to get a hold of him. My only worry is that the more I talk to experts the more I get one angle on this issue: The experts all want more media literacy and they all want to be progressive, they all want to implement new teaching models. My hypothesis is that it is hard to implement new teaching models because they tend to contradict Lithuanian culture in a teaching environment where people would be more prone to have a more traditional and teacher-focused approach. That is really my focus area, so if I don't get to hear from the horse's mouth how it actually to try to implement these things then I'm afraid I get this very one-sided picture like "oh, we should do more and more and all these Swedish ideas and Finnish ideas are all great and we should just do it", but by concern is that it is not as easy to actually implement it because it's hard to adapt it to Lithuanian culture and still keep the quality of the teaching material.

B: Yes, it is a challenge. It is difficult because Lithuanian teachers are extremely over loaded. Very many are very reluctant towards any new thing and any new methodologies. They have a program which they have to go through, they have very limited time, they are underpaid, they are tired, they are over-worked and one can really feel that. Still in this whole mass you can find two, three, four, five schools that say "yes, we can do that. We can

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cooperate in teams, we can ask our school librarian to help us". Some react like it's nothing new "we have been doing this for ages, we just didn't call it MIL, but we have been talking about advertising and ethical behavior online and safety and things like that", so it's just putting a new name on the same topic. I fully agree with you that you have to talk to practitioners and maybe also to the school children who have experienced this.

E: I would like to do that, but I think it goes beyond my scope. Also there is the language barrier, so I think it would be difficult. Although, I guess the children involved are teenagers, right?

B: Yes, from 9<sup>th</sup> grade, so around 16-17 years old.

E: So they should be old enough that they could be expected to know English well enough, but anyway. What you said about teachers pointing out that they have been teaching MIL for a long time and only the term MIL is new. I see how you could perceive this as nothing new, but then again – if you teach the content of media literacy and say "you have to understand what is good and bad journalism, you have to understand what is ethical behavior and unethical behavior online", but you teach it in a traditional teaching manner where the teacher is giving you the information, right. As a student you're sitting still, you're listening, you're just absorbing information and you're not being critical, you're not being engaged, you're not producing anything, so all these things that are central to media literacy are completely absent in the teaching environment, but you're being taught that these things are crucial. It seems that there is a disconnect between the way MIL could be taught and the content of MIL, and I think that's one of the big challenges in teaching MIL in Lithuania – that the teaching environment is probably not ready for MIL.

B: It is so individual. It depends on the teacher and the school environment. There are quite many schools and quite many teachers that are ready to involve children in the process, to do interactive actions, to encourage them to make some school radio or produce a newsletter or things like that where they learn from doing and trying and making mistakes themselves. At least those who are involved in the project they tell that they work like this. They involve the children, it is not just teaching theory or lecturing.

E: Okay. How were the involved schools chosen for the project? Did they volunteer to participate?

B: Yes, they did.

E: Okay. So that may also give you a selection bias, that those schools that you were working with are schools that are particularly prone to this type of content?

B: Yeah, of course. It was an open call where a number of schools were selected.

E: I would really like to know about the goals of the project and the measuring of success. Do you know specific details of what goals were set for this MIL project and how it is meant to be evaluated whether these goals are being met?

B: The goal was to present MIL as an integrated aspect in formal education. The ministry of education and science even set a goal to have an education program for teachers as an obligatory program for gymnasium teachers. Our goal was to present Nordic experience in MIL education. There was a plan to produce a portal for MIL education. Now something is on the web, it is not quite what we expected it to be, but okay. That is to do with lack of funding and things like that. When it comes to measuring the effect the Education Development Center has made the first part of a survey. In the very beginning of the project the schools were interviewed with questions like "how do you understand MIL, how do you feel about it, what is the situation in schools now, do you have enough information/competences to teach and how do you evaluate the competencies of your school children? So the first part of this survey is done and is also available, and the next part will be done, in December, right before the project ends. Then we'll see the results, if we had any impact or not.

E: Do you know about the adaptation process of this teaching material? Do you know what it was based on?

B: Unfortunately not. I know that it has been translated, but I haven't seen the Lithuanian text.

E: The things that I've been working with are the Lithuanian material that you sent to me and the n finding the materials that have sourced *MIK Rummet* or *MIK för mig* and then I have juxtaposed those two things and tried to see how they compare, what is the same, what is different, what has been carried over, what has been omitted or changed. That's how I've gotten a picture of what adaptations might have been done, but I have not yet talked to anybody about it, so it's only what I have been able to analyze.

What was the reason behind the decision to use the Swedish and Finnish teaching materials rather than others?

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B: After searching and investigating what was available we found the Swedish Media Council's materials. It looked nice and interesting. Finland had their national guidelines for MIL education and we could see that this topic is taken seriously on a high level. I think that was the reason behind the choices. In Norway, as far as I know, MIL is taught a bit differently. It is a separate subject and not integrated into formal education as it is in Finland. When it comes to Danish experience we couldn't find anything that looked as attractive as the Swedish model. I know that in Denmark much focus is put on the work with public libraries. The library sector is very involved in MIL education, so that might be something for the eventual continuation of the project. It was basically our Office's choice to go with Finland and Sweden.

E: Did you know about the results of the teaching models in Sweden and Finland prior to choosing it? Do you know about its impact?

B: Just from talking to representatives: The Swedish Media Council and the Finnish professor Reijo Kupiainen, but I haven't seen any analysis or such.

E: We talked a bit about the challenges of getting the actual implementation done and that there have been a lot of challenges organization-wise because many things needed to be done and such. Is there anything else that has been particularly challenging in the process of doing the project?

B: National funding. That has not been very successful and as far as I understand the Education Development Center is doing a big part of the job free of charge just because they believe in the project. The Ministry of Education and Science promised to give funding, but then finally something happened, so they are not contributing to the extent that was expected. That has been a challenge.

E: So the realization of the need for MIL has not really reached the government level in the same way that it has come to the level of many of these schools where people actually want to participate.

B: They made it clear that they now understand and support the idea, but when it comes to channeling funds then I guess some better lobbying has to be done or one has to be more "into the system" [laughs]. There are probably hundreds of such brilliant projects running, so one has to know the steps and have the right contacts on the decision makers' level.

E: How about the move from the first to the second project, have you had to do any adaptation from the first project when you decided to do the second project? I know the target group is a bit different, but on a more general level, have you had to do anything differently in your approach to MIL when you started the second project?

B: How much do you know about the second one?

E: I have read the project description and purpose and such.

B: Well, the second project came from above. We got instructions to do something for minorities in the country and then we had discussions in the office about what it could be. There were some different ideas, but as we had this MIL project the decision was made to continue on the same path. Then we got in touch with the Eastern European Studies Center which had just started a very similar project for Russian schools. So the two ideas melted together and formed that new project, so basically the connection between the two is just the theme. Maybe some know-how will be transferred and the minority schools may of course use the methodology and materials as they are available for all schools and even for parents and libraries as well. It is an open source now.

E: So much of the approach comes from the EESC's own project? That makes sense. What do you think are the major challenges of teaching MIL in Lithuania?

B: First of all, teacher competencies. Even in the schools that were willing and joined the project, the reaction was that "we have to learn this, ourselves" so I think many teachers feel they still don't understand what it is. The concept is new and the teachers themselves are not that media and information literate. When they were asked if they knew it for the first time, they very often answered "yes, we know the topic, we have computer classes, we have had computer literacy training" and now they have started realizing that it is something totally different – That it is not about how to use Word or Excel. Things are improving, but I think the first challenge is the competences of the teachers. Another challenge is the overloaded programs, lack of motivation and maybe even the courage to try new methods of teaching and to distance themselves from the traditional way of teaching and

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presenting this issue. Support from the school administration – one can't do anything without having support from the school director.

E: The material for this MIL project is designed for teachers to teach school children. There has not been a project to teach teachers or in to teach in higher education?

B: This particular project is for teachers in service and the tools to help them to integrate the MIL aspect into their own subject.

E: so it is for them to deliver, not for them to be taught?

B: No. The Education Development Center has come with a suggestion to extend the project and focus on teacher training as the next step. We have been trying to involve universities, especially the teacher education sector, but they have not shown any interest so far. But it is still something to be done both at Vilnius University and the University of Education Sciences.

E: When I was in touch with the Swedish Media Council they told me that their materials were modelled on the UNESCO's MIL curriculum for teachers which is for teachers, not for students. When you read through that material it is very clear that the pedagogical techniques and approach is aimed at adults teaching other adults, and it seems to me that there would be quite a big difference between how adults approach other adults and adults approach children. So it seems to me that it takes even more adaptation when you have to change your target group from adults in teacher training to children in grade 9-12.

B: That's interesting. Interesting point. I have not been into this UNESCO curriculum. I know that it exists and Lithuania also has it as basis. The UNESCO commission here has also made some attempts – I think the curriculum has been distributed, maybe even translated, to schools, but I didn't know that the target audience is grown-ups and not school children. That makes the task even more difficult.

E: What do you think is the future of MIL in Lithuania?

B: I don't know. I just hope that our attempts and all the efforts that the Education Development Center has put into developing these things, that this won't be one of the projects that just end up piling. At least I hope that the concept of MIL will be more understandable and recognizable. Maybe teachers will use it more, but usually I'm not that optimistic when it comes to the long-term effect of these projects that are really very short in period. We need long-lasting programs to make an impact. We have had many different educational projects and programs and different angles and methodologies and well... as far as funding exists the ideas are alive, but when the funding stops then it dies out.

E: That is interesting because it supports the theoretical framework that I use which says that culture is quite static. It does not mean that culture never changes, but it says that culture is reluctant to change so to speak. It takes very long time for culture to change. You cannot just expect that with the next generation comes a complete reversal of culture. And personally I don't have an opinion on what's true and what's not, but many people I've talked to have been very optimistic in this hope of progress and they often describe Scandinavian teaching models or the critical thinking of the Scandinavian population as being more progressive and that they are further ahead and that Lithuania is aspiring towards that as if there is a clear development. The theoretical framework that I use suggests that this is because of different cultural values and that it is much more static than you might expect, so it is not so much about one culture being ahead of another and the other culture moving towards it, it is more just that there are different ways to approach information and different attitudes towards...

B: Attitudes yeah, and ways to react. Yes. And you have to keep in mind the average age of our teachers. I think it's around 55 so... we do hope that if a new generation of teachers comes, things might start changing quicker. But nobody wants to be a teacher in Lithuania because of the low salary.

#### **Interview #06 with Project expert Egidijus Jurgelionis**

S=Emil, J=Egidijus

S: First of all, will you just clarify what your role in the project was?

J: Yes. I was an expert in the project. That means that I had to suggest topics which I think are important for teachers and school children to know – about the media. I worked more with mass media, not really cinema, arts and so on. It was mainly news, journalism and public relations and advertising. I prepared the material from the

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beginning till the end and also made some consulting for other experts who were making this material, and then I gave a few lectures.

S: Do you know anything about why the Swedish teaching materials were chosen?

J: I don't know exactly why, but I think because of political and social aspects and so on. First of all, if you talk about the social model, Lithuania is more in the Scandinavian sphere of life so to speak. It is definitely not Spain or Germany or Italy. We just think more about Scandinavia, not only in MIL, but everywhere – Politics, public administration, so both socially and politically. Also from an aspect of economy, a big part of Lithuanian media, websites, TV and so on, is owned by companies from Scandinavia, so I guess the media have the values of Scandinavian cultures as well. So I think the Scandinavian model is chosen because of these things, but I'm not sure about this.

S: Do you know what the goals were for the project?

J: For me the goal was to make people understand that they should not trust media. That was the main goal for me to say it in an easy way. To make them understand how the media work and that sometimes it's not true what is written. Not only the comment section in Delfi and such can be lying, but manipulation is also in the actual content. Delfi is just one example. In all media there are things that can seem weird for experts, but that are not so clear for regular people.

S: Did you expect that there would be any issues with using these Scandinavian materials in Lithuania? Did you for instance expect that some aspects needed to be changed from the Swedish to the Lithuanian material?

J: Yeah, definitely. There is a different context because Scandinavian countries were independent for a long time and the tradition of teaching MIL for instance in Finland is 60 years old. That is quite old and there is a big development made, not only in the program, but in society itself. The Baltic States were in the other side of Europe 25 years ago. We had a different thing in the ownership of media. First of all it's like wild capitalism in the media. Values in the media are just very low, so you can't be teaching in the upper level, you have to go deep. With the owners there are some problems. As we see it the Scandinavian media are more ethical than the Lithuanian ones. That's why we have to do more work to make people understand who the media are and from where they get money. This basis has to be known first and then we can go deeper.

S: How about teaching approaches? Do you think there is a different way to teach in Lithuania than there is in Sweden?

J: I don't think there are different ways because globalization is in Lithuania as well as in Sweden. So the methods are quite similar to Scandinavia and how they were teaching MIL in their schools. The same methods are used in Lithuanian schools in other classes like math and so on. The method itself is not different, but the content is. The problem is the difference in media.

S: Okay, so when we talk about the adaptation of the teaching material it is also more an adaptation of the content than an adaptation of the methods.

J: Yes okay, I should agree with you. There is also the factor of the teacher. There are now teachers that study and graduate this year, maybe they are more innovative with their methods and more creative in the way they teach students, but the older teachers, maybe 60 plus, they are more 'old-school', using methods where they just stand up and say the material they have and I don't think there is such a problem with young teachers who are more innovative and interactive and so on.

S: Okay, so hopefully there could be a generational shift in the teachers. What is interesting for me is that the content of media literacy and critical thinking is very much about students being able to evaluate and assess the information they get and be more critical to the material. It seems to me that the old-school way of teaching where the teacher is just providing information and the students just absorb it, is a bit contradictory to the content of MIL, so in that sense it seems that it will be easier to teach MIL with the more modern teaching style.

J: Yes, definitely. You can give the material, but honestly I don't even see the point of just saying something to a person. You can just give a book where it is written and tell them to memorize it. That would be easier, because you don't need to understand anything. But there is a difference between memorizing and remembering it and understanding it. So with an exercise where you just have to interpret a picture or a text or to discuss the text it is

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much more about understanding the problem than just learning that there is such a problem and one, two, three, four ways to solve it. Sure, I agree with you.

S: When you did the adaptation of this material, did you use any theoretical material for the adaptation or was it based on experience and practice?

J: The problem was that sure, I graduated university, master's and so on. I know the theories, but then again, you can tell the theory to the teachers and they would probably understand it, but those 15-year-old children cannot just be told the theory, so I was taking the theory as little as possible. Most of the methods were more practical. If you talk number of slides then theory was like two slides, practical experience was like ten slides, and then exercises like five or six slides again. So yeah, in the percentage of time teaching this was like 50% working with exercise, then five min. for theory and then also some practical experience for 15-20 min.

S: The results are not really in yet, so...

J: Yeah, I don't know how they're gonna evaluate it. I don't believe it will be very easy because when I was giving these classes there were also project coordinators from the ministry of education, like Rasa and others, and they were trying to check what they did since the last time, and I saw that during the class some of the teachers were just writing down what they did and I don't know if they really did it or just made up a story of what they did. But about evaluation if you talk on a global level I wish that the percentage of people who trust media would decrease. That is my goal, and I hope the goal of news is the same.

S: Do you have an impression of how this project has been received by the school staff that has been involved? Of course it is on a voluntary basis, so I assume they want to participate in it, but for instance I was told that some teachers would say "we're already doing this", but then when they get more information they realize that this is actually much different from what they have usually been doing. Do you have an impression of this reception from the teaching staff?

J: Well, a few aspects. First of all, yes, they have done something before, they are saying that. The new material that is prepared, they told me it really makes the approach wider for teachers. I couldn't say how they would give it to children. Then again I was giving this class and they were saying it was a great class and very interesting, but okay, I took the three best classes that I myself liked the most and I thought were the most important things: PR/advertising journalism, how to tell the difference; ownership of media and how to see the media. For them it was really interesting and everybody was listening. Then when we were in the cafeteria during some free time I was talking to some teachers and they said "we liked your class, but a few other classes we didn't really like because the lecturers were really boring and giving boring information. I don't know who the lecturers were or what information they gave, but I got the information from teachers that they were not really attracted and I don't know how to solve that. For those with whom I talked I tried to explain that the teacher does not show the values of the problem and the material itself, so I hope they believed me, but that might be a problem.

S: What do you think are the challenges in teaching MIL in Lithuania?

J: The start is always a challenge. Since nobody has done that actively before. I know that there was at least one time when Romas Sakadolskis tried to do it, but I got an impression from the material I saw they did and how the people talked about it, that is was not as successful in the way of schools. The schools didn't take it so actively as they wanted them to. So I don't know whether now is the time to start again, but I think that might be a challenge. Also there are old teachers who are not really able to change themselves "I have the program of my Lithuanian course, so I'm just gonna teach it. For me it's easier". Oh yeah, also, I'm serving in Lithuanian military and I was hosting a conference about hybrid warfare where media has a really big influence. There was one teacher during this discussion who said "we have these courses in MIL, civics, national identity etc. which teachers could take, but not compulsory, but if the teachers have an opportunity not to take the courses, they will use it". So the teacher is the problem.

S: It's an interesting thing to me that particularly what I heard a lot of teacher representatives say in the conference on Saturday was that their schedule is full. They cannot add anymore content, and I think on one hand that is a very fair statement. Of course there is only so much time to teach, and when the curriculum is full you cannot keep adding more material, but as I see it the crucial difference is the style of teaching, the way you teach. So you would teach MIL through the structure, so you could keep teaching the same content, but do it in a



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structure that allows students to assess their information sources critically, to evaluate, to produce information themselves, so you teach it not through added content, but through a different teaching structure, do you agree with that?

J: Yes, I agree with that for sure. For example in Lithuania language classes, since I graduated my school eight years ago only, we had lots of things to write like interpretation of a text or some art story or whatever. Why not take the material on how to write a media release and write a media release once in a while? You're still gonna write something, why not this? Or for example in some schools we have classes in economics where they talk about the basics of economics. Why not make a class about media ownership and talk about it as a business? It's like a 45 min. class and you can easily integrate it in your course. I hope that will be possible for some teachers. Or class of arts: anyway you have to paint something, why not make photography analysis or go to the city and take some pictures with an assignment like "a day in my town" for example and just do it.

S: We were talking a bit about the factors that have an influence on MIL and critical thinking. Can we go over that a little bit more? Just the things you think have an influence.

J: Sure. When Lithuania gained independence the trust of media was around 80%. Now it's something like 50%. Half of the population trusts media according to Eurobarometer. In other countries like UK I guess it is like 30% only. So from this percentage you can really see that the situation changes. Some political events, like for example we had one president who was kicked out from his work. After that the media was playing a really big role there. One was saying that the president was good, the other was saying the president was bad, and people really saw that media plays a role. After that people started not to trust the media that much. Now again, I don't have facts or numbers, but I see the media sites start to talk more about the war in Ukraine, the Russian propaganda, some news with headlines like "Russia is almost attacking" and so on, which is not true according to the text. People start to evaluate media in a more critical way. Maybe not trust it, but to check what they are saying and not to trust headlines – which is great, because that really sucks. So the political, social and international factors really make a difference in people's view of the media.

S: What do you think is the future of MIL in Lithuania?

J: I hope it is really bright. I hope once sometime Lithuanian MIL will be in the same position as Mathematics, foreign language, history and so on. I was good at math when I was at school, I don't use these things like tangent, sine, cosine, I don't need these things in my life, but I read media all the time. All people also, my parents and such, they are neither mathematicians nor historians, but they read media. Historians and mathematicians they use media as well. So It's a thing everybody uses, but don't know how to use. So I hope that either the ministry or teachers or society will understand that MIL is something worth teaching and worth learning.

#### **Interview #07 with project participant Paulius Miezelis**

E=Emil, P=Paulius

E: Do you know about the reason for implementing the MIL project in Lithuania? Why was it decided that this was necessary?

P: I think the reason was discovered during the discussions we had with the ministry of education, UNESCO and the Nordic Council. There was initiative from UNESCO to talk about it, and the Nordic Council joined it and also initiated a discussion to talk about this topic. Then experts of Lithuanian education agreed that we should work on this field. So I think the reason was insights from experts. Also there were some previous actions taken, but they were stopped, so for several years nothing special was happening in MIL, so we wanted to continue it.

E: The project is relying quite a lot on these Scandinavian MIL models. Do you know anything about why these particular models were chosen to model the Lithuanian material on?

P: Because we started cooperation with the Nordic Council - basically because of that reason. Nordic Council is one of the initiators of the projects, so they can bring Nordic experience. It was easily accessible and also I believe that Nordic Council has an interest to spread the experience and ideas from Nordic countries. On the other hand, as much as we analyzed available material from Europe, provided by UNESCO, the Nordic countries are advanced in this field. So on one hand it was easily accessible information and on the other hand it was working practice.

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E: When choosing this Scandinavian material, did you anticipate that there would be any issues with implementing it in a Lithuanian context?

P: You mean some difficulties to implementation?

E: Yeah, something you would have to adapt in order for it to work in Lithuania.

P: While we were planning the project we discussed that it is not enough to translate the material, it needs to be adapted to a local context. I cannot say what particularly should be adapted, but sure there is such a need to make it more familiar, more local for this country.

E: I wonder if you have any thoughts on the different aspects of the content of what is being taught and the structure of what is being taught in terms of this adaptation thing. Do you think it's mostly about adapting the content to a local context or is it more about adapting the way you teach these things to the way things are being taught in Lithuanian schools rather than in Swedish schools?

P: Both aspects need to be adapted. First the content: persons, names, pictures, these need to be adapted to make it more Lithuanian, but that's just a cover and some details. Another aspect is the Lithuanian curriculum which is as it is and there are some lessons and if we want to integrate it into curriculum and not only leave it as some extra activities, this needs more precise adaptation to make links to existing subjects in the curriculum – making links to teacher realities, how teachers are used to work and how they understand it. So basically these adaptations are more necessary.

E: Regarding the results of this project, I know there was a survey made, as we heard at the conference on Saturday, before the project was implemented and then there is a survey that is meant to be made after the project has been run. Do you have any impression at this point about the results of the project? Do you see any progress in it as it is being carried out now?

P: I could evaluate it only from my schools participants because I'm not involved in implementing the project and I don't communicate with other schools. From our perspective the change is not so significant in students' education because what we do now is educating the teachers. So first the team of the school which was involved directly with the activities of the project got some inspiration and also knowledge to work in this field. We also got some tools and guidelines to work with these teaching materials. What we said to ourselves during the internal discussions was that the first thing we need to do is to work with teachers and to provide some seminar for them. Then we can make the next step and bring it to the lessons of the students.

E: When you talk about educating the teachers, how has the reception been if you should say something general about this project, among the staff here in this school?

P: I think generally the reception is positive. They understand why this topic is important. They find it interesting, but maybe they don't see it as a top priority.

E: I've heard a few people say that teachers, often when they are presented with it at first, say "we do this. This is nothing new to us", but then once they dig deeper into the material of this project they realize that it goes much deeper than what they have previously done. Is that something you can recognize?

P: Actually I can recognize this reaction in almost every topic. When you start talking about it some teachers usually say "yes we do it. We do it very well", but when you go deeper you see that there is space for development. The same is with that because there are several layers of understanding what MIL is, for sure. All teachers have literacy skills, but maybe they don't know how far they can go and what is the whole scope of MIL. Still participating in this project we still have different understandings of what MIL is.

E: Do you feel like you have learned something from this project so far? Is there something that this project has given to you?

P: The project has given us a new topic and a new cooperation between fields and between different teachers. So far I can say that we got a challenge and motivation as well, but I cannot say that we already got a product and something that we can use.

E: It's unfortunate that the project has not come so far in the actual implementation process, as I can understand there has been some kind of hold-up in the development and production of the material, so I have to adapt my approach a little bit to that as well.

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P: As far as I know in the beginning the material was not available. It was meant to be presented during the first meeting, so they were not synchronized as I expected. Now that we already have materials, they are very useful, but we need to work with that.

E: There is this thing that at the core of what MIL teaches is the critical assessment of the information that you're given. You have to be critical and evaluate the quality of the information you receive from whatever media, not only newspapers, but also for instance teachers. I expect that it can be problematic in relation to the more traditional teaching style in Lithuania where it is very teacher-focused and the students are very passive in that teaching environment. What are your thoughts on that?

P: I don't think that this teaching reality is so passive anymore. There are some teachers whose work is really teacher centered, but there are also many teachers, more than half, who implement a modern teaching approach, so the teaching reality is actually not so bad as we see sometimes. Even though there really are some teachers who like to be the center and to be the only source of truth, this MIL and critical assessment of information I don't see a direct link with the teacher as an information provider in school and media which provides information from outside a school. Maybe you can make your question more clear because I cannot find a link here.

E: What I'm thinking is that the teacher is very much a source of information in the school environment. Particularly in a more traditional teaching style the students are trained to memorize the facts that the teacher provides them with, and then once the exam comes around they have to present these facts they have memorized. Whereas the content of MIL seems to be much more about not retaining information, but about learning the structures of how to find information, how to evaluate what information is good and what is not good, what is relevant and what is not relevant, and also how to produce information yourself. So it seems to me that those two things are in a bit of contrast. Does that make sense?

P: It might make sense if you put it so as you say, but in reality even the exams are not really only facts oriented or fact based tests. Because there is, in the Lithuanian language exam, a test of understanding a text so you need to interpret the text and also create a text – create your own text based on sources you choose. It involves analysis and selection of information. History, which used to be facts learning, has also changed a lot and many have, in the history exam, analyzing some sources and some outcomes from different sources which are provided. There you can use your knowledge of facts, but it's not enough. You need to evaluate these several information sources. That is about the two main exams. Learning is for exams and for life and sometimes these two are put on different sides of the scale. Are we learning for the exam or for life? That is a big discussion, but we are learning for both actually. The information which is all around us is involved into learning because the book and the teacher is not the only source of information anymore. It's impossible to have a dictatorship over the information. Before the internet you could say "here is a book and in there is everything you need to know about the subject". And if there is no other book then that's the only source, but now no teacher can have such a power to control the information flow.

E: A few general question about MIL. What do you think is the national need for Mil here in Lithuania?

P: The national need is the sufficient level of media and information literacy among the whole of society. That is a national need where we start working with education, but we need to pay attention to the ones that already finished their formal education already.

E: How critical do you think this need is?

P: I couldn't say a number on a priority list, but I think it's really important that we talk about a social and cultural policy.

E: Do you think there is a lot to be done in teaching MIL as the situation is now?

P: I think yes, there is a need to work.

E: What do you think are challenges to teaching MIL in a Lithuanian context?

P: There are several challenges and the first is the concept of MIL which is quite illusive. It's not very clear what it is. It needs explanation. That is one challenge because there are different understandings. When people hear MIL they join it to their own experience and some put accent on media, some put is on literacy, some find just information. So there are different understandings of what this concept is. Another challenge is that education is a slow process and media and information flow is very fast and it's getting faster and faster. The methods of

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teaching are difficult to be applied for MIL education because information and media are developing very quickly – changing – so you can't easily learn about some laws which repeat.

E: Okay. Kind of off the cuff here, do you think it would make sense to try to invoke the desire to learn about MIL in non-school environment such as social media or some kind of online resource rather than in school?

P: I think it would be really great to have some kind of motivation for people to educate themselves in terms of MIL, but in school we can simply say that this is important, so you might like it or not, you might find it useful or not, but it's important for your comprehensive education. But that's in formal education institutions. When it is outside formal education then people need to see a clear motivation, and most people are looking for some education which might improve their employability of training which might improve their working skills or which might improve the development of their self-feeling. I think people choose either to learn something about how to do things, so they need the know-how or they want something which can help them psychologically to give them better feelings. Here again it is not very easy to explain or proof that MIL will benefit you in one way or another. It's not easy to prove it, but actually it gives benefits, but it is more difficult to show.

E: What do you think is the future of media literacy in Lithuania?

P: I could say that I see an optimistic future for this topic. I believe in that and I hope that people will become more literate in this field because I think that people will also understand that this literacy can make their lives better as well as society's lives better. I think that quite soon people will feel that being literate makes a difference in your life.

E: I was thinking about what you said about quite a lot of teachers now implementing new teaching methods and that becoming a thing. As I can understand that's the case in this school. Do you think the fact that this school is an inner-city school and has quite good resources has an influence on it? So if we think about the Lithuanian school system on a general level does the situation look different?

P: For sure it is different. Schools are different. I cannot say that we are the only school, one of several schools where normal education is happening and in other schools something bad is going on because I have met a lot of teachers from different schools in Lithuania, from small towns and small schools, and they were motivated to learn new teaching methods and also have a lot of experience in implementing that. When I talk to them, even recently in an exhibition where teachers come from different schools, not only from the capital, I see a lot of teachers who are approaching the education from a modern perspective. And they really have a lot of opportunities to work here about new teaching methods and have enough time to practice it. I cannot say that there are some old-school teachers and some new wave teachers and which part is bigger. It needs an investigation and even here in the school it would be difficult to say how many of our teachers are innovative and how many are really traditional.

E: From what I've heard from many people now it seems like there is a movement towards these more progressive teaching styles. Of course my worry is that there is this selection bias going on where the people that we talk to happen to be people who are prone to use these progressive teaching methods, so it seems to us like there is a whole lot going on whereas all the people who are not interested in it they keep quiet so we don't hear from them. Of course it's hard to evaluate that just by suggesting it might be the case. I just wanted to point out that it's one of the things I need to keep in mind.

P: This might really be a challenge for you to go outside your circle of likeminded people. If schools participate in the project that means they already have some motivation and understand that it's important because otherwise they wouldn't want to spend time on it.

#### **Interview #08 with Project manager Rasa Janciauskaite**

R=Rasa, E=Emil

R: The first step [of the MIL skill survey] was made so we can compare, and now we have already started planning the second part of it and it will be carried out in the end of November and beginning of December. The teachers will also fill in two surveys about what they did additionally during the course of the project because they already had some experiences in MIL education, so they now need to tell us what they did additionally, how the children reacted and if the teachers feel that their competences have become a bit deeper.

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E: Okay. But that will only be carried out in the end of November / beginning of December, and then it will have to be analyzed and made presentable and stuff. I have a deadline which is January 4<sup>th</sup>, and of course there's gonna be some work for me to make that presentable, so I don't think it makes sense for me to include the actual results of this survey because it comes out too late for me to have time to include it.

R: Yes, because the middle of December is probably an optimistic date for the results of the project.

E: Exactly. And it's perfectly fine for me. Of course I would like to include it, but since it's not gonna be a reasonable assumption that I'll have time for it, it's better for me to now say "okay, I'll adapt" and do something that makes sense without having these survey results. That's perfectly fine as well. It's just good for me to know so I can make something without trying to rely on that.

I've already been doing quite a few interviews, this is the 8<sup>th</sup> I'm doing and I have one more today and one more tomorrow, so I think that will be all the interviews I'll do unless somebody suddenly comes up and says "yeah, you can interview me".

R: Could you please tell me a bit more about your goals?

E: Of course. Some of exactly what I'm doing we can talk about after the interview just so we don't think too much about what I'm trying to do while we talk about the project. But I'm writing about the adaptation process from these Scandinavian materials onto the Lithuanian context in which they've been implemented. That's basically the scope of my international communication perspective. I'm a student of international communication, so that's what's interesting for me: to see how it's been done and what's been challenging and all these things. I've done interviews with two different groups. I have a group of people who have been involved directly in the project – You, Brigita from NCM, yesterday I was talking to Paulius Miezelis and actually I thought he was gonna be an external expert, but now since he's the vice director of the Vilnius Jesuit High school, which has actually been participating in the project, I could get some insights from him too. Then I have the other group which is the external experts: people who haven't been affiliated with the project, but who have been involved with MIL or are kind of opinion leaders in MIL, so they're primarily journalists or university lecturers. I was talking to Romas Sakadolskis...

R: Yes, he's the leader I would say and we also had earlier, in 2009, a project with him. This project is also a little bit of a continuation of that one and he suggested us about what kind of journalists to take for our materials.

E: Yeah, everybody says that he is the go-to guy except from himself, he keeps pointing out that he is no expert. He's a humble guy. I've been talking to him and I've been talking to some journalists and university professors as well. I've gotten quite a good view of how this kind of authorities see the MIL situation in Lithuania and the challenges of implementing and stuff. It's only quite late in the process that I started to get insights from people who were involved in the project, so I got a very good idea about how people see the situation, so it's very interesting for me to get to this point where I can actually figure out how the project's been done. So let's just start from the top:

Generally, what was the reason for implementing this project? Why was it decided that it was a good idea or necessary to do a MIL project?

R: Well probably Paulius already talked a bit more about it because he was the co-creator of the project. I took over the project after Martyna left. This project is a little bit specific because Paulius was one of the creators, but then he left for another job, then Martyna Braziunaite was the coordinator, but she also left for another job, and now I took over from her, so there's a little bit of evolution of the project. It changed slightly and this is why some initial ideas might be changed - also because the general situation and media situation changed drastically. Because in the beginning it was more about MIL for children to be safe on the net, to think about what they're doing and things like that - critical thinking, but also responsible use of media and creativity. And then the geopolitical situation changed so now was also added propaganda. And that's why the attention of media and other institutions like schools, I think it became a lot bigger than it would have been if nothing had changed. Like that the project evolved a bit, but also together with the situation, it changed. Now also other ministries, not only the ministry of culture, are interested in a continuation of similar projects, because they have the public libraries in their field and libraries have a very wide education part - but also the ministry of defense, the ministry of foreign affairs because in some way every part of policy is linked with that.

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E: How about the decision to use these Scandinavian teaching materials, why were the Scandinavian teaching materials chosen to work with? Why not something else?

R: Well, as one of the partners is the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office, it was only natural that the partnership between our country and the Scandinavian countries was worked upon, because this was the basic idea: to develop cooperation, also in terms of methodology – learning about their good experiences because they have a very wide and long experience with that. We're only starting to realize that we need MIL education in Lithuania as a separate topic – that media is not only a tool for teachers to use in the classroom, but also a topic to learn as a field of competences. The Scandinavian countries had a lot of experience in that and a lot of good materials as well. It was only fair that we used that. Also because of the partnership with the NCM.

E: When I've asked this question my idea would be that you would look at practices from a different country and say "are these results something that we could aspire to, and are these methods something that we could do?" And I hear many people say that Scandinavia has good results, they're good with MIL, and I think about the methods they use. When you've been introduced to that, do you have any thoughts on that? Thinking "this is something that we could do" or thinking maybe "we need to adapt some of these methods in order to make it work in Lithuania".

R: We looked at Scandinavian countries, not other countries like south Europe or whatever, and then we had our goals of what we wanted: we wanted the different age groups of school children, and then we thought about what we can take for primary school, for middle school or for high school. Then we looked at it and we chose this material. We took some materials from Sweden and some materials from Finland that we could use. Of course the legal basis is different, so when we worked on adaptations we needed to work on that. Some of the realities are different, so for example some personalities and events that are very well known for a Swedish person might not be known for a Lithuanian, so some of these methods were adapted a little bit, but not too much so Lithuanians could also learn about the Swedish situations for example. But mainly what was adapted was the legal basis and some practical issues like for example some material had links to podcasts or video material that was in other languages, Swedish or Finnish, that we couldn't translate because we didn't get the rights for those videos or podcasts or articles. So we chose similar Lithuanian materials. We tried to do that because we tried to maintain the main principles and values of MIL education in the Nordic countries because especially the human rights we need to develop in Lithuania. Also as a country we aspire to those countries, so I think personally that it was really good that we could use those materials and not only for MIL, but also on the value level of the topics that we talked about – human rights.

E: Okay. That's very interesting for me. How did you adapt the material from the Scandinavian models that you used?

R: Basically legal issues and non-translatable materials, but as I said we tried to find something similar or if we changed then it would still be on the same topic.

E: The thing that I've notice is that many of the pedagogical approaches and teaching methods that are presented in the material seem to reflect a Scandinavian style where there is a lot of methodology that seems very student focused and is about engaging the students to make them participate and to make them create things. My idea is that this conflicts a bit with the more traditional teaching style in Lithuania and that maybe teachers would want to resist this kind of teaching where there is more focus on the students' participation rather than the old-school style where the teacher is giving the information to the students and they just listen and accept what the teacher says.

R: Yes, partly. As an example of a bad teacher, they take the text book, open it up and just go one page after the other. Some teachers have this kind of methodology where they tell what they know to the classroom and the children need to learn that and tell the same thing that they heard. But there are already a lot of teachers who understand that media is not something they can talk about because usually pupils know a lot more, they use a lot more media than the teachers. Especially new media, they just take it like that. And teachers feel like they don't know media very well. So I think this helps them to understand that they can just ask the children. They can be moderators of the learning instead of being preachers who just come and say everything. So the material is constructed in that way that first we let teachers understand what to talk about and they would be able to present

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this material if they wanted to, and then just let the students discuss. This is a kind of topic that really needs to be worked with; you cannot just come and tell. If you want to learn it you need to use it and to really internalize it because there are also values related to it, not only knowledge and practical skills, but also values. This is a very deep level of learning which doesn't happen without directly doing things, so this is why the material is focused on engaging methods. It is also much more fun for everybody like that. And in this way the material also becomes more flexible because you can take some part of it from one topic, another part from another topic, put them together and use them, and those are methods that are not too difficult for teachers to use even if they are not used to it. If they only are formal teachers, they need to know the methods in order to use it. The material is constructed in a way that would be really useful for them to know about the topic and really flexible and easy for them to use. So they can just take sheets out and use them if they don't know. Because for non-formal teachers who have more background in MIL, this is everyday work to engage with and talk about and I know that more and more teachers are doing that in their lessons, not only coming and telling things.

E: Yeah, I've heard from quite a few sources that there might be a development towards this more engaging teaching style, but the theoretical framework that my work is based on suggests that this kind of cultural values don't change. It takes very long time if they even change at all. It kind of hints at culture being maybe even static, but at least that it takes a long time for change to occur, it doesn't come over one generation, it takes generations and generations slowly changing their ways. So for instance there is one example from the Lithuanian teaching material where the suggestion is for the teacher to ask the students if they agree with the message of a video that's been shown in class. It's interesting for me to use a question like this because it is very open-ended and has a very vague objective, so based on the theory that I use one could assume that students would be reluctant to try to answer this question because it's unclear what the teacher expects. It's unclear, what is a right answer to this type of question. So without any experience from a Lithuania school setting, only based on the theory I use, I would assume that this would not work very well in a Lithuania school setting. Of course it's always individual and there is always gonna be classrooms where it works and classrooms where it doesn't, but on a general level I would assume that this type of methodology is less effective than something with more clearly defined goals. Does that make sense?

R: Yeah. But this is a topic where very often there are opinions, but not correct or incorrect answers, so for instance if we watch a movie you will have one opinion and I will have another because I will notice one thing that will speak to me and another thing will speak to somebody else, so sometimes there are no correct answers and I think teachers also need to learn that. Especially in this topic you need to discuss and to understand that children have their own opinion. They have to have their own opinion and they have to be able to express it and to base it on some arguments and to defend it. They might be right or wrong, but they still have the right to express it. So that's the goal to try and think "what do I think. Some say this movie is about this but I think it is about totally other things because I noticed this and that", so some teachers probably need to learn that the children's opinions matter and that the main thing is to try to discuss it - not only agree or disagree, but also say why they think so. Probably this discussion culture needs to grow. And you're right in saying that not only a generation needs to change, but several, because you know we have had some really drastic changes in our recent history, so there's not only a generational gap, there is a cultural gap between generations. You know, the independence was one thing, then the media was another thing. Then the social networking and computers. So I think that some time needs to pass. Some teachers are really on the right directions and some probably will stray the way they are. That doesn't mean that they are bad teachers, but they probably won't use these methods. They will not discuss, but they will present the topics and that's it.

E: When I've suggested that cultures don't change that fast I worry that people perceive it as me saying that Lithuania is kind of a backwards country and Scandinavia is doing things right. I don't even have an opinion on this, but saying that culture is static doesn't mean that one thing is right and the other is wrong. I think there is a bigger risk of perceiving one thing as right and the other as wrong if you say that Scandinavia is further ahead and we're developing towards Scandinavia, because that gives the impression that one thing is good and the other is bad and we're going towards the good thing.

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R: Well, as I said we aspire to those countries. It doesn't mean we copy it and try to take a picture of a good thing and simply try to make the same thing. There is this understanding that people in Finland have developed a good teaching system because the children feel great which we also have a problem with. The teachers feel great, which we also would like to work on, and we see that this is what it's like to have a good education system, these are the elements they have and what can we do from these elements? Can they be interpreted in our cultures and maybe we need to make some changes to adapt and try to reach this kind of results. Also the education system is probably one of the biggest systems in Lithuania, but having in mind the quantity of teachers, schools and that every person goes through that system in one way or another, so it's very inert. And of course some things have developed in the past 25 years. Some things have changed, younger teachers have come in and they may have some new perspectives, and some older teachers maybe also see that the children are different and they try to adapt. I think this is the ultimate goal: to see how the students are taking it. If they are okay with my methods, if they understand and if my methods help their learning. One thing is that I tell something, because a lecture is also a method, but I need to understand if they have understood and if they have learned anything. Maybe they have different opinions so I need to understand how it settles in their minds. This is the basic principle that should be used in teaching. Then of course the teacher chooses the methods to his or her experience or possibilities and then the children take it or they don't.

E: Alright, so it sounds like you're aware that the material is quite progressive and maybe pushing some teachers who haven't quite realized that it is important to involve the students, so it's a deliberate choice to make the material like that?

R: Yes, we tried to make it more interactive, but I think that if a teacher takes it then they can really use it in a flexible way and choose their way of using it. Some of them take one method for one topic. As the schools said in the seminar we just had, that is mainly the way they use that material because almost nobody used it from page one to page five or something... all in all. They just used pieces in different settings – formal and informal education, and it worked in those different ways because non-formal means more interaction, more possibilities of discussion in smaller groups. That's why these methods work this way. Formal means 45 min. or maybe 90, but usually 45 min. and it is often put together with another topic that the teacher also teaches according to the program, so that's another way, but they used it in all those settings.

E: Do you have any impression about how this has been received by the schools that have been participating? One can only assume it's been received positively since it's voluntary participation, but have you gotten any feedback on things that have been challenging or things that have been good or bad or surprising or?

R: Yes, well I think there were about 200 schools that applied. We had 60 positions, we took 62 schools so we could get more teachers, but somebody could just not participate.

E: What were the selection criteria?

R: The main criteria were firstly experience - those that had already been involved in similar projects. Of course MIL projects were really few. Mostly those were computer literacy, but also citizenship.

E: So you wanted those with more experience?

R: Yes. because we wanted to take the schools that were more active because we hoped that would mean they would participate actively and try out the materials, because this is a pilot project. It would be great if we could work with all the schools in Lithuania, it would be great if we could work with the teacher training program that we have, because teachers could develop their competences in their work as well. So, we hope that this project will start working and then it will create a more systematic approach to more teachers, but this was a pilot to let them try out the materials, see how it works and get their feedback. So the first criteria was their experience. Then there was their motivation to participate in the project because it was a process that started in April and then there was a gap during summer when we all went on summer vacation, so for them to come back afterwards was a challenge because few were participating in the second trainings unfortunately, but that's the reality.

So yeah, their motivation to participate; and they had to find five team members: a librarian, an administration worker, two teachers (one of Lithuanian language and one of citizenship) and they could choose the fifth teacher. This project doesn't directly involve students, only staff. And we only now get feedback through teachers from the students, about the things they tried out such as methodology. Mostly the replies that I've heard and seen are



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positive. They said they can use the material. They could understand it, use the methods, it was clear. They used it flexibly and the reactions of the students was also positive because it was interesting for them. Some even created additional clubs after classes for them to try out more things, but just some of them. Some of them are only now starting to use the materials, they have not used it in this whole period between the two events.

E: It's unfortunate for my research that they've only now started to use the material because it makes it difficult for me to get this experience feedback about how they found it and such.

R: I know that Aukuras Gimnazija that spoke at the conference, and Kedainiu Sviesioji Gimnazija I think, they tried out all the topics. I think you can find them or I can write additionally to them because I also asked all the schools if they would like to participate in this kind of interview, but they didn't reply so far. I don't know why...

E: Okay. 0 out of 60...

R: Yes, unfortunately. If it's not something they have to do they sometimes need additional encouragement. Or they don't think their opinion matters, that's also sometimes... It's a cultural thing. We don't think we have anything to say when in fact we do.

E: Yeah, so far I think the amount of data I'm getting as it is will be sufficient. I have also tried to adapt to the situation when I found out that it would be difficult to get school feedback. I will make do with what I can get.

R: Well, we are now getting their feedback about the topics. It is mostly positive. Most of the feedback they give is on details like "maybe you should work on this method or explain it better" or something like that. Not that "I do not agree with what you wrote, change everything". It's more constructive.

E: It's of course on a voluntary basis, and even more so when it's only 62 schools out of 200 that have been selected for being most likely to participate actively. Of course this gives you a very particular set of participants that are more likely to give positive feedback.

R: Well, not necessarily, because some of them also had criticism, especially about the events, but about the materials they have been really positive so far, so I hope that means that it's useful.

E: Even if there is a certain risk of selection bias it still seems like if it's generally positive feedback, that is worth something.

R: I think they would tell us if they found something they really cannot use or agree on.

The good part is that the teachers also understand that they need to learn and they need to understand, so they ask. So all those schools that could not participate in the events, I have a small network with them and I inform them on the events and send them video broadcasts of the events that we're doing. Everything is also made available for them so even if they cannot participate directly they can still use the materials, because after the project that's what will stay, because we cannot take all the teachers and work with them.

We also presented the project and most of the material on the topic on other conferences for teachers and for example the school librarians' conference. We have these bigger conferences for teachers of different subjects and then they also have their regional groups, so from these conferences they bring the materials and information to the local level. In these we presented to the foreign language teachers, arts teachers, social studies and such. They were eager. They really listened to what we had to say and were really interested in the material and what they could use, so I think that it will spread because they really understand that this is a real work and they want to learn more.

E: That's a very positive perspective.

R: Well, I could be more negative. This is a very sensitive topic because if we talk about MIL in general then that's one thing, but if we come to the extreme which is propaganda, this is something that I don't know how to work on, and I don't think anybody really knows how to work on it with the teachers who already believe what they hear from that part and you don't believe that any of the information is correct, so they do not want to receive any more. If we tell them that something is incorrect they take it really personally, and I don't really know how to work with them.

E: No. I mean of course when you get to areas that are more focused on politics and ideology then that inertia that you mentioned about the whole of the Lithuanian school system, it's probably much more so when you come to this area of political conviction. So it's understandable that when you come to those areas it's very difficult to change people's minds or just to open people up to scrutiny.

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R: But also it is right to say that we in Lithuania have not had any clear vision on how to integrate the minorities. We kept them apart which we shouldn't have done. Now we see the results. They don't feel Lithuanian. Also they don't feel Russian or Polish when they go there, but it means that they feel like "my town is everything I got, my language is everything I got, I'm not Lithuanian and Lithuanians are strangers to me. They do not act politely towards me, so why should I listen to them?" I think Lithuanians really need to say to ourselves that we have made a mistake and we need to learn to find ways to accept these minorities the way they are and work with them.

E: Yeah. I think it's a challenge to try to find a way to present MIL as a way of strengthening people's identity – as a way of making them more able to express their identity and make them able to take a bigger part in society instead of giving them the impression that Lithuanian thought police is coming to make them assimilate into "lithuanianism".

R: This is also not really correct. In this project the activity part is in ways developed, but to really develop that part we would need to work even more with movie directors or journalists to have workshops or something like that. That would probably be a further step for the schools to do. It's not only about being safe in that environment, but it's also about creativity, but what we talk most about is being safe because it's the primary issue. But then creativity and expression and freedom of speech has not been developed enough in this project.

I know that there is a group of projects working with that creativity especially in sensitive regions, so they are going in with writers and directors and really working with one school. They take one school and they have a process. I think that's the way to develop this.

#### **Interview #09 with Lithuanian Student body representative Ana Sosnovskaja**

E=Emil, A=Ana

E: About media MIL in general, could you try to explain to me how you understand MIL?

A: Actually before the conference I didn't know what it means because students are not told about it. Not just me, but all students don't know about MIL, so I just didn't know what to expect during the conference.

E: Do you know if your school has been part of this MIL project?

A: No, my school, no.

E: Okay. You expressed some views of the students you've talked to, about how teaching is being done.

A: I just heard about what this thing is and I think students in school are not told about things like this. We talk about things that are close to it, but they don't know anything about it.

E: Okay, so as I see it, this MIL is very much about teaching students about being critical to the information they receive, both in media, online, basically all the sources of information. Is that something you feel is being taught in schools as it is?

A: Not all teachers. There are some teachers that teach how to look up information, but not many.

E: What do you think about teaching these things? Do you think it's important for students to learn these things?

A: Yeah, of course, and if we're talking about the internet and stuff. Now it's the 21<sup>st</sup> century and I think this is very important to know how to work with MIL. It's a very useful thing in life. Teachers just give students information or say "you need to find information about work" and they don't say how to do it and I don't know – not all students know how to find information and how to evaluate it.

E: Okay. Often with new media like social media and such, the younger generation knows more about stuff like Facebook and Twitter than the older generation does. Do you think it's uncomfortable for teachers to talk about media where the students might know more than the teachers do?

A: Maybe some times because for example sometimes when I have a lesson and the teacher doesn't know how to do something and she asks for the students to help. Maybe that is uncomfortable, but I don't think it should be uncomfortable. It should be talked about.

E: They were talking a lot about the fact that the teachers don't have much time so it's hard for them to put more teaching into the program because they say their schedule is already full.

A: Actually I think they have enough time because a lot of lessons are not very useful. We don't do anything that is common or that we could use later. It's just spending time.

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E: So as I understand, they want to integrate this MIL into the curriculum, so they don't want to add a new class in MIL, but they want it to be a part of Lithuanian language, part of history, part of civics. Do you think it's a good idea to use it as a way of learning Lithuanian language and history?

A: We believe that it would be more useful to integrate it and not have a separate lesson because we could practice more while learning those subjects.

E: Why do you think it's necessary for people to have MIL skills?

A: Well, during our life we see a lot of non-useful and even false information, and it would be useful later in life not only during school or during university, but during our whole lives.

### **Interview #10 with local expert Donatas Puslys**

E=Emil, D=Donatas

E: How long have you been involved with MIL?

D: With the particular project that I presented on Saturday I would say half a year, but it's not a new thing for me because I was also a teacher, so I had to speak with the students about MIL anyway, because it's very important in doing research – especially about history which sometimes becomes a battle ground of different ideologies and so on. How to orient yourself in this situation and recognize misrepresentations and then I was also a teacher at projects like Samsung School for the Future where I had also taught teachers about social media and how to use it in the learning process. It was not directly about MIL, but still I got the idea about what is needed what is lacking because on one hand you can say the teachers need to catch up with the students who are more advanced and use all the social media that are there, so the thing is to make them use those tools effectively, but then the teachers themselves are very skeptical, they don't want to be there, they say it's nonsense. You sometimes feel like there are two worlds: one which is there, but sometimes doesn't know how to stay safe, and the other one who understands the dangers, but doesn't want to go in and help those students. And then this project somehow was born and it's very important for me because I'm also a journalist, so I also want readers to not just be blind followers of what we pronounce, but to be critical and requiring readers that would be educated.

E: What do you think is the national need for MIL here in Lithuania?

D: It's very huge because you could even say that if you buy a screwdriver you need to know how to use it and it's not that easy. You can use it for good purposes, but if you don't know how, you can also use it to injure yourself. It's the same with the media. Sometimes it can do harm or mislead or make you into a victim of propaganda or false prejudice and stereotypes. And I think the thing that was forgotten was that you can educate those that didn't pay attention "they are grown up when they are 18, they know how to read. You can only teach those who are in school, maybe also in university, but what can you teach those who know everything?" so yeah. It's huge because there is no secret that an information war is going on. On one hand we can even fight back to catch Russian propaganda, but on the other hand there is also the danger that we can become very propagandic by fighting back. We would be like a mirror, only opposite like "all the Russians are wrong or they are just Putin tools". Sometimes even with this propaganda you can play into the hands of Putin. The other very dangerous thing is labeling the wrong information as propaganda. Like those who write or speak it are agents of Russia. What I mean is that you have to speak about these examples for people to grasp the full picture of what is going on in the field and it's not that easy. You have to speak with them about how the media works, what's the driving force even of the yellow pages to be on the top of the newspapers, about the dictatorship of clicks where different media compete about how many clicks they get in order to get advertisements. I think there is a huge need and huge empty space for this media education on different levels starting from primary school all the way to pensioners, who are also targeted, to catch the idea of different national groups living in Lithuania because it's not only Lithuanian language media, but also Russian and Polish language media. This is also a very important question.

E: What do you think are challenges to teaching MIL in Lithuania?

D: The main challenge is that for a long time it wasn't done at all, I think. The teachers are avoiding this topic in the schools completely. Maybe I'm wrong, but it's because they themselves are not educated in this kind of topic and they don't know how to start speaking with the children about that and I think it should be a very essential part of civic education because civic education is not about the constitution or some political ideologies. It's about the

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contemporary world and what's going on and how to respond to contemporary challenges. The students can already be responsible citizens, and you have to give them this responsibility. I think it's a huge need.

E: What factors do you think influence MIL and critical thinking skills of a country like Lithuania?

D: Could you explain what you mean?

E: I mean for instance cultural or socio-economic or political factors that could have an influence on how critically the population is approaching media. Because you see differences in different countries. Like the Scandinavian countries which are kind of role models in this context are generally more critical towards media and they trust them less. What do you think has an influence on this level of critical thinking or MIL?

D: Different things, I think. Education, the environment you live in, even the region. I think people from bigger cities are more critical. I don't want to say that we don't have challenges in big media, we have a lot of problems there, but in small towns or regions you have to educate the simple things to the people: who is the owner of the particular newspaper. Sometimes it's even a local politician, so they are really clever. They know that sometimes the people lack the analytical skills or tools to understand why this particular newspaper writes in this way and not another one. They have to go and tell them "look, there are several questions you need to answer before you can say "yes I trust this information fully"". Or the simple fact that you have to double check – one source and then another. It would be easy to say that only education has an influence, but the Soviet legacy also works so the people who want to use media as propaganda they know that they have to exploit those who are looking for the good old times of some groups. Income matters because those people are more dissatisfied with what's happening and you can really easily exploit them by giving false or very simplified explanations for why their lives are bad like the European Union, Brussels or capitalism or the free market. So mainly education, attitude towards the Soviet time, income, and probably the developed habits of the people. You have to teach them self-reflection because for a long time they have probably thought "I'm reading this newspaper" and it changes. The content, the owners, it changes, but the trust continues. I also think language matters. I don't want to say that Russian speakers or Polish speakers are victims of propaganda, but I think it was a mistake from our national broadcasters that at some point they stopped Russian news and they left this whole area for propaganda newspapers or media and they didn't pay attention and Vilnius region was like a forgotten island where one party established its media and its dominance. It's also an important factor and it's only now when it is critical that our media and government regained the understanding that those are people we have to speak with, not leave alone. They don't read Lithuanian, so they will not read what our national broadcast says unless we will have some Russian or Polish news. Language can sometimes become an obstacle, not for them but for the people. You can say that all have to know Lithuanian, but it's not gonna work. You have to reach them and go and speak to them. It's your responsibility as a media outlet. Even if they know Lithuanian I think a very important factor is what their main language is, so in which language do they read news? In Russian, in Polish or what?

E: Even what language they identify with, right?

D: Yes. Because sometimes it even happen that they identify themselves as Poles, but they read the news in Russian, or Polish or Lithuanian even. That sometimes looks strange.

E: There is a thing with teaching MIL that I am quite aware of. The things you teach in MIL is being critical towards the information that you're given – It's being an active citizen and you're participating in the processes of society. When I look at the traditional teaching methods in Lithuania it's very much the opposite. As a student your relationship with your teacher is that you rely on your teacher to give you your information, you trust the information the teacher gives you and you as a student are relatively passive in this context. So it seems like it's kind of a contradictory thing to teach MIL in a traditional teaching context. Of course many people say that there are new younger people who are interested in teaching in new and more inclusive ways, but do you recognize that as a problematic situation?

D: Yes of course. I would start at an even earlier stage: When you go in Vilnius or any other city and there is a school, then there is a fence around the school and it's written that the area of the school is monitored with CCTV and it's not allowed to pass through. And it looks like a symbol that the school is separated from what's going on outside. They live their own life inside, they have the programs that they have to teach according to and sometimes those are very out of touch with the contemporary realities of what's important to the students. And

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you can for example study history and perfectly understand 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> century, but it doesn't mean that you will have a clue what's going on around now. And I think that's the most important thing. I don't mean that while teaching 17<sup>th</sup> century you have to jump and make stupid comparisons with the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but what can you give is a critical attitude and the tools to analyze. The same tools can be used to analyze the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For example in both centuries there were attempts to persuade people, to manipulate them, to attract them. And when, as you say, the school becomes a place where the teacher is the only authority and you have to follow orders and write down what he's saying, and not have a critical attitude, then with the same attitude you receive all the other opinions. Because the teacher is one authority then a journalist is probably another one and a historian is also. So the only thing you learn is to quote. Then your thesis and any writing is simply a collection of quotations. Then you feel very safe in the way that if someone will say that "this is wrong" then you say "no, I found it here in this source. It's not my opinion". Then you are a student and a citizen who tries to avoid his or her own opinion and just hide behind quotation, authorities and so on, so you don't develop yourself. For the teachers it's also comfortable because they know the sources, they can easily check, but it's not development of the student. Yes, according to the learning program there are those competencies that you have to teach like 'learning for life', 'critical thinking', 'social responsibility' and so on. There is an attempt to turn the teaching process from the knowledge and fact based style towards being based on individual skills to interact in the contemporary worlds, but it's not going well with all the teachers and all the schools. Sometimes the theory is far away from the realities of what's going on. For me literature is the perfect example. You can take two different novels and see how two people look differently at the world and then try to analyze with the students "what matters when different people look differently at the world" and try to explain that age probably does, social standing, income and so on. So they can do the same. "Why does this French writer write about this event like this, and this German writer writes from this point of view". And it's gonna be an analysis because they would try to understand or search for answers that are not written in the book. Sometimes it's also not needed for example in history you can give tasks about finding the dates, when this battle happened, who was the leader in the battle, who lost, who won, how many victims were there, what were the consequences like treaties and overtaking of territories and so on. You simply need to know facts, not analysis. The same thing about literature. You simply give the information "who is Balzac, born when, belongs to this and that, wrote this and that..." I don't want to be rude, but it's nonsense.

E: I think particularly history is a good example because in a more traditional teaching style it's been very much about memorizing facts and names and dates and that's the way I learned history as well. And at a very late point in my life I was made aware that of course History is written for the people to develop a self-understanding. Creating a national history compendium is very much a selective process - picking out the events that help to establish your national identity, so when you learn Lithuanian history you learn the events that ultimately lead to who you are today. And you can be very critical about many of these things and say "what things aren't we learning about and what other things happened, right? What perspectives do we get on these things"

D: Yes, for instance the word memory which is another word for history is very tricky. It's not only about what we remember - memory is also about the things we forget. You can't remember everything, so this means you have to select "this is important to remember and this is not so we can forget it", but then when teaching history or MIL it's very important to go out of this box and ask why. Why do we choose to remember this date and why do we let this date or event be forgotten? The same with the media - why do we write on the first page about this event and about that one we write only on the 18<sup>th</sup> page, or we don't write at all. It's a reflection. And you were right in saying that we create our history by picking those events we create our narrative which has to be reflected. Sometimes it can sound very innocent, but what I'm trying to fight here, take for example Lithuanians and Jews. Simple words, but they tell a lot. We say our tragedy, for instance the deportations to Siberia and their tragedy such as holocaust. But aren't we all Lithuanians? Then it shows, why do we still use 'we' and 'they'? Do we still understand the nation in ethnic terms rather than in civic terms? This gives a broader perspective and I think history would be a very good example in MIL because both media and history is about narrating and speaking. But the most important question is why we speak in one way and not in another way. How do we construct our identities? How do we define ourselves? Why do we let some people be outside and why do we not let them in?

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Why do we choose to say our pain and their pain? "What. their pain is not important? it's not ours?" Are we indifferent to it? I mean It's important to have separate project about MIL. It could inspire to change the process of how we teach language, literature or history, but the most important thing is not to have just one project. Schools do a lot like 'week without abuse' – one week you do something, then the rest of the time you don't pay attention to the abuses that are happening in your class - the same about MIL. You have to teach it constantly. All the literature course with critical reflection, history course with critical reflection of what we write about ourselves as a historical subject. Probably even in math or physics, why do they choose to investigate some problems and not others?

E: What do you think is the future of MIL in Lithuania?

D: I'm quite positive, because I think it's changing. There are more and more people who understand that it's needed to work on it and that it's important. Before it was always this disappointment and all these complaints directed towards the education ministry. "They have to do something, they have to change this and that", now it's more understood that people themselves, I mean from think tanks and different NGOs, even from media like PR media, newspapers, internet dailies, can also contribute towards this education. They can implement project, they can travel to schools to speak with the students. Sometimes I think it's even more important because I think students trust those who are professionals in their field more than their teachers, you know. I don't mean that you have to mistrust your teacher, but you have to get different perspectives from other people, especially when they are professionals in what they're doing. I see more and more opening of the cooperation of schools with the NGO sector, so this is very positive.

E: I've been thinking about that in addition to teaching MIL in schools maybe it would be an idea to develop an online platform. A digital opportunity for young people in particular to engage with MIL learning on their own. It would be a way of bypassing this kind of traditional teacher-student relationship where students feel a bit passive and they don't have the power, to using a community where they feel empowered and are able to be critical and it would rely on them. Do you think that would make sense to work on?

D: Yes. I think it's very important, and you rightly said not instead, but in addition to. It's very important to do it in schools, but you will probably not avoid this teacher-student relationship. You should change it. It should become less hierarchical and more dialogical like in ancient Greece. It was still hierarchical, but it was like a dialogue of the one who has authority and knowledge with the one who is eager to learn, not one who dictates what you have to do. In Soviet times school was a military barrack. The teacher was like a military person that had to implement order. You have to change this military barrack into an academy. But online tools are very important especially when young people spend a lot of time on social networks. If they can learn something there they can be empowered. Why not. I'm looking very positively on different projects. I enjoy this last one, you probably saw it, on Google Chrome where people can change the titles of articles. It's perfect because it's also about reading critically, then deconstructing the way titles are created to be more scandalous and attractive but at the same time hiding the essential information inside. They are empowered. Sometimes it seems the best attitude is not to be angry, but to be critical and sarcastic - being able to make fun of it and laughing and joking. It's more powerful than sheer anger. That's very self-destructive I think.

E: There is a lot of talk about how media is now changing from information to entertainment and education is pretty much left out of that. People make these hybrid words like infocation, combining information and education, but what I think really makes sense is edutainment. That's exactly what this project is. You entertain people by making alternative headlines, but you also engage them in a critical assessment of the news media, so I think that's a very interesting app.

D: There were also a few others like on Facebook there was a group, mainly for journalists not students, about journalism where people were posting articles and telling for example what the conflict of the article is and the ethics of journalism or why it's constructed as propaganda, so you can enable a lot of people to be active, critical and feeling important on social media. And it doesn't require huge investments, I think. You don't need to create a new platform with plenty of multimedia and so on.

### 3. Coding sheets

Categorization		
Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
CV - Cultural Value	PDI - Power distance	Y - Correlates with national score
		N - Does not correlate with national score
		C - contained within the statement
		I - Implied by the statement
	IDV - Individualism	Y - Correlates with national score
		N - Does not correlate with national score
		C - contained within the statement
		I - Implied by the statement
	MAS - Masculinity	Y - Correlates with national score
		N - Does not correlate with national score
		C - contained within the statement
		I - Implied by the statement
UAI - Uncertainty avoidance	Y - Correlates with national score	
	N - Does not correlate with national score	
	C - contained within the statement	
	I - Implied by the statement	
LTO - Long-term orientation	Y - Correlates with national score	
	N - Does not correlate with national score	
	C - contained within the statement	
	I - Implied by the statement	
IND - Indulgence	Y - Correlates with national score	
	N - Does not correlate with national score	
	C - contained within the statement	
	I - Implied by the statement	
MIL - Media and Information Literacy topic	AR - Access and retrieval of information	SF - Structure and format of information
		IC - Information content
	EC - Evaluation and critical assessment of information	SF - Structure and format of information
		IC - Information content
STS - Teaching style that reflects high indulgence and low uncertainty avoidance	IM - Importance to MIL teaching	PD - Production and distribution of information
		SF - Structure and format of information
		IC - Information content
		Y - Crucial element

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	N - Not crucial
PR - Element is found in Lithuanian school setting	Y – Yes
	N – No

Gender & Seterotypes		Critical Thinking & Media's Role in Society		New Media & Social Media	
Lithuanian article #1	Swedish article #1	Lithuanian article #2	Swedish article #2	Lithuanian article #3	Swedish article #3
<b>CV.UAI.N -</b> Klausimai diskusijai: <i>kaip pristatomas „vyriškumas“ ir „moteriškumas“? Kokios savybės būdingos moterims, kokios – vyrams? Kokią žinią perteikia toks vaizdavimas? Kokį poveikį tai daro skaitytojui, kaip formuoja jo požiūrį į lyčių vaidmenis? Kaip formuoja tarpusavio santykius?</i>	<b>CV.IND.Y -</b> Upprätta en egen kvinnoexpertlista. Ni bestämmer själva fyra vitt skilda områden (yrken och/eller fritidssysselsättningar) och hittar sedan namn på kvinnor som kan något om det området. Kanske har ni en expert i klassen? Sök på nätet och fundera över egna kontakter.	<b>CV.IND.N -</b> Klausimas visai klasei: Kaip užtikrinti informacijos prieigą visiems ir kodėl tai svarbu galvojant apie pokyčius visuomenėje?	<b>CV.IND.Y -</b> Eleverna får ta ställning genom att placera sig i klassrummets fyra hörn	<b>CV.IND.N - 1.</b> Nagrinėdami socialinius tinklus, žiūrėdami video medžiagą svarstys kokias galimybes atveria socialiniai tinklai, turinio bendruomenės bei, diskusijos metu keldami klausimus ir išsakydami savo nuomonę, sužinos kokios yra galimos grėsmės.	<b>CV.IND.Y -</b> Diskutera studien med utgångspunkt i elevernas egen användning av sociala medier.



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<p><b>CV.UAI.N</b> - klausimas: kaip kuriami rasiniai stereotipai?; kaip jie paveikia žmonių mąstymą ir elgesį?</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.Y</b> - Stämmer detta i er tidning? Kontrollera hur det ligger till.</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.Y - 2.</b> Teorinės medžiagos vaizdinė pateiktis. Mokytojas pristato (10–15 min.) skaidres „Medijų įtaka visuomenei“ (žr. 1 priedą), iš kurių mokiniai gaus informacijos, reikalingos tolesnei diskusijai. Įvardijamas diskusijos tikslas: išanalizuoti ir visapusiškai įvertinti medijų vaidmenį ir įtaką įvairioms visuomenės gyvenimo sritims.</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.Y</b> - En nyhet sprids om elever som blivit lurade på sin veckopeng av en rektor som sålt höga betyg till högstbjudande. Vilken av följande källor litar du på mest?</p>	<p><b>MIL.PD.IC - 2.</b> Kurdamas tinklaraštį, įgis įgūdžių kaip jame skelbti informaciją.</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.Y</b> - Ringa in två meningar från varje artikel som de anser vara särskilt intressanta och vill diskutera vidare</p>
<p><b>CV.IND.N</b> - Teaching method "knowledge wheel"</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.Y</b> - Hur väl tycker ni att följande påstående stämmer? Vi påverkas mycket av bilder i medier! Diskutera och ringa in ert svar.</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.N</b> - „Žinių ratelis“</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.Y</b> - Du har fått i läxa i religion att ta reda på vad Bibeln säger om omskärelse. Hur går du tillväga för att besvara frågan?</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.N</b> - Ar sutinka su žinia, kuri skelbiama šiame filmuke?</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.Y</b> - Har eleverna några egna tips eller råd</p>
<p><b>CV.IND.N</b> - Mokiniai paraginami sukurti siužetą vienai serijai, kur būtų perteikiami asmens lyčių lygiavertiškumo ir pagarbos kitų rasių atstovams principai.</p>	<p><b>CV.MAS.Y</b> - The material focuses on gender equality and fair gender representation</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.Y</b> - Kokias žinias nori perteikti šie pavyzdžiai? Diskutuodami atkreipkite dėmesį į laidos pobūdį, pavadinimą, laidos vedėjų parinkimą (pvz., amžiaus ir lyties atžvilgiu), aprangos stilių, pristatymą, atributus, kurie siejami su laida.</p>	<p><b>MIL.AR.SF</b> - Du har fått i läxa i religion att ta reda på vad Bibeln säger om omskärelse. Hur går du tillväga för att besvara frågan?</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.Y</b> - Užduotis mokiniams: kiekvienoje grupėje aptarti tinklaraščio tikslą, idėją, pavadinimą, periodiškumą, temų pavadinimus</p>	<p><b>MIL.EC.IC</b> - Diskutera därför gärna frågor gällande källkritik, forskningsmetodik och mediernas hantering av nyheten i samband med diskussionsmomentet i övningen.</p>

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<p><b>CV.UAI.Y</b> - Analysis scheme is highly directive</p>	<p><b>MIL.AR.IC</b> - Gå igenom tidningen i jakt på experter som får komma till tals i tidningen. Ringa in deras namn och räkna hur många som är män respektive kvinnor.</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.Y</b> - Providing sources of information</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.Y</b> - Din lärare påstår att Barnkonventionen är lag i våra grannländer Finland och Norge, men inte i Sverige. Det låter orättvist och konstigt... Hur gör du för att ta reda på om din lärare talar sanning?</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.N</b> - Mokiniai pristato savo darbus ir aptaria kūrybinę patirtį, įvertina vieni kitų tinklaraščius, pateikia siūlymų, ką galima būtų patobulinti.</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.Y</b> - Vad är "för lite" tid och vad är "för mycket" tid? Hur vet man det?</p>
<p><b>MIL.PD.IC</b> - Kūrybinė užduotis. Pasitelkę pavyzdžius iš spaudos, mokiniai pagalvoja, koks rezultatas būtų apkeitus vyrų ir moterų vaidmenis? Ką galima pavaizduoti kitaip? Mokiniam siūloma pakeksperimentuoti ir sukurti savo reklamas – permontuoti iš kelių reklamos pavyzdžių, esančių spaudoje, nufotografuoti ar nufilmuoti vyrų ar moterų stereotipus permąstančias reklamas. Darbo grupelių veiklos</p>	<p><b>MIL.EC.IC</b> - Spelar det någon roll vem som får utrymme att synas i tidningen som expert? Diskutera och motivera ert svar.</p>	<p><b>MIL.EC.IC</b> - focus is on content analysis, the validity of the source is simply assumed</p>	<p><b>MIL.AR.SF</b> - Din lärare påstår att Barnkonventionen är lag i våra grannländer Finland och Norge, men inte i Sverige. Det låter orättvist och konstigt... Hur gör du för att ta reda på om din lärare talar sanning?</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.N</b> - Užduotis mokiniams: įsivaizduokite, kad esate mokytojai ir jums reikia sukurti pamokos planą</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.Y</b> - Låt eleverna ta ställning till olika påståenden genom att placera sig i klassrummet på lappar med texten: "JA", "NEJ", "KANSKE". Lägga de olika lapparna på golvet.</p>

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<p>rezultatai pristatomi ir aptariami.</p>					
<p><b>MIL.PD.IC -</b> Kūrybinė užduotis. Pasitelkus populiarių TV serialų, mokiniams pasiūloma aptarti, <i>kokius vyrų, moterų ir etninių mažumų atstovų vaidmenis jis pristato. Ar perteikiami akivaizdūs stereotipai? Kodėl stereotipai atrodo tokie būtini?</i> Mokiniai paraginami sukurti siužetą vienai serijai, kur būtų perteikiami asmens lyčių lygiavertiškumo ir pagarbos kitų rasių atstovams</p>	<p><b>MIL.PD.SF -</b> Upprätta en egen kvinnoexpertlista . Ni bestämmer själva fyra vitt skilda områden (yrken och/eller fritidssysselsättningar) och hittar sedan namn på kvinnor som kan något om det området. Kanske har ni en expert i klassen? Sök på nätet och fundera över egna kontakter.</p>	<p><b>MIL.EC.IC -</b> „Socialiniai tinklai – pilietiškumo ugdymo platforma“ ir „Socialiniai tinklai gali tapti propagandos įrankiu“</p>	<p><b>MIL.EC.IC -</b> Hur vet man om en nyhetssajt är pålitlig?</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.N -</b> Ar naudojasi kompiuteriniais žaidimais mokymosi tikslais? Kokius žaidimus žaidžia ir kokiais tikslais?</p>	

principai.					
<b>MIL.AR.IC</b> - Tiriamoji užduotis. Pasirinkite reklamą, kurioje vaizduojami vyrai ir moterys. Naudodamiesi lentelėje pateiktais klausimais patyrimkite ir nustatykite koks yra vyro ar moters vaizdavimas: stereotipinis ar ne? (Veiklos lapas nr. 1).	<b>MIL.EC.IC</b> - Bläddra igenom tidningen och stryk under ställen där journalisten markerar att det handlar om en kvinna även när det inte är spelar någon roll för innehållet och budskapet i artikeln	<b>MIL.EC.IC</b> - Mokiniai raginami pasvarstyti apie medijų turinį Lietuvoje: Kiek skirtingų požiūrių galite rasti apie tautos savimonės ugdymą? Kiek apie tai diskutuoja politikai, mokslininkai, kultūros kūrėjai ir kiti? Kokios medijos tai padeda skleisti?	<b>MIL.EC.SF</b> - Inte nog med att SVT ibland slarvar med källorna – de luras också!	<b>MIL.PD.SF</b> - Kaip sukurti tinklaraštį	
<b>MIL.EC.IC</b> - Siūloma pasitelkti laikraščius, žurnalus ir lyginti, kaip vaizduojami vyrai, moterys, kokiame kontekste.		<b>MIL.PD.IC</b> - Siūloma mokinių grupėms apmąstyti diskusiją ir reflektuoti savo dalyvavimą joje		<b>CV.UAI.Y</b> - Clear, directed instructions	

Interviews with project involved experts				
Interview #01	Interview #05	Interview #06	Interview #07	Interview #08
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Another reason was of course the worrying situation with the very high level of trust in the media according to polls and surveys</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - Very many are very reluctant towards any new thing and any new methodologies. They have a program which they have to go through</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - There are now teachers that study and graduate this year, maybe they are more innovative with their methods and more creative in the way they teach students, but the older teachers, maybe 60 plus, they are more 'old-school', using methods where they just stand up and say the material they have and I don't think there is such a problem with young teachers who are more innovative and interactive and so on</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - I cannot say what particularly should be adapted, but sure there is such a need to make it more familiar, more local for this country</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - We're only starting to realize that we need MIL education in Lithuania as a separate topic – that media is not only a tool for teachers to use in the classroom, but also a topic to learn as a field of competences</p>
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Another reason was of course the worrying situation with the very high level of trust in the media according to polls and surveys</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - Some react like it's nothing new "we have been doing this for ages, we just didn't call it MIL, but we have been talking about advertising and ethical behavior online and safety and things like that", so it's just putting a new name on the same topic</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - So with an exercise where you just have to interpret a picture or a text or to discuss the text it is much more about understanding the problem than just learning that there is such a problem and one, two, three, four ways to solve it. Sure, I agree with you</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Another aspect is the Lithuanian curriculum which is as it is and there are some lessons and if we want to integrate it into curriculum and not only leave it as some extra activities, this needs more precise adaptation to make links to existing subjects in the curriculum – making links to teacher realities, how teachers are used to work and how they understand it. So basically these adaptations are</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - We tried to do that because we tried to maintain the main principles and values of MIL education in the Nordic countries because especially the human rights we need to develop in Lithuania</p>

			more necessary.	
<b>CV.IND.I</b> - the media content and quality, in my own assessment, is rather low in Lithuania	<b>CV.IND.C</b> - There are quite many schools and quite many teachers that are ready to involve children in the process, to do interactive actions, to encourage them to make some school radio or produce a newsletter or things like that where they learn from doing and trying and making mistakes themselves	<b>CV.IND.I</b> - If you talk number of slides then theory was like two slides, practical experience was like ten slides, and then exercises like five or six slides again	<b>CV.IND.C</b> - They understand why this topic is important. They find it interesting, but maybe they don't see it as a top priority	<b>CV.IND.C</b> - As an example of a bad teacher, they take the text book, open it up and just go one page after the other. Some teachers have this kind of methodology where they tell what they know to the classroom and the children need to learn that and tell the same thing that they heard. But there are already a lot of teachers who understand that media is not something they can talk about because usually pupils know a lot more, they use a lot more media than the

				teachers
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - when you ask people about the issues of MIL and usually when you come into the discourse of propaganda and political issues then very early on from the original project we got some warnings that we should be careful when talking about these issues with minorities</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - E: Okay. So that may also give you a selection bias, that those schools that you were working with are particularly prone to this type of content? B: Yeah, of course. It was an open call where a number of schools were selected.</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - The start is always a challenge. Since nobody has done that actively before</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - When you start talking about it some teachers usually say “yes we do it. We do it very well”, but when you go deeper you see that there is space for development</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - And teachers feel like they don’t know media very well. So I think this helps them to understand that they can just ask the children. They can be moderators of the learning instead of being preachers who just come and say everything</p>

<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - I think the Lithuanian population is still very bad at recognizing the manipulations in media</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - The Ministry of Education and Science promised to give funding, but then finally something happened, so they are not contributing to the extent that was expected</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Also there are old teachers who are not really able to change themselves “I have the program of my Lithuanian course, so I’m just gonna teach it. For me it’s easier”.</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - All teachers have literacy skills, but maybe they don’t know how far they can go and what is the whole scope of MIL. Still participating in this project we still have different understandings of what MIL is</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - So the material is constructed in that way that first we let teachers understand what to talk about and they would be able to present this material if they wanted to, and then just let the students discuss. This is a kind of topic that really needs to be worked with; you cannot just come and tell. If you want to learn it you need to use it and to really internalize it because there are also values related to it, not only knowledge and practical skills, but also values</p>
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - ...the Russian speaking population where quite many of them would take a pro-Russian side in a geopolitical conflict, so they would maybe look at the whole issue of MIL as something ideological and simply reject to believe that this is something useful because it belongs to “the other</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - They made it clear that they now understand and support the idea, but when it comes to channeling funds then I guess some better lobbying has to be done</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - There was one teacher during this discussion who said “we have these courses in MIL, civics, national identity etc. which teachers could take, but not compulsory, but if the teachers have an opportunity not to take the courses, they will use it”. So the teacher is the problem</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - I don’t think that this teaching reality is so passive anymore. There are some teachers whose work is really teacher centered, but there are also many teachers, more than half, who implement a modern teaching</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - It is also much more fun for everybody like that</p>



<p>side”</p>			<p>approach, so the teaching reality is actually not so bad as we see sometimes</p>	
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - . Another challenge is connected to the general perception of such issues as transparency and corruption. I think there is a higher level of acceptance of these things</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Even in the schools that were willing and joined the project, the reaction was that “we have to learn this, ourselves” so I think many teachers feel they still don’t understand what it is</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - When Lithuania gained independence the trust of media was around 80%.</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - Even though there really are some teachers who like to be the center and to be the only source of truth, this MIL and critical assessment of information I don’t see a direct link with the teacher as an information provider in school and media which provides information from outside a school</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - Because for non-formal teachers who have more background in MIL, this is everyday work to engage with and talk about and I know that more and more teachers are doing that in their lessons, not only coming and telling things</p>
<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - From my personal point of view, I would like to challenge this view as much as possible. And that goes for any authority, whether it would be a media outlet or your country, your government or even your parents. That is maybe more my libertarian nature, but I don’t see any problem in that. I think it develops very important skills in a young person.</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - When they were asked if they knew it for the first time, they very often answered “yes, we know the topic, we have computer classes, we have had computer literacy training” and now they have started realizing that it is something totally different</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - For example in Lithuania language classes, since I graduated my school eight years ago only, we had lots of things to write like interpretation of a text or some art story or whatever. Why not take the material on how to write a media release and write a media release once in a while? You’re still gonna write something, why not this?</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - Learning is for exams and for life and sometimes these two are put on different sides of the scale. Are we learning for the exam or for life? That is a big discussion, but we are learning for both actually</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - But this is a topic where very often there are opinions, but not correct or incorrect answers, so for instance if we watch a movie you will have one opinion and I will have another because I will notice one thing that will speak to me and another thing will speak to somebody else, so sometimes there are no correct answers and I think</p>

				<p>teachers also need to learn that</p>
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - For example in this issue of propaganda and anti-propaganda I would very much like for our students to recognize not only the propaganda coming from other states, but also propaganda coming from your own state. This is equally important. And this is not very much underlined in the policies of anti-propaganda.</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Another challenge it the overloaded programs, lack of motivation and maybe even the courage to try new methods of teaching and to distance themselves from the traditional way of teaching and presenting this issue</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - One was saying that the president was good, the other was saying the president was bad, and people really saw that media plays a role. After that people started not to trust the media that much</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - It's impossible to have a dictatorship over the information. Before the internet you could say "here is a book and in there is everything you need to know about the subject". And if there is no other book then that's the only source, but now no teacher can have such a power to control the information flow</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Especially in this topic you need to discuss and to understand that children have their own opinion. They have to have their own opinion and they have to be able to express it and to base it on some arguments and to defend it. They might be right or wrong, but they still have the right to express it. So that's the goal to try and think "what do I think</p>

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<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - I think it's important to remember that only 25 years ago you would be punished for expressing your opinions, not only discouraged, but you would be punished harshly. This has been a part of Lithuanian history for the past 1000 years basically, so it is not that simple not to expect that people just open their minds and criticize everything and everyone. So this kind of cultural background is a factor</p>	<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - Very many are very reluctant towards any new thing and any new methodologies. They have a program which they have to go through</p>	<p><b>STS.PR.Y/STS.IM.Y</b> - There are now teachers that study and graduate this year, maybe they are more innovative with their methods and more creative in the way they teach students, but the older teachers, maybe 60 plus, they are more 'old-school', using methods where they just stand up and say the material they have and I don't think there is such a problem with young teachers who are more innovative and interactive and so on</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - There are several challenges and the first is the concept of MIL which is quite illusive. It's not very clear what it is. It needs explanation. That is one challenge because there are different understandings</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - so some teachers probably need to learn that the children's opinions matter and that the main thing is to try to discuss it - not only agree or disagree, but also say why they think so. Probably this discussion culture needs to grow</p>
<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - From my personal point of view, I would like to challenge this view as much as possible. And that goes for any authority, whether it would be a media outlet or your country, your government or even your parents</p>	<p><b>STS.PR.Y</b> - There are quite many schools and quite many teachers that are ready to involve children in the process, to do interactive actions, to encourage them to make some school radio or produce a newsletter or things like that where they learn from doing and trying and making mistakes themselves</p>	<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - So with an exercise where you just have to interpret a picture or a text or to discuss the text it is much more about understanding the problem than just learning that there is such a problem and one, two, three, four ways to solve it. Sure, I agree with you</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - The methods of teaching are difficult to be applied for MIL education because information and media are developing very quickly – changing – so you can't easily learn about some laws which repeat</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - Some teachers are really on the right directions and some probably will stray the way they are. That doesn't mean that they are bad teachers, but they probably won't use these methods. They will not discuss, but they will present the topics and that's it</p>

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<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - I think it develops very important skills in a young person. For example in this issue of propaganda and anti-propaganda I would very much like for our students to recognize not only the propaganda coming from other states, but also propaganda coming from your own state</p>	<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - Another challenge it the overloaded programs, lack of motivation and maybe even the courage to try new methods of teaching and to distance themselves from the traditional way of teaching and presenting this issue</p>	<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - Also there are old teachers who are not really able to change themselves "I have the program of my Lithuanian course, so I'm just gonna teach it. For me it's easier".</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - I think it would be really great to have some kind of motivation for people to educate themselves in terms of MIL, but in school we can simply say that this is important, so you might like it or not, you might find it useful or not, but it's important for your comprehensive education</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - I think this is the ultimate goal: to see how the students are taking it. If they are okay with my methods, if they understand and if my methods help their learning</p>
<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - ? I think one factor which we already mentioned is the ability to challenge authority. You can call it by different names like democratic tradition or pluralistic tradition how ready or encouraged to do that, the society is in general. That is of course where we see big difference between the Nordic countries and Lithuania</p>	<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - Attitudes yeah, and ways to react. Yes. And you have to keep in mind the average age of our teachers. I think it's around 55 so... we do hope that if a new generation of teachers comes, things might start changing quicker</p>		<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - I cannot say that there are some old-school teachers and some new wave teachers and which part is bigger. It needs an investigation and even here in the school it would be difficult to say how many of our teachers are innovative and how many are really traditional</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Mostly the replies that I've heard and seen are positive. They said they can use the material. They could understand it, use the methods, it was clear</p>

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			<p><b>STS.PR.Y</b> - I don't think that this teaching reality is so passive anymore. There are some teachers whose work is really teacher centered, but there are also many teachers, more than half, who implement a modern teaching approach, so the teaching reality is actually not so bad as we see sometimes</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - They used it flexibly and the reactions of the students was also positive because it was interesting for them. Some even created additional clubs after classes for them to try out more things, but just some of them</p>
			<p><b>STS.IM.N</b> - Even though there really are some teachers who like to be the center and to be the only source of truth, this MIL and critical assessment of information I don't see a direct link with the teacher as an information provider in school and media which provides information from outside a school</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - Yes, unfortunately. If it's not something they have to do they sometimes need additional encouragement. Or they don't think their opinion matters, that's also sometimes... It's a cultural thing. We don't think we have anything to say when in fact we do</p>

			<p><b>STS.PR.Y</b> - in reality even the exams are not really only facts oriented or fact based tests. Because there is, in the Lithuanian language exam, a test of understanding a text so you need to interpret the text and also create a text – create your own text based on sources you choose. It involves analysis and selection of information</p>	<p><b>STS.PR.Y</b> - there are already a lot of teachers who understand that media is not something they can talk about because usually pupils know a lot more, they use a lot more media than the teachers</p>
			<p><b>STS.PR.Y</b> - History, which used to be facts learning, has also changed a lot and many have, in the history exam, analyzing some sources and some outcomes from different sources which are provided. There you can use your knowledge of facts, but it's not enough. You need to evaluate these several information sources</p>	<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - This is a kind of topic that really needs to be worked with; you cannot just come and tell. If you want to learn it you need to use it and to really internalize it because there are also values related to it, not only knowledge and practical skills, but also values</p>

			<p><b>STS.PR.Y</b> - It's impossible to have a dictatorship over the information. Before the internet you could say "here is a book and in there is everything you need to know about the subject". And if there is no other book then that's the only source, but now no teacher can have such a power to control the information flow</p>	<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - But this is a topic where very often there are opinions, but not correct or incorrect answers, so for instance if we watch a movie you will have one opinion and I will have another because I will notice one thing that will speak to me and another thing will speak to somebody else, so sometimes there are no correct answers and I think teachers also need to learn that</p>
			<p><b>STS.PR.Y</b> - I have met a lot of teachers from different schools in Lithuania, from small towns and small schools, and they were motivated to learn new teaching methods and also have a lot of experience in implementing that</p>	<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - They have to have their own opinion and they have to be able to express it and to base it on some arguments and to defend it. They might be right or wrong, but they still have the right to express it. So that's the goal to try and think "what do I think</p>

				<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - so some teachers probably need to learn that the children's opinions matter and that the main thing is to try to discuss it - not only agree or disagree, but also say why they think so. Probably this discussion culture needs to grow</p>
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Interviews with unaffiliated experts				
Interview #02	Interview #03	Interview #04	Interview #09	Interview #10
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - What happens when you don't have a long tradition of independent media, you don't have independent media users either</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - That would assume the majority of the population already has some sort of media literacy and does not believe what the media says, but the problem is that they don't</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - What you get and what you see in public, that means truth. What you read in a book that means truth</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Actually before the conference I didn't know what it means because students are not told about it. Not just me, but all students don't know about MIL</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - one hand you can say the teachers need to catch up with the students who are more advanced and use all the social media that are there, so the thing is to make them use those tools effectively, but then the teachers themselves are very skeptical, they don't want to be there, they say it's nonsense</p>



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<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - the specific problems in Eastern Europe and Lithuania in particular involve the ability to discern what is useful, what can be trusted, what outlets or information that is available on social media or other platforms</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - In soviet times quite many people were sincerely believing what newspapers were saying. Now it reproduces itself in new generations of much younger readers who have no knowledge of soviet realities, but they are caught in a manipulative media society and many without any kind of help or explanation</p>	<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - I suppose the common sense was that we have to trust media because media is pure and democratic</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - I just heard about what this thing is and I think students in school are not told about things like this</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - It's very huge because you could even say that if you buy a screwdriver you need to know how to use it and it's not that easy. You can use it for good purposes, but if you don't know how, you can also use it to injure yourself. It's the same with the media</p>
<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - Usually MIL reflects the society in which it is. If that is the case then Scandinavian society is very different than Lithuanian society, and the application of Scandinavian tools to a Lithuanian environment, well I can only try and guess</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - you could tell students "Look, here is an article which was obviously paid, because you see the guy is crystal clean, he is nice and only good things are told about him and so on". But you could never prove that in court. The main difficulty is that usually you have a shortage of hard evidence</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - we can't take the whole thing and copy/paste to our system, because our system is on a different development level and we can't start teaching MIL from grade 10 to our 1st graders</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Now it's the 21st century and I think this is very important to know how to work with MIL. It's a very useful thing in life. Teachers just give students information or say "you need to find information about work" and they don't say how to do it and I don't know – not all students know how to find information and how to evaluate it</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - On one hand we can even fight back to catch Russian propaganda, but on the other hand there is also the danger that we can become very propagandic by fighting back. We would be like a mirror, only opposite like "all the Russians are wrong or they are just Putin tools". Sometimes even with this propaganda you can play into the hands of Putin</p>

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<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - if you look at the library system in Lithuania you will find very few libraries that engage citizens in terms of critical reading skills or civics</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - You could do text analysis; you could count words, positive and negative, and so on. A lot of work lies ahead. But for now the fact reservoir for such a course is quite limited</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.I</b> - Deconstruct the text and show that it is not a good text or what is missing in the text in order to make it objective journalism, or this is a good text because it has all or almost all the necessary parts of objective journalist</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Maybe some times because for example sometimes when I have a lesson and the teacher doesn't know how to do something and she asks for the students to help. Maybe that is uncomfortable, but I don't think it should be uncomfortable. It should be talked about</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - The other very dangerous thing is labeling the wrong information as propaganda</p>
<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - In Lithuanian education in general Civics is rarely taught and when it is, often it is a kind of primitive patriotism or nationalism which is not a substitute for citizenship</p>		<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - A lot of things have to be changed because the authority of the newspaper – of the printed word – at least used to be very strong, very important. It was not the fourth estate, but maybe number two. It was one of the most important in Lithuania. It used to be very important and it's the same with teaching</p>	<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - Teachers just give students information or say “you need to find information about work” and they don't say how to do it and I don't know – not all students know how to find information and how to evaluate it</p>	<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - The teachers are avoiding this topic in the schools completely. Maybe I'm wrong, but it's because they themselves are not educated in this kind of topic and they don't know how to start speaking with the children about that and I think it should be a very essential part of civic education because civic education is not about the constitution or some political ideologies</p>
<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - It [civics] exists in some schools depending on the teachers involved etc. but there is no systemic approach in Lithuanian education</p>		<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - In many cases we still haven't evolved into this different teaching style. And unfortunately this generational change didn't really happen that successfully, because the teachers are “gods”</p>		<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - The students can already be responsible citizens, and you have to give them this responsibility. I think it's a huge need</p>

		unfortunately		
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Challenging authority is a bit different because it presupposes certain things whereas checking presupposes other things. So, I would change it to checking authority, but is there a mindset in the case of Lithuania? In most of post-Soviet states I suspect there is, so yeah that would certainly be a contributory factor</p>		<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - At lectures you come not to discuss the lecture, but you come to listen – Without discussion</p>		<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - ...who is the owner of the particular newspaper. Sometimes it's even a local politician, so they are really clever. They know that sometimes the people lack the analytical skills or tools to understand why this particular newspaper writes in this way and not another one</p>
<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - There is also the question of the way education is organized and what the expectations are. Critical thinking assumes certain cognitive skills and a certain freedom to be able to evaluate independent thinking with critical reading, critical thinking skills etc.</p>		<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - we don't teach that creative thinking and creative environment where through the questions you are going to find your answers</p>		<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - You have to teach them self-reflection because for a long time they have probably thought "I'm reading this newspaper" and it changes. The content, the owners, it changes, but the trust continues</p>

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<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - children are being prepared to become good workers. This is evident in institutions of higher learning as well</p>		<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - not only what the teacher tells you, but you have to find the answers with the teacher's help. That should be encouraged.</p>		<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - And it looks like a symbol that the school is separated from what's going on outside. They live their own life inside, they have the programs that they have to teach according to and sometimes those are very out of touch with the contemporary realities of what's important to the students</p>
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Success is seen as - and people work toward securing a job and the financial. It's this sort of thinking as opposed to exploring and looking at your options</p>		<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - The curriculum or subject should be created in a different manner of asking questions – not only teaching, but also encourage participation in the information finding</p>		<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - Because the teacher is one authority then a journalist is probably another one and a historian is also. So the only thing you learn is to quote. Then your thesis and any writing is simply a collection of quotations. Then you feel very safe in the way that if someone will say that "this is wrong" then you say "no, I found it here in this source"</p>
<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - you've got this realization of the disconnection between the school and what's happening in the kids' lives</p>		<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - If it is just going to be teachers teaching, saying "this is that, this is this, this is that" without any discussions in the classroom and without questions, that is not going to work</p>		<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - For the teachers it's also comfortable because they know the sources, they can easily check, but it's not development of the student</p>

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<p><b>CV.IND.I</b> - You really cannot ignore social media if you wanna be a successful school. You can't do that anymore. Whether you like it or not people are forced to take another look around them</p>		<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - In many cases we still haven't evolved into this different teaching style. And unfortunately this generational change didn't really happen that successfully, because the teachers are "gods" unfortunately</p>		<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - You simply need to know facts, not analysis. The same thing about literature. You simply give the information "who is Balzac, born when, belongs to this and that, wrote this and that..." I don't want to be rude, but it's nonsense</p>
<p><b>CV.UAI.C</b> - A lot of people want to put little check marks and they are doing it, and very successfully, and they are taking a lot of money to do that and everybody is happy, it's win-win, but is there an improvement in media literacy? I'm not sure there is</p>		<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - At lectures you come not to discuss the lecture, but you come to listen – Without discussion</p>		<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - I don't mean that you have to mistrust your teacher, but you have to get different perspectives from other people, especially when they are professionals in what they're doing. I see more and more opening of the cooperation of schools with the NGO sector, so this is very positive</p>
<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - Making things really changes the dynamics. There are very few kids making things here. They may be doing it on their own, but the school environment doesn't really participate in that as far as I know</p>		<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - The curriculum or subject should be created in a different manner of asking questions – not only teaching, but also encourage participation in the information finding. If it is just going to be teachers teaching, saying "this is that, this is this, this is that" without any discussions in the classroom and without questions, that is not going to</p>		<p><b>CV.IND.C</b> - It's very important to do it in schools, but you will probably not avoid this teacher-student relationship. You should change it. It should become less hierarchical and more dialogical like in ancient Greece</p>

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		work		
<b>CV.UAI.C</b> - at this point you still have kids that are learning rote things, which is ridiculous when you think about it. They're still learning dates, they are learning the old fashioned way				<b>CV.IND.C</b> - In Soviet times school was a military barrack. The teacher was like a military person that had to implement order. You have to change this military barrack into an academy
<b>CV.UAI.C</b> - they still lack a lot of the skills and they do so because the teachers lack a lot of the skills. So you have cut/paste happening all over high schools and some teachers encourage it because it looks good				<b>STS.PR.N</b> - but then the teachers themselves are very skeptical, they don't want to be there, they say it's nonsense
<b>STS.PR.N</b> - In Lithuanian education in general Civics is rarely taught and when it is, often it is a kind of primitive patriotism or nationalism which is not a substitute for citizenship				<b>STS.IM.Y</b> - The students can already be responsible citizens, and you have to give them this responsibility. I think it's a huge need

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<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - In Lithuania there is this problem, and critical thinking and civics often go hand in hand simply because critical thinking skills are necessary for someone to be a successful citizen in a society, so there is this whole approach that civics, media literacy, critical thinking all tie together because a person has to function in a modern society</p>				<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - And it looks like a symbol that the school is separated from what's going on outside. They live their own life inside, they have the programs that they have to teach according to and sometimes those are very out of touch with the contemporary realities of what's important to the students</p>
<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - children are being prepared to become good workers. This is evident in institutions of higher learning as well. People who are attending college and university, instead of exploring things they want to know what the job is "where am I gonna end up working?" It's all about the job, and this sort of thinking goes against critical thinking skills</p>				<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - Because the teacher is one authority then a journalist is probably another one and a historian is also. So the only thing you learn is to quote. Then your thesis and any writing is simply a collection of quotations. Then you feel very safe in the way that if someone will say that "this is wrong" then you say "no, I found it here in this source"</p>

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<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - you've got this realization of the disconnection between the school and what's happening in the kids' lives</p>				<p><b>STS.PR.Y</b> - There is an attempt to turn the teaching process from the knowledge and fact based style towards being based on individual skills to interact in the contemporary worlds, but it's not going well with all the teachers and all the schools</p>
<p><b>STS.PR.N</b> - at this point you still have kids that are learning rote things, which is ridiculous when you think about it. They're still learning dates, they are learning the old fashioned way. They still have no memorize names, they still don't know how to search for things</p>				<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - You simply need to know facts, not analysis. The same thing about literature. You simply give the information "who is Balzac, born when, belongs to this and that, wrote this and that..." I don't want to be rude, but it's nonsense</p>
				<p><b>STS.IM.Y</b> - In Soviet times school was a military barrack. The teacher was like a military person that had to implement order. You have to change this military barrack into an academy</p>