

## DIVERSEurope

### Methodology for the identification of best practices in Lithuania

Best practices were identified through qualitative interviews with key persons working on diversity and inclusion in the regions. These experts were asked to share good practice examples of SMEs in remote and rural areas on recruiting, integrating, and retaining diverse talents.

#### Best Practices

##### Best practice 1:

Some SMEs that hire migrants, including refugees, have a practice of assigning or hiring translators when they are unable to communicate with new employees because of a language barrier. In situations like this, an organisation that acts as a recruitment intermediary provides a translator, or a company hires a translator oneself. While some SMEs can communicate with hired foreigners, they want to help them integrate into the team by assigning an internal person that guides them through responsibilities, tasks, and job specifics. At times, after a certain period, these employed workers themselves become mentors who help the newly recruited foreigners integrate.

<b>Organisation:</b>	<p><i>What type is the organisation that has implemented this practice? Provide information of the sector, number of employees, etc.</i></p> <p>According to the interviewees, this practice is implemented by a few SMEs in the region, and it is not limited to one particular sector. Although no information is available on the number of employees in these enterprises, all of them fall into the category of SMEs.</p>
<b>Objective:</b>	<p><i>What is the objective or purpose of the practice? (Brief description) What are the requirements to implement the practice?</i></p> <p>The purpose of this practice is twofold. One is to ensure that new employees can integrate into the workplace despite the language barrier – this would help them feel comfortable and welcome. Two is to help companies retain employees – so they are not leaving the workplace because do not understand their responsibilities – and not to miss out on suitable employees. The main requirement to implement this practice is the employer's willingness and determination to understand their employees' needs.</p>
<b>Beneficiaries:</b>	<p><i>Who are the beneficiaries (direct or indirect) of the practice?</i></p> <p>There are three groups of beneficiaries: a) migrants, including refugees, b) other staff members, c) the companies. Through this practice, recruited foreigners are introduced to their</p>

	<p>responsibilities, job specifics, and the company's activities, helping them feel comfortable. Other staff members do not have to spend extra time explaining things to new employees, so their work is not slowed down. While companies retain their employees and do not miss out on suitable candidates because of a language barrier.</p>
<p><b>Context:</b></p>	<p><i>What was the initial situation and its specific context? What are the specific difficulties that the practice seeks to address?</i></p> <p>In Lithuania, the challenge of recruiting migrants, especially refugees, is not only prevailing negative attitudes<sup>1</sup> but also employers' concerns that they will not be able to communicate with their employees.<sup>2</sup> The language barrier becomes a reason for employers to miss out on suitable employees, while in other situations, employees themselves decide to leave the workplace because they do not understand their responsibilities and feel uncomfortable. Therefore, to avoid losing employees and make them feel comfortable and welcome, it is important to assign a person to assist recruited foreigners with translation and integration.</p>
<p><b>Process:</b></p>	<p><i>Explain step by step the process of the practice to facilitate its understanding and reproduction.</i></p> <p>In some cases, companies employ migrants, including refugees, that do not know the language the company's personnel can use to explain the job specifics. Then companies approach an organization that acts as an intermediary for the recruitment to provide a translator. If an organisation has an available translator, it provides one. Otherwise, the company hires a translator oneself. In cases where there is no language barrier, the company assigns an internal person to introduce the new employees to their responsibilities, tasks, and job specifics.</p>
<p><b>Impact:</b></p>	<p><i>What has been the impact (positive or negative) of this practice on the beneficiaries? Has the situation of the beneficiaries improved with respect to the objectives of D&amp;I implementation?</i></p> <p>When recruited foreigners are introduced to the job specifics, they can feel more comfortable knowing what their responsibilities and tasks are. Other employees' work is not affected by the new hire because they do not need to spend their time trying to find ways of explaining things to the recruits, while the company itself does not miss the opportunity to</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.diversitygroup.lt/2021/11/16/pristatyti-2021-m-atliktu-visuomenes-nuostatu-tyrimo-ir-ziniasklaidos-stebesenos-rezultatai/> (In Lithuanian).

<sup>2</sup> DIVERSEurope strategic interviews, Lithuania.

	recruit suitable employees and does not lose new hires because of language barriers.
<b>Limitations:</b>	<p><i>What constraints or difficulties were encountered in implementing the practice, how were they addressed? And what other constraints maybe encountered in replicating this practice?</i></p> <p>No data is available – interviewees have no knowledge of what constraints or difficulties were encountered in implementing the practice, how were they addressed.</p>
<b>Related resources/Links:</b>	<p><i>Establish a list of references related to the practice. (If possible) Link to the home page of the organisation in question. If possible, contact the organisation and/or the person who carried out the practice.</i></p> <p><a href="https://draugiskiautizmui.lt/">https://draugiskiautizmui.lt/</a>  <a href="https://sopa.lt/">https://sopa.lt/</a>          Most information was provided by:  <a href="https://redcross.lt/">https://redcross.lt/</a>  <a href="https://www.caritas.lt/">https://www.caritas.lt/</a></p>

### Best practice 2:

Some SMEs that hire refugees have a practice of approaching diversity and inclusion specialists and consulting them when refugees' behavior raises concerns about its appropriateness in the workplace. When in doubt, companies try to find out whether the behaviour of an employee is culture-related or specific to one's personality. Those companies also make efforts to ensure that refugees may maintain their own traditions and practice religion at work.

<b>Organisation:</b>	<p><i>What type is the organisation that has implemented this practice? Provide information of the sector, number of employees, etc.</i></p> <p>According to the interviewees, this practice is implemented by a few SMEs in the region, and it is not limited to one sector. Although no information is available on the number of employees in these enterprises, all of them fall into the category of SMEs.</p>
<b>Objective:</b>	<p><i>What is the objective or purpose of the practice? (Brief description) What are the requirements to implement the practice?</i></p> <p>The purpose of this practice is twofold. Firstly, it helps ensure that new employees can integrate into the workplace no matter their cultural or religious differences. Secondly, it allows</p>

	<p>companies to retain employees and mitigates the risk of terminating a contract due to cultural misunderstandings. The main requirement to implement this practice is the employer's willingness and determination to understand their employees' cultural or religious traditions and needs.</p>
<p><b>Beneficiaries:</b></p>	<p><i>Who are the beneficiaries (direct or indirect) of the practice?</i></p> <p>There are three groups of beneficiaries: a) migrants, including refugees, b) other staff members, c) the companies. Through this practice, recruited foreigners can continue to uphold their own cultural or religious traditions, giving them the sense of belonging. Other staff members broaden their horizons on different cultures and traditions, but more importantly they get to know and accept new recruits better. Companies, on the other hand, retain their employees and attract new talents more effectively.</p>
<p><b>Context:</b></p>	<p><i>What was the initial situation and its specific context? What are the specific difficulties that the practice seeks to address?</i></p> <p>The main challenge of recruiting and retaining migrants, including refugees, is the prevailing negative attitudes. A recent survey revealed that a third of Lithuanians would not want to work with Muslims (31%) or refugees (28%).<sup>3</sup> This also effects employers and stops them from recruiting suitable employees if they come from a culturally different environment. Another challenge is a limited corporate capacity and misleading judgement on certain employees' behaviour or actions. At times companies are not sure whether an employee's behaviour is a matter of personality or it is rooted in one's culture. It can lead to uncertainty and confusion, causing the employer's decision to dismiss the employee or the employee's decision to leave. Therefore, to ensure that employees feel comfortable, and employers do not lose suitable staff, it is important to understand and accept recruited foreigners' cultural or religious backgrounds, as well as to provide them with opportunities to further maintain their traditions. In the long term, this might contribute to overcoming stereotypes and shifting attitudes.</p>
<p><b>Process:</b></p>	<p><i>Explain step by step the process of the practice to facilitate its understanding and reproduction.</i></p> <p>SMEs that have employed refugees contact the organisation that acts as an intermediary for the recruitment process on two occasions. First, they approach experts from an NGO sector to better understand the cultural complexities or religious</p>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.diversitygroup.lt/2021/11/16/pristatyti-2021-m-atliktu-visuomenes-nuostatu-tyrimo-ir-ziniasklaidos-stebesenos-rezultatai/> (In Lithuanian).

	<p>traditions. After receiving tailored guidance and recommendations, companies at least to some extent adapt their corporate culture, mainly by giving their colleagues time off to celebrate or commemorate days of significant importance or by providing facilities to pray at work. In other cases, companies ask specialists to clarify whether a particular behaviour (for example, regularly giving gifts to the employer) is culture related and invites NGOs to mediate when the situation is more complicated.</p>
<p><b>Impact:</b></p>	<p><i>What has been the impact (positive or negative) of this practice on the beneficiaries? Has the situation of the beneficiaries improved with respect to the objectives of D&amp;I implementation?</i></p> <p>When employers take an interest in the cultural or religious background of recruited migrants, including refugees, and ensure that they can uphold their traditions, employees feel comfortable, and welcome. Other staff broaden their horizons, which may contribute to changing prejudices, while the company itself does not miss the opportunity to recruit suitable employees and does not lose new hires because of cultural or religious differences.</p>
<p><b>Limitations:</b></p>	<p><i>What constraints or difficulties were encountered in implementing the practice, how were they addressed? And what other constraints maybe encountered in replicating this practice?</i></p> <p>No data is available – interviewees have no knowledge of what constraints or difficulties were encountered in implementing the practice, how were they addressed.</p>
<p><b>Related resources/Links:</b></p>	<p><i>Establish a list of references related to the practice. (If possible) Link to the home page of the organisation in question. If possible, contact the organisation and/or the person who carried out the practice.</i></p> <p><a href="https://draugiskiautizmui.lt/">https://draugiskiautizmui.lt/</a>  <a href="https://sopa.lt/">https://sopa.lt/</a>          Most information was provided by:  <a href="https://redcross.lt/">https://redcross.lt/</a>  <a href="https://www.caritas.lt/">https://www.caritas.lt/</a></p>

## Conclusion

The importance of both identified best practices comes from their contribution to overcoming the main challenges in Lithuania of recruiting migrants, especially refugees: (1) employers' concerns that they will not be able to communicate with their employees, (2) prevailing negative attitudes. First-practice SMEs hire or assign a translator to overcome the language barrier or assign an internal person to guide newly

recruited foreigners through the specifics of the job and their responsibilities. Second-practice SMEs approach diversity and inclusion specialists and consult them regarding particular employed refugees' behavior whether it is decisional or cultural, as well as seek to ensure that employees can maintain their traditions. Both of these best practices are built on the employer's willingness and commitment to understand the needs of its employees, while their benefits are not limited to the well-being and comfort of employed foreigners. They extend to the employers themselves, who do not miss out on suitable employees, and to other staff who broaden their horizons on different cultures and traditions, and more importantly get to know and accept recruits better.