

MODERN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING SOLUTIONS  
TEACHER TRAINING AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN LITHUANIA

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**Abstract:** *Modern education systems around the world now treat inclusive education as their main educational priority because they want to provide all students including those with special educational needs equal learning chances. The development of inclusive education in Lithuania has progressed according to European and international educational standards which UNESCO and OECD and European Union member states support. The research investigates how teacher training programs help Lithuania achieve its goal of developing inclusive educational practices. The researchers conducted qualitative research by analyzing secondary data which included policy documents international reports and academic literature. The research shows that Lithuania has made progress toward implementing inclusive education through its teacher education programs but the country still needs to address major gaps between theoretical knowledge and actual teaching methods. The research demonstrates that practical training plus ongoing professional development should receive strengthening because these elements serve as the main drivers for achieving better results in inclusive educational practices.*

**Keywords:** *Inclusive education, teacher training, Lithuania, special educational needs, professional development, educational policy, qualitative research.*

### **Introduction**

People consider education to be a basic human right which enables social inclusion and equal treatment of people while supporting sustainable development. The global education system has recognized inclusive education as a method to provide all students with equal educational opportunities which includes students from all backgrounds and abilities. UNESCO (2020) explains that inclusive education goes beyond giving students access to educational facilities because it requires all students to participate actively and succeed in their learning process. The method focuses on building educational systems that help students learn by removing obstacles to their educational progress. Inclusive education has emerged as a key policy initiative in European countries which receive backing from the European Union and the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education. The success of inclusive education systems depends on proper teacher preparation which these institutions consider to be the most crucial element in their development. Lithuania has implemented inclusive education reforms which follow international standards because it belongs to the European Union. The country has integrated inclusive education principles into national education policies and teacher

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training programs. Schools continue to face difficulties in executing these educational policies because implementation problems persist between policy and practical educational work. Teachers function as the main drivers behind inclusive education success because they transform educational policies into actual teaching methods. Teacher preparedness has a direct impact on student results according to OECD (2019) since it affects how teachers manage various classroom environments. Teacher training programs need improvement because they serve as the vital element which will enable Lithuania to implement inclusive education successfully in its educational system. This paper investigates how teacher training affects the development of inclusive education programs in Lithuania.

### Literature Review

Inclusive education functions as an educational method which provides all students with equal opportunities to learn. UNESCO (2020) defines inclusive education as a process which enables people to participate and achieve success while experiencing a sense of belonging in addition to physical accessibility.

The European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education serves as the primary organization that develops inclusive practices and enhances teacher training programs across Europe. Research shows that well-trained teachers are essential for effective inclusion. Florian (2014) presents inclusive education as a system which needs teaching methods that make adjustments for various student learning needs. Teacher preparedness serves as a critical element which determines how students perform in classrooms that accommodate various learning needs according to OECD (2019) research. Lithuania has aligned its education system with European Union policies. The European Commission (2021) reports that Lithuania has made progress in implementing inclusive education reforms, but challenges in practical implementation still exist.

### Methodology:

This study adopts a qualitative research approach based on secondary data analysis. Sources include international reports, policy documents, and academic literature.

Main sources:

UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report (2020)

OECD TALIS 2018 Report

European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education Country Reports

World Bank Education Data (Lithuania)

European Commission Education and Training Monitor (2021)

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**Results:**

Lithuania has made significant progress in integrating inclusive education into teacher training programs. Universities now include courses on special educational needs, educational psychology, and inclusive teaching strategies (European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2021). Teacher education programs emphasize differentiated instruction, individualized learning support, classroom adaptation strategies, and inclusive pedagogical approaches. However, OECD (2019) reports that while teachers have strong theoretical knowledge, they often lack practical experience in real classroom environments. A further issue is the gap between urban and rural schools. According to World Bank (2022), rural schools face limited access to resources, support staff, and teaching materials, which affects inclusive education implementation. UNESCO (2020) also stresses the importance of practical training in teacher education programs, which is still insufficient in some Lithuanian institutions.

**Discussion:**

The research results demonstrate that teacher training functions as the essential element which enables successful implementation of inclusive education practices. The existing policies show strong development yet their actual execution remains inconsistent across different areas. Florian (2014) states that inclusive education requires teachers to develop flexible teaching methods which accommodate the learning needs of different students. The process of implementing this practice in Lithuania remains ongoing. The main obstacle in this field exists because practical applications do not match existing theoretical knowledge. Theoretical training fails to prepare many teachers for their work in inclusive classroom settings according to research from the OECD published in 2019. The process of professional development needs to occur without interruption throughout a person's career. The European Commission (2021) emphasizes that teachers must practice lifelong learning throughout their professional lives. The educational system faces implementation challenges because urban schools receive better resources than rural schools. UNESCO recommends that universities and schools and international organizations should work together to create educational partnerships.

**Conclusion:**

Teacher training is essential for inclusive education in Lithuania. Although progress has been made, challenges remain in practical training, resource distribution, and implementation gaps.

Strengthening teacher education programs, improving professional development, and enhancing collaboration between institutions are necessary steps for improvement.

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