

# PODCAST



## MINILECTURE - DIVERSITY AS A STRENGTH: LEARNING TO LIVE AND ACT TOGETHER



### 1. THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

We live in a time when the world has shrunk - not in size, but in distance. The internet, social media, and low-cost travel have made what was once far away now just one click away.

#### Think about it - in a single day you might:

- Watch a Korean K-drama on Netflix or a Polish crime series,
- Order sushi in Skopje, or grab pierogi in Warsaw,
- Listen to Macedonian pop, Polish rock, American rap, and Nigerian Afrobeat all in one playlist,

And chat with a friend from Italy, Ukraine, or Turkiye on Instagram or Discord. Our daily lives - school, music, food, fashion, and gaming - are deeply connected with cultures from every corner of the planet. You can walk through Skopje and see sushi bars, Turkish kebabs, and Italian gelato shops, or through Warsaw, where you'll find ramen, vegan falafel, and Georgian khachapuri. Diversity isn't something "foreign" anymore - it's already part of who we are.

## Diversity: A gift and a challenge

Diversity is incredible - it opens our eyes to new ways of thinking, fresh ideas, and different traditions. But let's be honest - it's not always easy.

Imagine this:

A new student joins your class. She's from another country - say, Turkiye or Ukraine. Her Polish isn't perfect yet. Do we help her feel welcome, or do we let her sit alone at lunch because we "don't know what to say"?

Or, maybe your classmate doesn't eat pork for religious reasons. Do we respect that choice and learn something new, or do we joke around and say, "Oh, come on, just one sausage won't hurt"?

These small, everyday situations show whether we truly know how to live together in diversity. They test our empathy, our respect, and our ability to connect.

## The bag of diversity

Think of diversity as a *bag full of treasures*. It's packed with different languages, flavors, songs, and stories - things that make our world vibrant and rich.

But here's the trick: that bag can also be heavy if we don't know how to carry it. If we lack understanding, openness, or empathy, the treasures stay locked inside. But when we open that bag with curiosity and kindness, we discover amazing things - new friendships, inspiration, and creative ideas that can change the world.

## Building bridges, not walls

Here's the thing - the skills we need to live in a diverse world aren't something we're born with. We learn them - just like we learn to play guitar, code, or ride a skateboard. Openness, empathy, and dialogue are like muscles - the more we practice, the stronger they become.

In this training, we'll explore how to turn challenging situations into opportunities - how to understand, communicate, and cooperate across cultures.

Because the truth is: our world - whether in Skopje, Kraków, or anywhere else - won't become less diverse. If anything, it's becoming even more colorful, dynamic, and interconnected.

The question is: Will we treat that as a problem - or as our greatest strength?

## 2. WHAT IS INTERCULTURAL READINESS?

Imagine you're on a youth exchange in another country - maybe in Poland, Spain, or North Macedonia. You meet people from all over Europe. Everyone speaks a different language, eats different food, and expresses emotions in their own way.

One person laughs loudly and hugs everyone. Another speaks quietly and keeps a bit of distance. Someone starts dinner at 9 p.m. - because that's normal in Spain - while someone else doesn't eat a specific meat type at all because of their religion. At first, it might feel confusing or even uncomfortable.

But if you have intercultural readiness, you don't rush to judge. You stay curious. You ask, you listen, you try to understand. You know that different doesn't mean wrong - it just means different.

### **Knowledge. Skills. Attitudes. Action.**

Intercultural readiness is like a mix of four superpowers - knowledge, skills, attitude, and action.

- **Knowledge** means you understand that people may celebrate different holidays - like Ramadan, Easter, Orthodox Christmas, or Slava - or have other family traditions, ways of dressing, or beliefs.
- **Skills** mean you can really listen, ask questions without judging, and find solutions when misunderstandings happen.
- **Attitude** means you approach others with curiosity, respect, and empathy. You don't say, "That's weird," but "That's interesting - tell me more!"
- **Action** means you do something. You invite the new student from Ukraine to join your group project. You support the Polish classmate who's being teased for their accent. You say "Hey, that's not cool" when someone makes a hateful joke online.

### **A toolkit, a key, and a flashlight**

Think of intercultural readiness like a toolkit:

- *Knowledge* is your instruction manual - it tells you how things work.
- *Skills* are your tools - your hammer, screwdriver, and pliers.
- *Attitude* is your motivation - your decision, actually, to fix something.
- *Action* is when you roll up your sleeves and start building or repairing.

Or imagine it as a **key** - without it, you stay stuck in the hallway, wondering what's behind the door. But when you have intercultural readiness, you open the door - and step into new worlds full of people, ideas, and possibilities.

Or maybe it's like a **flashlight in the dark** - helping you find your way when you feel unsure around someone different. It gives you light, direction, and confidence.

### A real-life example

Let's say a new student joins your class - maybe from Ukraine, Syria, or Kosovo. Their Macedonian or Polish isn't perfect yet. They look a bit lost.

If you have intercultural readiness, you don't wait for someone else to act. You smile, wave, show them where the classroom is, or invite them to sit next to you. Even without words, you show kindness - and that can mean more than perfect grammar. It doesn't take exceptional talent - just a bit of **courage, empathy, and openness**.

### Like learning to ride a bike

The best part? Intercultural readiness isn't something you're born with - it's something you can learn and practice.

At first, it might feel awkward - like learning to ride a bike. You might make mistakes, lose balance, or say the wrong thing. But with practice, you get better, more confident, and soon - you're moving freely, connecting with people everywhere you go.

And just like riding a bike - once you learn, you never forget.

## 3. WHY WILL IT BE HELPFUL TO YOU?

You might be thinking: "Okay, this all sounds nice... but do I really need it? I already have my school, my friends, and my everyday life. Nothing's really changing." Well - it actually is.

The world around us is becoming more colorful, more connected, and more diverse than ever before. Even if you live in a small town or go to the same school since kindergarten, diversity is already part of your life. You might just not have noticed it yet.

## In school

Look around your classroom. In many schools today - whether in Bitola, Tetovo, or Warsaw - you can find students from Ukraine, Kosovo, or Turkiye. They bring with them new languages, habits, and perspectives.

Sometimes misunderstandings happen - maybe someone celebrates a holiday you've never heard of, or doesn't eat what's served in the cafeteria. But intercultural readiness helps you turn these differences into connections - into friendships, teamwork, and learning moments. It creates classrooms where everyone feels welcome, and where diversity becomes a strength, not a barrier.

## In everyday life

Even if you never leave your town, diversity reaches you through your phone. On TikTok or Instagram, you follow creators from Korea, Ireland, or Canada. You learn dances to songs in languages you don't even speak.

On Discord, you might play games with someone from Germany, Serbia, or Greece. Intercultural readiness helps you understand what's behind what you see - it enables you to spot stereotypes in memes, recognize hate speech disguised as "jokes," and know when something online is built on prejudice or misinformation.

It's like having a digital compass — helping you stay kind, respectful, and thoughtful online.

## In your future career

And here's another secret - this skill will make you stand out in the future. Employers today don't just want people who "know their job." They want people who can work with others - across languages, borders, and mindsets.

Imagine you're working in an IT team with people from Poland, North Macedonia, and Latvia. Or you're studying abroad on Erasmus+ in Kraków or Ljubljana. If you can adapt, communicate, and understand different perspectives, you're already ahead. Intercultural readiness is not just a skill for "travelling abroad." It's a life skill - one that shapes how you treat others, solve problems, and create opportunities wherever you go. Because diversity isn't going away. The question is - will you know how to use it to your advantage, or will you let it confuse and divide?

## 4. HOW WILL WE WORK?

Now, you might be wondering - "Okay, but what will this training actually look like?" Well, here's the good news - it's not a boring lecture.

You won't be sitting still and copying notes from a screen. You'll be moving, talking, laughing, thinking - you'll be part of the story.

### What we'll do:

- You'll do interactive **exercises and worksheets** to discover more about yourself and how you see others.
- You'll explore **real stories and case studies** - like how cultural misunderstandings can happen online, at school, or even in group projects.
- You'll listen to **short podcasts and watch multimedia clips** that spark new ideas and emotions.
- You'll take part in **simulations and role plays** - stepping into someone else's shoes to see how it feels to be "the new one" or "the outsider."
- You'll test your knowledge through **quizzes and games** - because learning is easier when it's fun.

### A laboratory of learning

Think of this workshop as a laboratory of people and ideas. Here, you can experiment - say what you think, try something new, even make mistakes.

Sometimes things will click. Sometimes they won't. But every time, you'll learn something new - about others and about yourself.

It's a safe space where every opinion matters and every story counts. You'll bring your own experiences - your background, your beliefs, your dreams - and together, we'll mix them into something truly inspiring.

Because the most important thing in this training isn't the slides or the coach - It's you. You're the main character of this journey.

## 5. WHAT WILL YOU GAIN?

So, what's in it for you? What will you actually take away from this experience - besides a few hours on your calendar? Let's break it down.

### **A better understanding of yourself**

Before you can understand others, you need to understand yourself. Through reflection and exercises, you'll notice how your own values, habits, and experiences shape how you see the world. This awareness helps you build stronger, more authentic relationships - both in school and beyond.

### **The power to recognize stereotypes**

You'll learn how to separate facts from opinions - and how to see when a comment or a post online is based on prejudice. You'll understand why stereotypes hurt - and how to challenge them calmly and intelligently. This is one of the most valuable 21st-century skills - especially in a world full of misinformation and quick judgments.

### **Confidence in conversation**

You'll learn to talk to people who think differently - without fear or anger. You'll discover that you don't have to agree to understand someone. And that respect and curiosity can turn even a disagreement into a meaningful exchange.

### **Practical tools for real life**

We'll give you concrete, hands-on tools - ways to respond to conflict, express empathy, and build dialogue. These are things you can use immediately: in class, on social media, while travelling, or at your future workplace.

### **A sense of Influence**

You'll see that even small actions - smiling at someone new, standing up against hate, or starting a positive conversation - can change the atmosphere around you. You'll feel empowered to make a difference, no matter how small it seems.

At the end of the day, diversity isn't a problem to solve - it's a superpower to develop. Once you unlock it, it will stay with you - in your school, your friendships, your future career, and every community you'll be part of.

**So, are you ready to embrace your new superpower?**

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