

D16 Katja / Germany / Foreign Languages in Adult Education

Interaction partner(s): Congolese student
Moment of enquiry: SS 08
Experience of difference: Behaviour expectations for invitations

During a semester abroad in Belgium, German student Katja meets Congolese student Akim, with whom she stays in touch by email after her return to Germany. A few months later, Katja is getting ready to get married, and she decides to invite Akim. A few days later she receives an email in which Akim expresses that he feels honoured to be invited and that he would love to attend, but he doesn't know for sure whether he can actually make the trip happen. One week before the wedding it is still not clear whether Akim can make it or not, despite several inquiries from Katja. Katja is getting impatient, as she has to find accommodation for the Congolese student. Finally, four days before the wedding, Akim calls and asks whether he could come the very next day and stay with Katja's family until the wedding. His brother is available that day and could drive him. Katja finds his request unbelievable. It is quite obvious that the days before a wedding are very busy, and nobody would have time to tend to an extra guest. She makes it clear to him that this is not possible and asks him to look for an alternative. Two days later, Akim calls again, announcing his arrival for the next day. Luckily, Katja is able to arrange accommodation for him with friends.

1. What are the German student's expectations toward a wedding guest?
2. What does the Congolese student expect of the German family, and what could explain his expectations?