COUNTRY OVERVIEW

LITHUANIA 2014
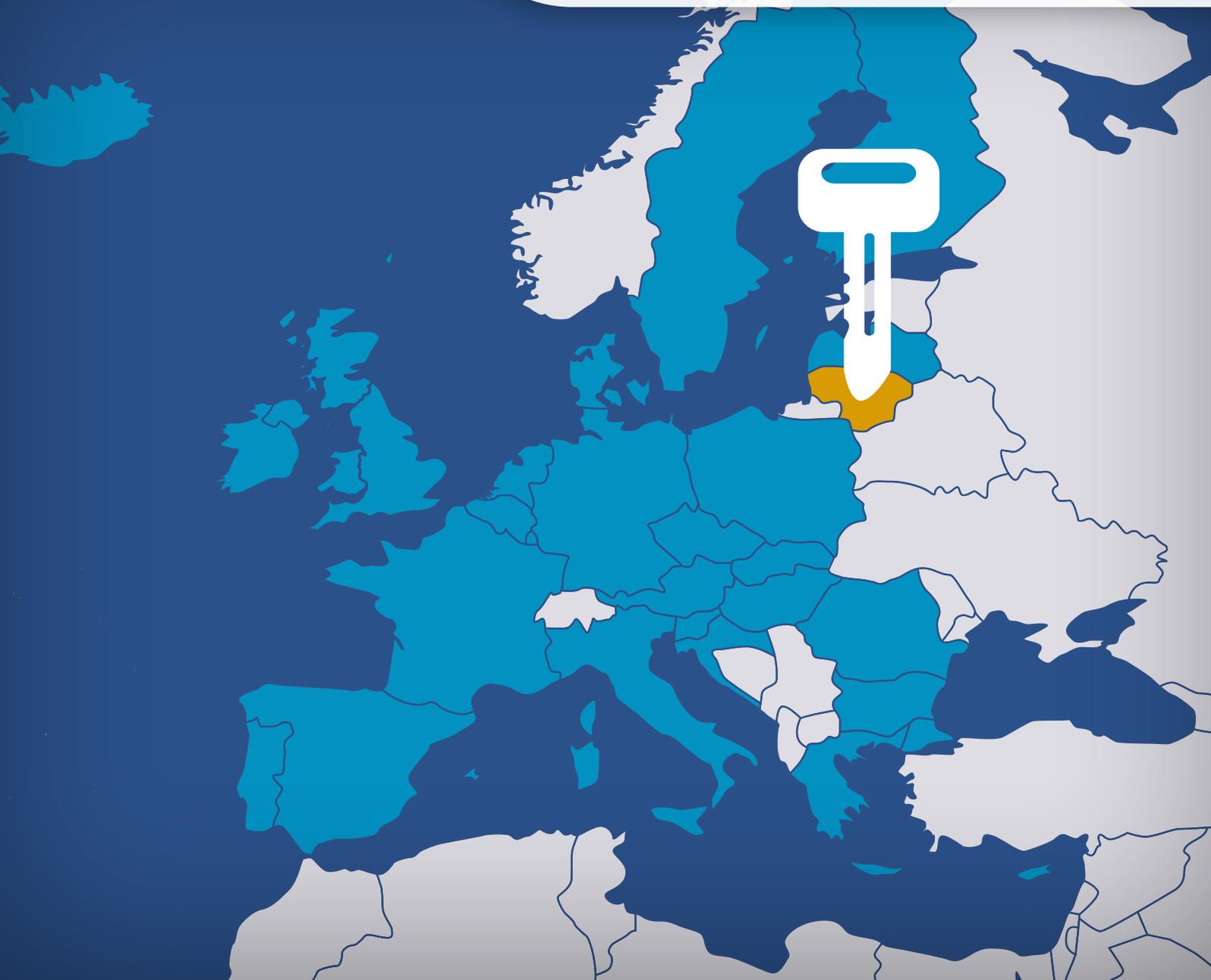
KEYCONET
Key Competence Network on School Education

European Schoolnet

In 2002 Lithuanian National Education Strategy 2003 – 2012 was adopted. It set the key aims for education development and envisaged the measures for its implementation. It was foreseen to update the contents of education and relate them to new competences of an individual. A need for more consistent transition to the new contents development policy oriented towards development of general competences, values was expressed in the Strategy, emphasising the importance of knowledge analysis, its critical assessment and practical application that would allow to relate the contents of education to actual life, actual problems and their solutions.

According to the Law on Education (new version since 2011), education curricula shall be implemented in compliance with the Description of the Education Curriculum, the General Curriculum Framework, general teaching plans approved by the Minister of Education and Science.

The General Curriculum Framework is oriented towards the development of general competences and subject-related competences (in primary and lower secondary education since 2008; in upper secondary education - since 2011). The general competences are adapted to Lithuanian context and realities of the educational system and closely linked with the competences and their elements that are set out in the European Framework for Key Competence. The following six general competences are included in the school curriculum: Learning to Learn, Communication, Cognitive, Social, Initiative and Creativity, Personal Competence (upper secondary education curriculum additionally includes competence of Cultural Awareness). All EU key competences are addressed in the curriculum, e.g. the content dimensions of social and civic competences as they are defined in the European Framework for Key Competences have a very close connection to the social competence used in Lithuanian school curriculum.

The content of renewed General curriculum is defined through describing expected learning outcomes, providing recommended guidelines of educational process, indicating subject content scope and describing the levels of students' achievements. The basics of general and subject-specific competences are embedded into students' learning outcomes.

What relevant key competence related initiatives (e.g. curricular reform/national strategy/pilot project/public consultation etc. in relation to students' curricula and assessment, teacher training, school organisation, and learning resources) have taken place in your country over the past five years, and which are planned in the future? You may also refer here to the 2012 case notes produced for your country, and any other initiatives which will be the focus of the 2013 case notes.

As it is described in the Law on Education, the main purpose of education is to provide or assist a person in the acquisition of skills and competences necessary to get established and successfully compete in the shifting labour market;

Lithuanian Education Strategy for 2003 – 2012 placed a strong focus on competence development at all levels of education in Lithuania. National Curriculum Framework for Primary and Basic Education have been renewed in 2008 and National Curriculum Framework for Secondary education – in 2011 bringing to the central place competence-based approach. A set of methodological material for teachers on the development of learners' general competences at all subjects has been prepared and published on-line by Education Development Centre.

As it is foreseen in the strategic education documents, the content of education should ensure the possibilities for learners to acquire those values, skills and general competences that are necessary for the life of an individual and society. There also should be a targeted development of the main literacy skills, social, cultural and communication competences, critical thinking, problems solving skills and ability to learn ensured. A particular attention is given to the development of digital and entrepreneurship competences.

Lithuania has accumulated a lot of experience of integrated competence development. Since 2009 Education Development Centre has been implementing over 20 large-scale projects (co-funded by European Social Fund and the Republic of Lithuania) that are focusing on the development of general competences.

The project **"Development of the adult education system by providing key competences to learners"** was launched in 2010 and implemented key priorities of the lifelong learning strategy (2008). This project is intended for the development of a comprehensive adult education system in Lithuania. The aims of the project are to develop a network of informal adult education services and its accessibility, train key competences, improve qualifications of managers and teachers of adult education institutions, implement innovative contents of adult education, and increase the availability of information and non-formal education services. The project provided free key competence courses for adults in 25 municipalities of Lithuania that were attended by more than 1,500 people. Adults enhanced their competences in the areas of finance, non-formal vocational training, legal literacy, civic education, English language, computer literacy, entrepreneurship, also received training in healthy lifestyle, safe road traffic, parenting, artistic expression etc.

A 6-years-long ESF-funded project **"Development of Students" Key Competences in Basic School (grades 5-8)"** (*http://mokomes5-8.ugdome.lt*) is aimed to provide the necessary conditions for the development of general competences of students using examples of communication in mother tongue, learning to learn and natural science competences and to develop an assessment instruments for the learning to learn competence (2009–2012). It is also aimed to disseminate competence-based learning and teaching methodology in Lithuanian schools and develop digital learning tools and teaching materials focused on general competences for basic school (grades 5–8) (2012-2015). Project activities directly contribute to the implementation of the National Curriculum Framework for Primary and Basic Education (2008). 60 teachers were trained as education counsellors to work in the field of key competence development; their experience and expertise became a great resource developing methodologies and resources related to competence development in basic education, testing and introducing them to teachers (almost 1900 teachers from 30 schools were trained). The following methodological resources, digital learning and teaching material and tools based on competence – oriented learning outcomes are developed and made easy accessible and freely available for teachers and students online:

·   Website for teachers on the methodological aspects of competence development (*http://www.ugdome.lt/kompetencijos5-8*), including video of good practices.

·   Websites for students (http://mokomes5-8.ugdome.lt/index.php/projekto-svetaines): Lithuanian language, grades 5-6 and 7–8; Digital Library (literature works), grades 5-8; Geography, grades 6–8; Human Safety and Health, grades 5–8; natural Science, grades 7-8.

·   Learning to Learn Assessment Tool on virtual learning environment (*http://www.ugdome.lt/kompetencijos5-8/mmkvi*)

Digital learning and teaching materials refer to all activities of interactive learning and offer students possibilities to virtually observe invisible objects, long and for a moment lasting natural phenomena, carry out experiments, which are difficult to perform in the classroom; create virtual stories, comics, descriptions, publish newspapers, prepare presentations; send tasks done from the website to the teacher by e-mail. Learning by exploring, problem solving, playing, listening, watching movies, reading, writing and self-assessment using ICT not only increases students' literacy skills and competences in subject areas but also nurture their digital, personal, communication and learning to learn competences, promotes critical thinking and creativity. Learning becomes more efficient, engaging and meaningful to the student. On-line resources also include possibilities for teachers:

·   to select learning objects and tasks in accordance with student's learning style and level of his or her achievements.

- to build students' skills for learning to learn by helping students to understand their own learning and developing appropriate strategies for 'learning to learn'.

For this purpose designed Learning to Learn Assessment Tool comprises different interactive instruments: diagnostic, planning, monitoring progress, reflecting learning and mapping learning progress.

Some of the initiatives and projects are targeted to the specific competence development related priorities as they are set in the strategic documents (e.g., creativity, digital competence, entrepreneurship etc.).

Project **"Creative Partnerships Development of Creativity in General Education Schools of Lithuania by Applying and Implementing the Model of Creative Partnerships"** (2011-2014) develops a model of the Creative Partnerships that brings cooperation between the Creative Practitioners – artists, cultural and creative industry representatives, and scientists – and schools into reality. The program invites the Creative Practitioners to work together with teachers in schools and implement together with the students creative and unique projects in each school. Creativity as the ability to wonder, doubt, think critically, cooperate, search for connections and resolve problems by creating novelties is one of the fundamental general competences determining successful individual activities in a modern dynamic society and the successful evolution of the society. The Creative Partnerships model offers to schools the unique experience of Creative Practitioners, ideas for upgrading the education and practical assistance in implementing them, helps change the learning process and creates conditions for the development of children's creativity by changing the teaching – the methods, means, organisation, environment and teachers' attitude towards their own creativity and the potential of creative work. During the Programme, the creative learning methodology will be developed and tested, evaluated and implemented. The methodological materials will be distributed, specialists (teachers and the Creative Practitioners) will be trained, and long-term contacts will be established. The stakeholders will be aware of the significance of creative education that will create conditions for more frequent and professional application of creative learning methods in general education schools after the completion of the Project, and creative learning will not be limited to particular events and lessons on a few disciplines and will become the practice of the entire school.

A project **"Dissemination Model of Curriculum Innovations"** is being implemented in 2011 – 2015 and is focusing on the development of digital competence (students and teachers). During the project implementation dissemination model of curriculum innovations will be created, innovative digital learning objects (hereafter - DLO) will be created or adapted, criteria for their assessment will be developed, constantly renewed educational portal will be developed; teachers will be equipped with methodological materials which ensure successful and effective DLO integration in the classroom.

In 2009 – 2014 the project **"Providing Wider Possibilities for Choosing a Learning Pathway by Students aged 14-19"** was implemented. The project was focused on deeper

differentiation and individualisation of learning for ensuring education quality demanded by the modern labour world. One of its aims was to provide wider possibilities for students to choose and increasing the attractiveness of training content, by taking into account the needs of a modern labour world. As one of the valuable outcomes, the methodological recommendations were developed for training of entrepreneurship capacities, by integrating entrepreneurship into the content of various subjects and putting it in the context of education of 9-12 grade students.

OVERALL KCD APPROACH:

How would you characterise the overall approach to key competence development in your country? Is it a holistic approach characterised by an overarching strategy, or rather a targeted approach focusing on one or more specific dimension of the education system (student curriculum, assessment, teacher training, school organisation, learning resources etc.)? Does it cover formal and non-formal learning, both primary and secondary school levels?

The overall approach to key competences is seen as the holistic one. There was a lot of work done to build awareness and support for integrating key competences into all levels of school curriculum. All National Curriculum are built using competence-based approach, however, there are some challenges that have to be overcome:

· The signs of existing external pressure to prioritise short-term learning outcomes/ results vs. long-term ones (e.g., passing the exam, entering university, excellent graduation scores etc.) are still common among education community (students, parents, teachers);

· Opportunities for competence development created by integration of formal and non-formal education (e.g., methods, learning spaces, development of talented children etc.) are still to be explored.

KEY COMPETENCES ADDRESSED:

Is there a focus on any particular EU key competence/s or a combination of them, or perhaps there is more of a focus on alternative/complementary competences defined at national level?

There is an even and consistent focus on all 6 general competences that are employed at national level. As it was justified above, all general competences used at national level are closely linked content-wise with EU key competences. However, national strategic documents in the field of education set particular priorities. Learning to learn, digital competences as well as competences of creativity and entrepreneurship are being highlighted.

Who are the main stakeholders involved in key competence development in your country?

- Ministry of Education and Science
- Education Development Centre
- National Examination Centre
- National Agency for Schools Evaluation
- Lithuanian Centre of Non-formal Youth Education
- Lithuanian Children and Youth Centre
- Teacher training institutions (universities)
- Network of Regional Education Centres
- Schools
- Parents organisations
- Teachers' organisations
- Students' organisations

KCD IMPLEMENTATION PROCESSES:

How does the implementation of key competence development/reform in school education function in your country? *(e.g. process followed, political commitment, consultation with stakeholders and their respective roles, incentives for stakeholders, dedicated funding, teaching material, definition of goals and standards, assessment and evaluation mechanisms, impact on teacher training/professional development and school practices/leadership, scaling-up approach, based on research/evidence? etc.)*

The learning by objectives approach has been replaced by a competence-based approach. On the level of political commitments, competence based approach is shared in the main political and strategic documents in the field of education (e.g., Law on Education, Provisions of the National Education Strategy). The General Curriculum Framework for Primary and Basic (2008) as well as Secondary Education (2011) are based on the general and subject-related competences development approach.

New approaches towards assessment of learning outcomes are being offered: *criterion-referenced assessment* has been introduced since 2013 at the matura examination. Along with matura examination, the idea of *matura work / project* has been developed and currently is being piloted by National Examination Centre. Matura work can be described as individual research or creative work conducted by the student over a longer period of time, encouraging

and testing those his/her skills and competences, which are difficult to check by the "paper and pencil" type of task. A portfolio of learning achievements is being offered for Basic school graduates (piloting phase). The ideas of portfolio and criterion-referenced assessment are being developed and tested in the field of In-service teachers training.

Despite the systemic efforts and overall progress, there is still lot of challenges when it comes to the competence based learning at classroom level. The main challenges can be identified as lack of assessment tools; readiness and willingness of teachers changing their approaches and working practices; embedding and employing other learning spaces and opportunities (e.g., non-formal, informal learning). These are issues identified and addressed in on-going ESF-funded projects („Development of Students' Key Competences in Basic School (grades 5-8)", „Development In-service Training and Retraining of Teachers'", "Development of Non-formal children's education funding model and its testing in municipalities").

Competence based learning is further developed in the provisions of the new national Education Strategy 2013-2022 (adopted by Lithuanian Parliament in 2013).

The latest development in the field of general competences – a draft *Description of National Curriculum Framework for Primary, Basic and Secondary Education* has been prepared and open for public discussions with stakeholders. The draft document defines learning outcomes as a set of competences necessary for learning and acting in personal, cultural, civil, and (or) professional contexts. It also formulates integrated learning outcomes grouped into the following competences: Personal, Learning to learn, Communication, Cognitive, Social and civic, Cultural, Initiative and creativity.

Series of public discussions with practitioners (teachers, representatives of teachers' organisations etc.) are starting in August 2014.

OBSTACLES AND FACILITATORS:

What would you identify as obstacles and/or facilitators to developing and implementing a key competence approach in your country's education system, or to more generally introducing any type of educational reform related to the definition of key competences and revision of the curriculum, and to joint collaboration on such issues relying on the input from those working on different dimensions (e.g. teacher training, learning resources etc.)?

Obstacles:

· The Lithuanian translation of the EU term "Key Competences" and the nationally used term "General Competences" are the same. Official translation of European term "Key Competences" (syn. to basic, core, essential) to Lithuanian is bendrosios kompetencijos. In this case, the word bendrosios would have a meaning of general, universal, overall, common etc., which is the original meaning of the term "General Competences" as classified and defined at national level.

· Lack of competence-based learning outcomes assessment tools.

· The signs of existing external pressure to prioritise short-term learning outcomes/ results vs. long-term ones (e.g., passing the exam, entering university, excellent graduation scores etc.) are still common among education community (students, parents, teachers).

Facilitators:

· General competence development and competence-based learning are well documented and embedded into national curriculum of all school levels.

· Increasing variety of digital learning and teaching material that students and teachers can use.

· Sustainability and effective exploitation of projects' outcomes.

· Teachers' training.

· Initiatives and expertise of NGO engaged into quality development of school education.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/USEFUL URLs:

The Law on Education:
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=460836

The Provisions of National Education Strategy 2013-2022:
http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=438859

National Curriculum Framework:
http://portalas.emokykla.lt/bup/Puslapiai/default.aspx

Websites of institutions:

Ministry of Education and Science:
http://www.smm.lt

Education Development Centre:
http://www.upc.smm.lt

National Agency for Schools Evaluation:
http://www.nmva.smm.lt

National Examination Centre:
http://www.egzaminai.lt

Lithuanian Centre of Non-formal Youth Education:
http://www.lmnsc.lt

ABOUT EUROPEAN SCHOOLNET

European Schoolnet is the coordinator of the KeyCoNet project.

European Schoolnet is a network of 31 Ministries of Education from across the European member states, leading educational innovation at European level. As a major international think tank, European Schoolnet operates key European services in education on behalf of the European Commission, member Ministries of Education and industry partners.

European Schoolnet's activities are divided among three areas of work:

🔑 Policy, research and innovation: information sharing and evidence building.

🔑 Schools services: enhancing cooperation between schools across Europe.

🔑 Advocacy: how ICT and digital media contribute to transforming teaching and learning processes.

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