



The sense of belonging

Multilingualism and intercultural learning

With approximately 195 countries and over 7,000 languages spoken worldwide, linguistic **diversity** is immense. In a globalized world, multilingualism has become increasingly common, with around 50-60% of the world's population speaking >2 languages. This highlights the importance of **multilingual and intercultural learning (MIL)** which can support lifelong learning, aid language revitalization and support the inclusion of marginalized learners. MIL is also essential for sustainable development, peaceful and equitable societies, improving cultural fluency, and fostering mutual respect and understanding.

MULTILINGUALISM

- The ability to use more than one language in daily life
- It enhances cognitive abilities, including memory, problem-solving skills and mental flexibility
- It improves emotional competencies, including empathy and cross-cultural understanding

INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

- The process of gaining knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours through interaction with different cultures
- It helps people from different backgrounds live together peacefully
- It involves learning about yourself, understanding others, and recognising cultural differences in people

MULTILINGUAL AND INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION (MIL)

It refers to the use of **at least 3 languages**: the mother tongue(s), a regional or national language, and an international language. It is typically based on mother-tongue instruction to improve learning outcomes, inclusion, and cultural diversity.

Its main objectives:

- To improve learning outcomes
- To enhance access and inclusion
- To support sustainable development

IDEAS AND SOLUTIONS

- Offering teaching staff MIL
- More international student events
- Highlighting daily historical milestones from students' home countries

- Making all universities completely multilingually accessible
- Forming groups by intentionally mixing backgrounds
- Offer more and accessible language classes

- Creating materials and guidelines which facilitate MIL
- Establishing days with focus on the culture of enrolled students
- Establishing a mentorship programme

References

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