



# Research and collection of inclusive VET and employment success stories

## Report on the National Systems and Best Cases in Lithuania and Portugal

VšĮ "eMundus"

### 1. Aims of the research

This research examines two complementary domains of inclusion within the European context:

Inclusive Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Lithuania, based on the practices of Raseiniai Technology and Business School (RTBS) and Karalius Mindaugas Vocational Training Centre (KMVTC). These institutions offer a rich example of how mainstream VET schools can systematically include learners with diverse special educational needs (SEN) through individualised learning support, adapted environments, multidisciplinary teams, and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approaches. The aim is to identify how Lithuanian VET structures enable equitable learning pathways and how these practices can inform broader European VET inclusion models.

Inclusive employment in Portugal, where medium and large private-sector companies operate under binding disability employment quotas and extensive accessibility requirements informed by national legislation and the European Accessibility Act. These frameworks have led organisations to implement structured governance for reasonable accommodation, accessibility, and neuroinclusion. The objective is to understand how quota systems, legal obligations, and organisational strategies contribute to sustainable, rights-based employment practices.

By analysing these two national cases side-by-side—Lithuania's VET inclusion and Portugal's employment inclusion—the research highlights how strong educational inclusion models and rights-based employment systems can complement one another. The ultimate aim is to develop evidence-based insights that support:

- More accessible and equitable VET pathways in Europe
- Improved employment inclusion for persons with disabilities
- Enhanced continuity between education and labour market participation
- Transferable organisational practices for sustainable inclusion across sectors



## 2. Scope and Definitions of the Research

### 2.1 Scope and Definitions as far as VET education is concerned (VET types, age, disability categories)

The Lithuanian case focuses on two mainstream VET providers—RTBS and KMVTC—that operate within the national system guided by the Law on Education and the 2024–2030 Inclusion Development Plan. These schools offer programmes in engineering, technology, business, logistics, services, health and social care, and general education from Grade 9 upwards. Both serve learners aged approximately 14–21, including adults in vocational tracks. As established regional VET centres, they translate national inclusion policies into everyday practice and demonstrate how structured support and adapted learning environments can sustainably improve access for learners with diverse needs.

#### Disability and SEN categories included

The scope includes learners with:

- Cognitive and learning disabilities
- Sensory sensitivities
- Emotional and behavioural difficulties
- Physical disabilities
- Autism spectrum–related needs (through sensory and communication adaptations)

#### Core definitions

- Inclusion refers to full participation in mainstream VET through adapted learning, flexible assessment, accessible environments, and ongoing specialist support.
- Individual Learning Plan (ILP): custom pathway outlining supports, pacing, and assessment adaptations.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL): provision of multiple means of representation, action, and engagement, reducing the need for individual accommodations.

#### Foreign comparison (Portugal as employment case – not VET)

Although the Portuguese case does not focus on VET, it provides valuable insight into how education-to-employment transitions are supported by accessibility and anti-discrimination legislation. This contrast highlights that while Lithuania strengthens inclusion within VET structures, Portugal enhances inclusion at the point of labour market entry. Together, these two cases illustrate how coordinated reforms across education and employment systems can create a continuous, barrier-free pathway for learners and workers with disabilities.

### 2.2 Scope and Definitions as far as inclusive employment is concerned

The Portuguese model applies to medium and large private-sector employers ( $\geq 75$  employees), who are legally required to recruit persons with disabilities under the national disability quota system. Enforcement is carried out by the Labour Authority (ACT), and accessibility obligations extend to ICT, banking, e-commerce, public-facing digital services, and physical workplaces under the European Accessibility Act (EAA).

#### Disability categories included

Employment quotas apply to workers with  $\geq 60\%$  officially certified disability, covering:

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- Physical, sensory, intellectual disabilities
- Neurodivergence (autism, ADHD, dyslexia)
- Chronic or long-term functional limitations.

### **Core definitions**

- Reasonable Accommodation (RA): practical, physical, organisational or technological adjustments enabling equal participation. Portugal operationalises this through RA Passports and clear service-level targets (10–30 days).
- Accessibility (EN 301 549): mandatory digital accessibility standard applied to both public-sector and private-sector services.
- Quota compliance: legal obligation for private employers (1–2%) with fines for non-compliance.
- Neuroinclusion: structured support for cognitive diversity, often delivered through partnerships such as Specialisterne Portugal.

## **3. Criteria for Selecting Good Practices**

The practices selected from Lithuania and Portugal meet the following criteria:

### **Proven impact on inclusion outcomes**

Lithuanian VET schools report measurable improvements in academic participation, attendance, emotional stability, skill mastery, and WBL readiness. Portuguese employers report compliance improvements, faster RA delivery, and increased neurodivergent hiring.

### **Alignment with European frameworks**

Both cases demonstrate strong connection to European principles such as:

- Universal Design for Learning (UDL)
- European Accessibility Act (EAA)
- EU disability rights strategies

### **Sustainability and long-term integration**

KMVTTC has embedded inclusion for more than 15 years; RTBS has integrated inclusive practices into school-wide strategies since 2022. In Portugal, RA processes, accessibility governance, and quota reporting are embedded in HR/IT operations.

### **Transferability**

Both models rely on structures that can be replicated in other European contexts, such as multidisciplinary support teams, RA workflows, UDL-based teaching, and national funding schemes.

### **Reasonable cost and resource efficiency**

Both countries use existing institutional structures and public funding (IEFP in Portugal; internal specialists and mainstream teachers in Lithuania).

## 4. Study Design and Sampling

The study employs a comparative qualitative approach based on document analysis of two detailed best-practice reports. No interviews or field research were conducted for this report; insights derive solely from the submitted documentation.

### Lithuania (VET case sampling)

Sampling includes two VET institutions selected for:

- Demonstrated maturity of inclusive practice
- Diverse SEN learner populations
- Use of ILPs, UDL, adapted environments, and multidisciplinary teams
- Structured employer partnerships enabling WBL (RTBS)

### Portugal (employment case sampling)

Sampling focuses on:

- Private-sector employers subject to quota obligations
- Organisations applying RA Passports, accessibility governance, and cross-functional inclusion practices
- Partnerships with national agencies (IEFP, INR) and neuroinclusion networks (Specialisterne)

This dual sampling allows for meaningful comparison of education-focused inclusion versus employment-focused inclusion.

## 5. Data Sources and Tools

This report is based on a structured qualitative analysis of two detailed best-practice documents provided by project partners. The research does not incorporate external datasets, interviews, or field visits; instead, it relies on systematic interpretation of the evidence, frameworks, and outcomes described in the submitted cases.

### Primary Sources

The analysis draws exclusively on two internally prepared documents:

- Inclusive VET in Lithuania — best practice descriptions from Raseiniai Technology and Business School (RTBS) and Karalius Mindaugas Vocational Training Centre (KMVTC), outlining institutional structures, support systems, learning adaptations, and reported outcomes.
- Inclusive Employment in Portugal — private-sector inclusion model documenting legal obligations, quota implementation, accessibility requirements, governance structures, reasonable accommodation workflows, partnerships, timelines, and inclusion KPIs.

### Analytical Tools and Methods

To ensure a rigorous comparison of the two cases, the following analytical tools were applied: **Comparative Document Analysis**

Each document was reviewed to identify core themes related to inclusion, such as governance, accessibility, support structures, capacity-building, and measurable outcomes. Key elements

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were then compared across the Lithuanian (education-focused) and Portuguese (employment-focused) contexts.

### **Thematic Coding**

The content of both documents was coded into categories such as:

- Pedagogical and organisational inclusion strategies
- Legal obligations and policy drivers
- Support mechanisms and stakeholder roles
- Environmental and digital accessibility
- Monitoring, evaluation, and sustainability

This coding enabled consistent cross-case comparison and identification of recurring principles of effective inclusion.

### **Legislative and Policy Framework Review**

Both documents contain summaries of national laws and EU-level obligations relevant to their respective contexts. These references (e.g., Lithuanian Inclusion Policy, Portugal’s Law 4/2019, Law 46/2006, EAA transposition acts, EN 301 549 requirements) were analysed as they appear *within the documents*, to understand how legal frameworks shape institutional practice.

### **Document Reviews**

The two case documents contain embedded summaries of key laws, institutional frameworks, and organisational mechanisms that shape inclusion. The analysis therefore draws on:

- **Lithuanian educational policy extracts**
  - National Law on Education
  - Inclusion Development Plan 2024–2030
  - VET modernisation initiatives
- **Portuguese legal and regulatory references**
  - Law 4/2019: Mandatory disability employment quotas
  - Law 46/2006: Anti-discrimination in employment
  - DL 82/2022: European Accessibility Act implementation
  - DL 83/2018: Web accessibility standards
  - EN 301 549: Digital accessibility technical framework
- **Institutional policy instruments**
  - RA Passport procedures and GDPR-aligned processes
  - Inclusive hiring and reporting mechanisms (Relatório Único)
  - Internal governance and Accessibility Roadmaps.

These references were analysed in the context in which they appear in the documents, rather than supplemented with external legislative reviews.

### **Qualitative Content and Organisational Evidence**

The reports provide rich descriptive detail on everyday inclusion practices. Key sources include: **Institutional practices in Lithuanian VET**



- Individual learning plans
- Multidisciplinary collaboration
- Adapted classrooms, sensory rooms, digital accessibility
- Assistive technology provision
- WBL monitoring tools (workplace logs, employer evaluations, reflection forms)

### **Organisational practices in Portuguese employment**

- Executive-level governance for inclusion
- RA request channels and turnaround SLAs
- Employer partnerships with IEFP, INR, and neurodiversity organisations
- Accessibility audits and phased compliance timelines
- Inclusion KPIs (quota compliance, RA speed, neurodivergent hires)

These organisational descriptions form the backbone of the comparative analysis in this report.

## **Analytical Frameworks and Tools**

### **Comparative Document Analysis**

Both documents were analysed side-by-side to trace common themes, contrasts, and complementary approaches across:

- Governance
- Pedagogy vs workplace inclusion
- Accessibility implementation
- Support structures
- Sustainability and transferability

### **Thematic Coding**

Content was coded into analytical categories such as:

- Legal drivers
- Inclusive pedagogy and training
- Organisational adaptation
- Disability support mechanisms
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Assistive technologies

### **Internal Legislative Review**

The documents themselves include references to national and EU legislation; these were interpreted to understand their influence on institutional practice without extending the research to external sources.

### **Structural and Systems Mapping**

Institutional diagrams and process descriptions (e.g., RA workflows, multidisciplinary  
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support structures, employer mentoring models) were used to map:

- Information flows
- Decision-making roles
- Operationalisation of inclusion mechanisms

## **Checklists, Rubrics, and Tools Embedded in the Reports**

The analysis relies on tools described directly in the documents:

### **Lithuania**

- Individual Learning Plan templates
- WBL progress logs
- Adapted assessment procedures
- School-level quality assurance mechanisms

### **Portugal**

- RA Passport
- Accessibility checklists aligned with EN 301 549
- Quota monitoring tools
- Internal HR reporting structures (Relatório Único)

These instruments provide the methodological backbone for understanding practical implementation.

## **6. Best practices for inclusive VET**

This section synthesises the identified success story in inclusive vocational education and training (VET) in Lithuania, focusing on the pedagogical, organisational, and environmental mechanisms that underpin the inclusion of learners with Special Educational Needs (SEN). The full case descriptions of Raseiniai Technology and Business School (RTBS) and Karalius Mindaugas Vocational Training Centre (KMVTC), including methodological workflows and institutional practices, are available in Annex 1.

### **National Practice (Lithuania): Inclusive VET at RTBS and KMVTC**

The Lithuanian practice represents a mature, system-level model of inclusive vocational education implemented across two mainstream VET institutions. Both centres work within the national framework established by the Law on Education and the 2024–2030 Inclusion Development Plan, translating national priorities into daily pedagogical routines and school-wide organisational processes.

#### **Legal and Policy Framework**

The practice operates under Lithuanian legislation mandating equal access to education, personalised learning, and adapted assessment conditions for learners with diverse SEN. National strategies emphasise accessibility, mainstream participation, and collaboration between VET institutions and local authorities. Both RTBS and KMVTC act as regional leaders in applying these policies through coordinated, school-wide inclusion systems.



## **Core Methodology and Workflow**

Inclusive VET delivery at both institutions follows a structured multi-stage workflow designed to ensure personalised learning and holistic support:

1. **Assessment:** Each learner undergoes an initial needs analysis conducted by a multidisciplinary team, identifying cognitive, behavioural, sensory, and social-emotional support requirements.
2. **Planning:** Teachers and specialists jointly create Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) outlining adapted tasks, pacing, assistive technologies, and flexible assessment formats.
3. **Implementation:** ILPs are delivered through UDL-aligned teaching, differentiated instruction, adapted materials, and continuous specialist involvement. In RTBS, this also includes structured Work-Based Learning (WBL) with employer mentors and adapted workplace tasks.
4. **Evaluation:** Learner progress is monitored at baseline, 6-month, and 12-month intervals through academic reviews, attendance tracking, behavioural observations, and—where applicable—employer feedback during practical placements.

## **Key Innovation – Universal Design for Learning (UDL)**

Both institutions embed UDL as a foundational pedagogical principle. Learning content is provided in multiple formats (text, audio, video, visual cues), tasks can be demonstrated through practical or oral methods, and engagement is supported through choice, predictable routines, and reduced sensory load. UDL helps normalise learner diversity and reduces reliance on individual accommodations.

## **Governance and Support Structures**

A strong governance model ensures coordinated and sustainable implementation. RTBS and KMVTC maintain multidisciplinary support teams—including special educators, psychologists, social pedagogues, counsellors, and mentor teachers—who collaborate daily with mainstream teachers. Regular communication with parents, municipal services, and NGOs ensures continuity of care and responsive adjustment of support.

## **Physical, Digital, and Pedagogical Accessibility**

The institutions provide adapted classrooms, sensory rooms, quiet spaces, ergonomic workstations, and safe workshop layouts. Digital accessibility is ensured through large-print materials, high-contrast visuals, video-based content, and compatible assistive technologies such as tablets, laptops, and noise-cancelling headphones. Pedagogical accessibility includes clear task structures, small learning units, continuous feedback, and modified practical tasks in hands-on fields such as catering and health care.

## **Outcome Indicators**

Effectiveness is monitored through long-term observation of learners' academic, behavioural, and socio-emotional growth. Reported outcomes include:

- Increased confidence, motivation, and classroom participation
- Improved practical skills and greater safety in workshop environments
- Reduced dropout risk and more consistent attendance
- Stronger independence and self-regulation
- Enhanced readiness for WBL (RTBS) and future labour market participation.

## 7. Best practices for inclusive employment

This section synthesises the identified success story in inclusive employment in Portugal, focusing on the legal frameworks, organisational structures, and practical mechanisms that enable companies to recruit, retain, and support workers with disabilities. The full methodological description—including quota implementation procedures, RA workflows, and accessibility compliance timelines.

### Legal Framework

Portugal's inclusive employment model is anchored in several binding legislative pillars:

- Law 4/2019: Establishes mandatory disability employment quotas for private-sector employers with  $\geq 75$  employees (1% for 75–249 employees; 2% for  $\geq 250$ ). Full enforceability began in February 2024, triggering nationwide inspections by the Labour Authority (ACT).
- Law 46/2006: Prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability and requires organisations to maintain grievance channels and anti-bias safeguards.
- Decree-Law 82/2022 (EAA) + Portaria 220/2023: Transposes the European Accessibility Act, requiring accessibility of consumer services and digital products by 2025–2030.
- Decree-Law 83/2018: Ensures WCAG-aligned web accessibility for public entities and influences industry standards in hybrid public-private services.
- GDPR + Portuguese Law 58/2019: Regulate health and disability data used for reasonable accommodation, applying strict minimisation and access-control requirements.

Together, these frameworks create a compliance-driven but opportunity-oriented environment in which inclusive employment becomes a structural expectation rather than a voluntary commitment.

### Core Methodology: Quota-Driven Inclusion and Structured Support

Portugal's model integrates legal obligations with operational mechanisms that ensure inclusion is implemented consistently across recruitment, workplace adaptation, and career progression. Key components include:

#### 1. Reasonable Accommodation (RA) Workflow

The RA Passport is the central tool in this system. It records agreed adjustments—such as assistive technology, adapted workflows, or communication supports—and follows the employee during role or manager changes, reducing repeated disclosures and delays. RA requests can be initiated by candidates or employees, and delivery is supported by HR, IT, Facilities, and external partners like IEFP and INR. Target delivery times range from 10–15 days for standard accommodations to 30 days for complex cases.

#### 2. Inclusive Recruitment Pathways

Job advertisements include clear RA request channels; recruiters receive training on unbiased screening; and companies collaborate with IEFP to reach candidates meeting quota definitions ( $\geq 60\%$  disability certificate). Interview processes may be adapted through pre-shared questions, extra time, format modifications, or work-sample alternatives.

#### 3. Accessibility by Design

Digital accessibility frameworks (EN 301 549) guide website, app, and service testing. Physical spaces incorporate barrier-free routes, accessible sanitary facilities, and inclusive emergency procedures. Organisational practices reinforce inclusion through predictable meeting norms, hybrid working options, sensory adjustments, and alternative communication formats.



#### 4. Neuroinclusion Programmes

Companies partner with national autism and neurodiversity organisations—including programmes like Specialisterne Portugal—to adjust job design, strengthen manager capability, and create supported pipelines for neurodivergent talent.

#### Key Innovation – Integrated Governance for Compliance and Inclusion

A defining feature of the Portuguese model is cross-functional governance:

- A C-level executive (e.g., CHRO) oversees inclusion strategy and reports quarterly to the Executive Committee.
- HR manages quota reporting via the *Relatório Único* and oversees RA workflows.
- IT leads digital accessibility projects under EN 301 549.
- Facilities implement physical adaptations and evacuation plans.
- A Disability & Neuroinclusion Network (ERG) partners with specialist organisations to strengthen cultural change.

This governance structure ensures that inclusion is embedded at the organisational core rather than treated as an isolated HR initiative.

#### Outcome Indicators

Effectiveness is monitored through a comprehensive 24-month KPI framework, including:

- Quota compliance rates: organisations aim for full compliance to avoid ACT penalties and reputational risk.
- RA turnaround times: median delivery reduced toward the 10–15-day target, improving retention and engagement.
- Accessibility conformance: alignment with EN 301 549 across priority services, progressing toward 2025 and 2030 EAA milestones.
- Self-identification rates: increases of +5 to +10 percentage points as trust and confidentiality improve.
- Neurodivergent talent pipelines: at least one supported cohort intake within the first year, with targeted 85%+ 12-month retention.

Together, these indicators show a mature, legally grounded, and operationally structured employment inclusion model with strong potential for transferability across Europe.

#### 8. Ethics and Data Protection

Given the sensitivity of disability-related information, the documentation of Lithuanian VET practices and Portuguese employment models was carried out under strict ethical and legal safeguards.

#### Informed Consent

Both Lithuanian VET institutions and Portuguese employers ensure that learners, families, and employees give informed consent before sharing SEN or accommodation-related

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information. Participation and disclosure are always voluntary.

### Data Minimisation

Only information essential for support or reasonable accommodation is processed. Lithuanian schools separate SEN documentation from general records, while Portuguese employers restrict RA data on a strict “need-to-know” basis. Both systems focus on *functional needs*, not diagnoses.

### GDPR Compliance

Both countries operate under GDPR, with Portugal applying additional national rules (Law 58/2019). Disability and health data are processed with purpose limitation, secure storage, and regulated access controls.

### Confidentiality

Access to sensitive information is restricted to authorised staff—support specialists in Lithuanian VET schools and designated HR/RA personnel in Portuguese organisations. Disclosure is strictly controlled to prevent stigma or bias.

### Accessible Formats

Lithuanian VET materials are provided in large-print, high-contrast, simplified, or digital formats, while Portuguese employers ensure digital accessibility aligned with EN 301 549. Research materials follow the same accessibility standards.

## 9. References

- **VšĮ eMundus (2025)**. *Inclusive Vocational Education Through Individualised Support, Multidisciplinary Collaboration, and Adapted Learning Environments in Lithuanian VET Schools*.
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- **Government of Portugal**. Portuguese Data Protection Law 58/2019 (referenced in relation to GDPR and disability data processing).
- **Instituto do Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP)** and **Instituto Nacional para a Reabilitação (INR)** – national frameworks for workplace adaptation funding and technical support.
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