



Best practice for inclusive VET

(VšĮ “eMundus”)

Title of the best practice:

Inclusive Vocational Education Through Individualised Support, Multidisciplinary Collaboration, and Adapted Learning Environments in Lithuanian VET Schools

Country of the case study

Lithuania has a well-developed vocational education and training (VET) system governed by national legislation that emphasises accessibility, inclusion, and lifelong learning. Recent reforms have strengthened the focus on inclusive education, requiring VET institutions to support students with diverse special educational needs (SEN) through individualised approaches, adapted learning materials, flexible assessment, and collaboration with support specialists.

National strategies such as the Law on Education, the 2024–2030 Inclusion Development Plan, and ongoing VET modernisation efforts promote equal opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in mainstream vocational training. These developments have encouraged VET schools to redesign learning environments and practices to ensure accessibility and smoother transitions to employment.

Context

This best practice brings together the inclusive approaches of two Lithuanian VET providers:

Raseiniai Technology and Business School (RTBS)

A regional VET institution offering programmes in engineering, technology, business, logistics, services, health, and social care. RTBS operates in a region affected by demographic decline, workforce shortages, and socioeconomic inequalities—contextual factors that increased the importance of inclusion and personalised learning.



RTBS works closely with employers, the municipal authority, NGOs, chambers of commerce, and international partners through Erasmus+ projects.

Karalius Mindaugas Vocational Training Centre (KMVTC)

A large VET institution providing general education from Grade 9 alongside vocational programmes. KMVTC collaborates with a broad network of social partners and institutions supporting learners with disabilities. Its inclusive practice is shaped by close cooperation among teachers, support specialists, administration, parents, and external agencies.

Together, these institutions demonstrate a mature, systemic approach to inclusive VET in Lithuania.

Problem and motivation

Both institutions observed an increasing number of students with disabilities enrolling in VET. Many faced challenges related to:

- learning pace or cognitive processing
- sensory sensitivities
- emotional or behavioural difficulties
- social integration
- transition to labour market

Traditional teaching approaches were not always sufficiently flexible, accessible, or differentiated. Schools recognised the need for:

- more individualised support
- adapted learning materials
- strengthened educational support services
- improved teacher competencies
- safer and more accessible learning environments

Participation in Erasmus+ projects further motivated the adoption of innovative, learner-centred inclusion practices.



Description of the practical approach

The two schools implemented a comprehensive set of inclusive measures, transforming teaching processes, physical spaces, and support structures to provide meaningful access to education for students with SEN.

1. Individualised Learning Experiences

Both institutions prepare **individual learning plans**, adjust the complexity and pace of tasks, and apply differentiated instruction based on each learner's abilities. Practical tasks are adapted so students can engage safely and confidently. Assessment practices are flexible and may include oral examinations, visual or practical demonstrations, portfolios, or project-based assignments.

2. Strengthening Multidisciplinary Support Teams

Each school has established a strong support system involving special education teachers, psychologists, social pedagogues, career counsellors, and mentor teachers. These specialists collaborate daily to support both academic development and emotional well-being. Cooperation with external agencies—such as municipal support services and NGOs—ensures continuity of care beyond the school environment.

3. Adapted and Accessible Learning Environments

Learning spaces were redesigned to ensure accessibility, including the creation of **quiet rooms**, **sensory spaces**, and **flexible seating arrangements**. Instructional materials were adapted into easy-to-read formats, with clear structure, visuals, and simplified language when needed. Workshops and practical training areas were adjusted for safety and sensory comfort.

4. Implementation of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

Both schools apply UDL principles by offering multiple formats for presenting information (text, audio, video, visual cues), various ways for students to demonstrate their achievements, and differentiated forms of engagement designed to increase motivation, autonomy, and choice. UDL helps reduce the need for individual accommodations by making the learning environment accessible from the outset.

5. Workplace-Based Learning (WBL) Support at RTBS

RTBS provides structured workplace training in partnership with employers. Students are assigned workplace mentors who support their tasks, while teachers closely monitor progress using workplace logs,



employer evaluations, and student self-reflection. Tasks are adapted to match each student's abilities, ensuring safety and successful participation.

Accessibility

Physical Accessibility

Both schools ensure adapted classrooms, safe tools, ergonomic workstations, quiet zones, and sensory-friendly rooms, allowing learners with diverse needs to navigate the environment independently.

Digital Accessibility

Schools use digital platforms with accessible settings, offering video-based content and digitally adapted materials with large fonts, high contrast, and supportive visual markers.

Pedagogical Accessibility

Teachers apply differentiation, continuous feedback, clear task structure, and small learning units to ensure that learners understand expectations and can progress at their own pace. Close cooperation between teachers and specialists ensures consistent pedagogical support.

Assistive Technology

Students use tablets, laptops, large-print materials, noise-cancelling headphones, and other digital tools to support comprehension, focus, and communication.

Results

The inclusive practices implemented at Raseiniai Technology and Business School (RTBS) and Karalius Mindaugas Vocational Training Centre (KMVTC) have led to clear improvements in the academic, social, and emotional development of learners with special educational needs (SEN). Both institutions report that students have become more confident, more engaged in learning, and better prepared for practical tasks and daily activities.

RTBS



At RTBS, adaptations in practical training have had a particularly strong impact. In the cook programme, quieter kitchen areas and adjusted workflows have enabled students with sensory sensitivities to participate fully and safely. In healthcare training, additional small-group practical guidance has resulted in stronger skill mastery and better understanding of procedures. Teachers observe increased motivation, lower dropout risk, and more consistent attendance among SEN learners. The introduction of workplace-based learning further enhances students' readiness for real employment settings: employer feedback shows that, with mentorship and task adjustment, learners demonstrate reliability, practical competence, and growing confidence.

KMVTC

KMVTC, which currently educates 43 SEN learners, reports significant progress in social interaction, emotional stability, and independence. Students participate more actively in lessons, communicate more openly with peers, and manage equipment more safely during practical activities. Teachers note improvements in organisation, self-regulation, and daily life skills such as preparing materials, planning tasks, and maintaining their workspaces. These gains reflect the effectiveness of a long-standing support ecosystem involving psychologists, special educators, and class teachers.

Overall Impact

Across both institutions, inclusive VET has strengthened student well-being, reduced behavioural challenges, and increased academic participation. Families report higher independence and confidence at home, while mixed-ability classrooms promote tolerance and positive peer relationships. The practices not only enhance student outcomes but contribute to more supportive, adaptable, and socially cohesive school environments.

Work-Based Learning and Transition to Employment

RTBS integrates work-based learning (WBL) into the educational pathway of SEN learners through close cooperation with local employers. Students complete practical training in real workplaces where company mentors guide them through tasks, reinforce safety, and help them understand professional expectations. Progress is monitored through tools such as workplace logs, employer evaluations, and student reflections. Regular follow-up meetings between teachers and employers ensure early identification of difficulties and allow for timely adjustments to support, such as adapting tasks or providing additional preparation. This structured model strengthens learners' confidence, develops essential vocational and social skills, and helps them better understand the realities of employment.



KMVTC does not currently provide external WBL placements for learners with disabilities due to programme structure, employer readiness, and the need for additional specialised support. However, the school recognises the importance of workplace experience for SEN learners and plans to expand this area in the future. Preparatory steps include exploring new partnerships with employers, assessing support needs, and considering mentor training so that future placements can be implemented safely and effectively. Developing WBL opportunities remains a strategic priority for improving transitions from school to the labour market.

Outcome Indicators (0, 6, 12 months)

- Both institutions use a structured, multi-stage monitoring system that allows them to track learner progress over time and adjust support when needed. Monitoring begins at the start of the learning pathway, when baseline data is collected on participation, attendance, learning needs, and any required adaptations. Attendance and participation are monitored continuously, allowing teachers and support teams to identify early signs of disengagement or emerging challenges.
- Academic progress is reviewed regularly through formative and summative assessments, adapted tasks, and individual learning plan updates. At six months, teachers and specialists evaluate how learners are responding to instructional strategies, whether the adaptations are effective, and whether additional supports or changes to the learning plan are required. Completion levels—such as progress towards module outcomes, practical skills mastery, and attainment of credits—are documented at key stages, particularly at the end of each semester or training cycle.
- Learner satisfaction is assessed through informal discussions, individual consultations, and surveys, helping schools understand how students perceive the learning environment, support offered, and their sense of belonging. At RTBS, mentor feedback from workplace-based training placements provides an additional layer of information about behaviour, practical skill development, and employability competencies. At KMVTC, where WBL placements are not yet implemented, greater emphasis is placed on monitoring behavioural and socio-emotional development, including communication skills, self-regulation, and initiative during practical training inside the school.
- At the 12-month mark, schools examine longer-term indicators such as consistent attendance, improved academic performance, successful completion of modules, and readiness for progression—either into more advanced training or into WBL (RTBS). These indicators collectively allow both institutions to evaluate the effectiveness of their inclusive practices and to plan for continuous improvement.



Sustainability

RTBS and KMVTC demonstrate different, yet complementary, forms of sustainability in inclusive vocational education. Since 2022, RTBS has integrated inclusive practices into its school development strategy and quality assurance processes, ensuring that inclusion is not treated as an add-on but as a core principle guiding teaching, planning, and resource allocation. The school has established a stable support team, invested in teacher training, and continues to build strong partnerships with employers and local authorities—elements that strengthen long-term sustainability.

KMVTC's sustainability is rooted in more than 15 years of consistent practice. Inclusive education is embedded in the daily culture of the institution and is widely accepted by staff, students, and families. The school has established routines, support structures, and specialist roles that have become integral to its identity. This long-term continuity provides stable foundations for ongoing development and allows the school to adapt gradually to new needs and policies without disrupting existing support systems.

Both institutions demonstrate strong capacity to maintain and evolve their inclusive models, supported by consistent leadership, committed staff, and well-established cooperation with external partners.

Transferability

The inclusive approach developed by RTBS and KMVTC can be successfully replicated in other VET institutions, provided that several basic conditions are met. First, school leadership must demonstrate a clear commitment to inclusive education, ensuring that inclusion is embedded in the school's strategic vision and operational planning. Second, institutions must establish a multidisciplinary support structure—including special educators, psychologists, social pedagogues, and mentor teachers—to provide coordinated assistance to learners.

Transferability also requires adapted curricula and flexible assessment methods that allow students to demonstrate competencies in ways that match their abilities. Teachers must receive ongoing training in inclusive pedagogy, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), differentiation, and behavioural support. Schools need to form partnerships with external support agencies, municipal services, and employers to ensure continuity of support beyond the classroom.

Institutions also need to foster a culture of continuous improvement, where feedback from learners, teachers, parents, and specialists informs ongoing adjustments. With these conditions in place, most schools can implement a functioning inclusive model within one to two years, though continued refinement and capacity-building will remain essential over time.



Cost efficiency

The inclusive approach used at both institutions is cost-efficient because it builds on existing resources rather than creating separate, parallel systems. Most adaptations—such as differentiated materials, flexible instruction, and small-group support—are implemented by existing teachers and specialists. This approach reduces dropout rates and increases learner engagement, which in turn lowers the long-term social and educational costs associated with disengagement or school failure.

Investments in adapted materials, teacher training, and specialist support require financial and human resources; however, these costs are outweighed by the benefits of higher completion rates, better skill acquisition, and improved employability. Since the adaptations rely heavily on the expertise and collaboration of in-house staff, rather than the purchase of expensive external services, the model remains financially sustainable.

Long-term outcomes—such as increased independence, social participation, and potential for employment—further strengthen the economic rationale of the inclusive VET system.

However, some aspects require significant human resources, particularly support specialist time.

Success Factors

Several key factors underpin the success of the inclusive practices at RTBS and KMVTC. Strong and supportive school leadership has been essential for setting expectations, establishing support structures, and ensuring that inclusion is prioritised in planning and resourcing. Cohesive teamwork among teachers, specialists, and administrators fosters a shared responsibility for student success, while regular communication with parents strengthens home–school cooperation.

Individualised approaches allow each learner’s strengths and needs to be recognised, enabling teachers to adapt content, pacing, and methods accordingly. Continuous professional development ensures that staff remain confident and competent in applying inclusive strategies, particularly those aligned with UDL. Both institutions also benefit from participation in Erasmus+ and international cooperation, which introduces new methods, encourages innovation, and strengthens professional networks.

Ongoing monitoring and internal evaluation help refine practices and maintain high quality. Together, these factors create a strong and adaptable foundation for long-term success.



Challenges and Solutions

- Despite their achievements, both schools encounter challenges that commonly arise in inclusive VET settings. One major challenge is ensuring that all teachers feel adequately prepared to work with diverse learners, especially when they have varying levels of experience with SEN. To address this, schools have invested in targeted training, mentoring, and peer support.
- Another challenge relates to limited material and spatial resources, which can restrict the extent to which learning environments can be adapted. Schools have gradually upgraded spaces and materials, prioritising the most urgent needs and seeking external support when possible.
- Employer hesitancy remains a barrier, particularly in the context of providing WBL placements for SEN learners. Schools work to overcome this by developing strong relationships with employers, communicating clearly about support mechanisms, and, in some cases, preparing employers through orientation sessions or joint planning.
- These challenges are addressed through cooperation, gradual improvement, and long-term commitment rather than quick or isolated solutions.

Reason for Selecting the Practice for WIN

- This practice has been selected for the W.I.N. list because it represents a strong and mature model of inclusive vocational education that aligns closely with the strategic priorities of European VET systems. The approaches implemented by Raseiniai Technology and Business School (RTBS) and Karalius Mindaugas Vocational Training Centre (KMVTC) demonstrate how inclusion can be embedded in everyday school life through systematic planning, multidisciplinary cooperation, and continuous adaptation of learning environments.
- One of the key reasons for selecting this practice is its **demonstrated impact on learner outcomes**. Both schools show measurable improvements in academic achievement, social and emotional development, practical skill acquisition, and participation in school activities. Students with a wide range of disabilities—cognitive, sensory, behavioural, or physical—are successfully integrated into mainstream VET programmes, proving that inclusive approaches can work effectively in hands-on, technical, and practice-oriented learning environments.
- A second important factor is the practice's **strong alignment with European inclusion and equity policies**, including the European Pillar of Social Rights, the VET Recommendation, and the EU Strategy for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The schools' use of Universal Design for

Learning (UDL), accessible learning environments, adapted assessment, and structured support systems reflects the EU's call for personalised and flexible learning pathways that ensure no learner is left behind.

- The case is also selected because it illustrates **long-term sustainability**. At KMVTC, inclusive practice has been evolving for more than 15 years and is now part of the institution's identity. Meanwhile, RTBS has embedded inclusive approaches into its strategic planning, teacher training, and quality assurance processes, ensuring they are not temporary projects but permanent commitments. This long-term engagement demonstrates that inclusive VET can be consistently maintained even in changing social, economic, or demographic conditions.
- Another reason is the model's **high transferability potential**. Both institutions rely on structures and methods that other VET providers across Europe can replicate: multidisciplinary teams, individual learning plans, adapted practical tasks, flexible assessment, and partnerships with employers and support agencies. Because the approaches use mostly existing resources and focus on capacity-building rather than expensive external services, they can be adopted by VET centres of different sizes and contexts.
- Furthermore, the practice demonstrates **effective cooperation across sectors**, including collaboration with municipalities, NGOs, employer networks, and social partners. RTBS's work-based learning model, supported by employer mentors and structured monitoring, provides a strong example of how real workplaces can be made accessible for SEN learners. KMVTC's long-term collaboration with parents, specialists, and external institutions highlights the importance of community-based support in inclusion.
- Finally, this practice was selected because it provides **valuable insights for policy development**. It demonstrates that inclusive VET is possible in mainstream institutions, even when resources are limited, as long as leadership is committed and staff are prepared. It also identifies remaining gaps—such as the need for more employer involvement in WBL—which can inform national and European discussions on how to support the transition from school to employment for SEN learners.
- Overall, the practice from Lithuania offers a balanced combination of **proven effectiveness, strategic relevance, sustainability, and transferability**, making it a strong candidate for the W.I.N. list and an inspiring example for VET providers across Europe.



Co-funded by
the European Union

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