ON THE PROBLEM OF THE INTEGRATION OF MIGRANTS INTO LITHUANIAN SOCIETY IN THE CONTEXT OF NGO EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

The article focuses on problems of the integration of migrants in Lithuania from the perspective of social workers working in NGOs. The research highlights various difficulties that migrants face during their transition from migration to integration, such as mental, physical, socioeconomic, spiritual and other challenges. Also, language, housing, health care, education, socio-economic integration and self-identity were identified as common challenges faced by all groups of migrants during integration, with those from Third World countries facing more complex issues. These difficulties include issues related to financing, resettlement, access to hospitals and state institutions, nutrition, communication, identification, and more. The research emphasises the importance of a third party to ensure that the needs of migrants are met, and that they are treated normally and without discrimination. It also emphasises the need for migrants to be able to participate in decision-making, to prevent situations like mass demonstrations or attempts to create a state within a state. Social workers in NGO settings play a crucial role in helping migrants integrate into Lithuanian society, and policymakers must develop policies and programmes that address the unique challenges faced by Third World migrants.
KEY WORDS: migrants, integration, social work, NGO.

Anotacija

Straipsnyje daugiausia dėmesio skiriama migrantų integracijos problemoms Lietuvoje NVO dirbančių socialinių darbuotojų požiūriu. Tyrime aptariami migrantų patiriami sunkumai pereinamajame nuo emigracijos prie integracijos procese, pavyzdžiui, psichiniai, fiziniai, socialiniai, ekonominiai, dvasiniai ir kiti. Prie to prisideda kalbos, būsto, sveikatos priežiūros, švietimo, socialinės ir ekonominės integracijos bei tapatybės problemos, su kuriomis integruodamosi susiduria visos migrantų grupės. Migrantams iš trečiojo pasaulio šalių kyla dar sudėtingesnių problemų, kurios susijusios su finansavimu padengiant persikėlimo ir gydymo išlaidas, bendravimu su valstybinėmis institucijomis, asmenybės identifikavimu ir kt. Tyrime pabrėžiama trečiosios šalies dalyvavimo svarba siekiant užtikrinti, kad migrantų poreikiai būtų patenkinti ir su jais būtų tinkamai elgiamasi jų nediskriminuojant. Migrantai turi turėti galimybę dalyvauti priimant sprendimus jiems aktualiais klausimais, siekiant išvengti tokių situacijų, kaip masinės demonstracijos ar bandymai sukurti valstybę valstybėje. Socialiniai darbuotojai nevyriausybinėse organizacijose atlieka svarbų vaidmenį padėdami migrantams integruotis į Lietuvos visuomenę. Politikos formuotojai turi parengti tokias socialinės politikos prieigas ir programas, kurios padėtų spręsti unikalius trečiojo pasaulio migrantų iššūkius.
PAGRINDINIAI ŽODŽIAI: migrantai, integracija, socialinis darbas, NVO.
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Introduction

People migrate to find better living conditions, food, jobs, education and business prospects. Relocating from one political or administrative boundary to another is migration. The integration literature has grown thanks to Ager and Strang (2004), who created a framework to operationalise integration processes. According to their explanation, the framework has ten domains, each subdivided into one of four categories: 'means and markers' (employment, housing, education and health), 'social connections' (social bridges, social bonds and social links), 'facilitators' (language and cultural knowledge, safety and stability), and 'foundation' (rights and citizenship).

Ager and Strang (2008) focused on refugee and migrant possibilities and successes in their comprehensive integration plan. Later, they identified the key domains of integration as employment, housing, health, education, rights and citizenship, community and social connections, and social and cultural barriers to such connections. Their theory helps explain integrating sectors and processes, but it ignores receiving community dynamics, refugee status, and conditions. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) defines refugee integration as multifaceted and two-way. This process involves (forced) migration in the receiving society and approval from the established population and other groups (ECRE, 1999).

Integration refers to the endeavour to promote the equitable distribution of economic and social resources, the equalisation of political and territorial rights, and the advancement of cultural exchange and novel cultural expressions between refugees and other members of society. It underscores the importance of social interaction between migrants and host communities, fostering a sense of belonging in the host society and the assurance to access rights and resources, including education, employment and housing.

Migration entails three key changes: personal relationships and social network reconstruction, economic system change, and cultural system change. Before, during and after migration are the three stages of migration (Kirmayer et al., 2010). Each phase contains risks and opportunities.

Problem of the research. The research for this article focuses on problems of migrant integration in Lithuania from the perspective of social workers working in NGOs. The research highlights the various difficulties that migrants face during their transition from migration to integration, such as mental, physical, socioeconomic, spiritual, and other challenges. These difficulties include issues related to financing, resettlement, access to hospitals and state institutions, nutrition, com-

munication, identification, and more. It also emphasises the need for migrants to be able to participate in decision-making, to prevent risk situations.

The aim of the article: to disclose the social integration of migrants in Lithuania from a social work perspective in the context of NGO experience in Lithuania.

Research methods: analyses of scientific literature, qualitative method (semi-structured interview).

Theoretical methodology of the research: Social construction of reality, theories of social roles, humanistic philosophy, interpersonal theory. These theories provide an opportunity to evaluate the phenomenon of migration and the process of integration of migrants in Lithuanian society in the framework of social work (NGO experience).

1. General characteristics of the phenomenon of migration and social integration

Human migration is an old phenomenon that began with the survival of humans on Earth. It has an impact on both human life and the environment. Migration involves three main kinds of change: changes in personal relationships and the rebuilding of social networks, the move from one socioeconomic system to another, and the change from one cultural system to another. The path of migration can be broken down into three parts: before migration, during migration, and after migration (Kirmayer et al., 2010). Each phase comes with its own risks and opportunities. Communication problems because of language and cultural differences, the effects on an individual's behaviour of torture or pain endured while moving to a better place, adaptation, acculturation, conflicts between generations, malnutrition in the process of migration and over-eating leading to obesity when they settle, and aspects of acceptance by the new society that affect employment, social status and integration.

Why do people migrate? In trying to answer this question, we notice individuals move from one location to another for a variety of reasons, including the pursuit of better education or work prospects, concerns regarding the quality of the local climate, and so on. But there are a number of theories that have been developed to comprehend the various variables which drive people to leave a certain region and go to another

Several researchers have carried out research on migrants' *integration*. Migrant integration is a process, and it takes time and patience to understand why the social worker role is crucial and very necessary. Social workers' role for migrant integration in the host society is essential due to the fact that they provide an unlimited

range of services, such as personal care, protection and social support. They can be seen as physicians without syringes or medication, providing an essential role in the integration of migrants. In 2021, Becker and Charlotte (2022) examined migrant integration from two angles. *First*, from the standpoint of long-time residents, and *second*, from the perspective of recent migrants. In the former, they concentrated on the attitudes of two understudied groups, children and migrants who have stayed for a long time in a different country which is not their country of origin. Nirmala et al. (2014) researched the migration impact on mental health. Researchers like Bevelander and Veenman (2006), and Bery (1992), went on to research the significance of the three-dimensional integration process (social, cultural and structural) that helps to speed up integration. These factors are regarded as the cornerstone of integration by some scholars. Another aspect of integration that surfaces is that of emotional integration. Munniksma et al. (2014) and Martinovic (2014) all went on to discuss self-identification. Most researchers try to point out the need for migrants to integrate into the labour market, as this provides a means of survival and reduces the burden and expenses required by the state to make provisions for migrants. According to research by Etninių Tyrimų Skyrius (n.d.), it demonstrates that most Lithuanians have a negative attitude towards migrants, especially those coming from outside the European Union. Specifically, 58% of Lithuanians view migration to their country as a negative event, while only 18% have a favourable view. A total of 64% of Lithuanians agree that 'The state should prevent the concentrated accommodation of migrants in territory of Lithuania,' and nearly as many (59%) believe that 'the state should strictly limit the number of foreigners who come to Lithuania from non-EU countries' and 'should strictly define the countries from which migrants, who are non-EU citizens, come to Lithuania' (54%). Considering the data shown above, there are gaps in multidimensional integration, which helps to explain why the challenges faced by migrants from Africa, Asia or the Islamic community will be different to those encountered by migrants from Belarus, Russia or Ukraine. The varying attitudes of Lithuanians towards this group poses obstacles, or at least complicates the integration process in a number of ways.

2. General characteristics of Lithuanian migration and asylum policy

Internationally, the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees established refugees' rights once they enter the asylum-granting country, provided their asylum claims are genuine. Articles 12 and 30 of the 1951 Refugee Convention establish refugee rights. The right to identity papers, travel credentials, trade union membership, and wage-earning jobs are among these rights. Additionally, refugees

can participate in politics. International refugee law recognises these rights as minimum conditions for refugee status. They are required for refugee status since they help a person start over in the host country in a dignified way. State signatories to the 1951 refugee agreement must recognise refugees' rights to fulfil their commitments under the agreement, including restricting or returning refugees to hazardous countries. The research also recommends giving refugees permanent residence as soon as they are recognised. This status gives refugees a road to legal residency and the rights that come with it. These rights usually match those of nationals. It makes it easier to exercise refugees' rights by linking their status and entitlements to a more common legal residence. Its benefit comes from the familiarity of its legal abode.

Lithuania governs immigration and migrant integration through the Law on the Legal Status of Aliens and national long-term strategies. After the Soviet Union collapsed and the EU expanded in 2004, mass emigration changed the Lithuanian labour market and demographics. The massive population loss was especially noticeable during the economic boom from 2005 to 2008 and the worldwide economic turbulence in 2009 and 2010. Unemployment declined from 23.2% in 2004 to 4.2% at the end of 2007, but due to global economic development it rose in 2008 to 18.3% in 2010. The unemployment rate fell from 2004 to 2007. One-way migration, where immigrants do not replace departing citizens, makes the issue worse.

Before the Lithuanian government adopted the Economic Migration Regulatory Plan in 2014, the country had no long-term immigration policy strategy (2007). The Law on the Legal Status of Aliens handles immigration and foreigners' legal status in an ad hoc way, demonstrating Lithuania's administrative immigration policy. The administrative aspects of Lithuanian immigration policy are highlighted. The State Strategy for Long-Term Development (2002, No 113-5029) did not directly influence immigration regulations, and the Strategy for National Demographic (Population) Policy (2004, No 159-5795) showed Lithuania's immigration management shortcomings. The Long-Term Plan for Lithuania's Economic Growth up to 2015 emphasised strict immigration control without specific policy measures, but both legal and illegal immigration were problematic. The Economic Migration Regulation Strategy (EMRS) outlined Lithuania's long-term migration policy. The long-term goals include eliminating negative net migration by 2012, emphasising return migration, and limiting third-country labour immigration (Žibas, 2015).

The content analysis of EMRS and other papers identified six main questions: immigration policy priorities changed gradually before the EMRS. In 2007, Lithuania's long-term immigration policy began to address labour immigration as well as emigration. A 'selectively open' immigration policy was implemented to en-

courage circular migration. The Lithuanian Migration Policy Guidelines were published in the Register of Legal Acts under 79 on 22 January 2014. Emigration, return migration, immigration, migrant integration, asylum, illegal migration and institutional policy are covered by these rules. They want to encourage Third World labour, restrict legal immigration channels, and align immigration policies with EU law. However, recent institutional changes raise concerns about the efficiency of migration policy.

Only refugees are prioritised in Lithuania's integration policy, which does not target immigrants. In 2007, just one of 35 migration policy implementation measures integrated migrants, while eight regulated immigration. Four 2008 migration policy implementation measures involved the European Fund for Third-Country Nationals. The Lithuanian Migration Policy Guidelines were established by the government in 2014. These recommendations prioritised migrant integration. The most important principles of migrant integration are ensuring human rights and equal opportunities in all aspects of life, providing permanent residency and citizenship, reducing social inequality, vulnerability and exploitation, observing work and living conditions, improving representation, and fighting xenophobia, discrimination and racism. Even though immigrants do not like Lithuania's labour market, schools do not want their children, and immigrants do not have equal access to health services, Lithuania's integration policy has remained largely unchanged since 2007. Migrants must undergo a lengthy and tough process to become citizens.

Global migrant integration laws: in 2010, the Stockholm Programme, the third multi-annual AFSJ programme, reiterated that integration requires 'not only efforts by national, regional and local authorities, but also a greater commitment by the host community and immigrants' (EC, 2010). In 2011, the European Commission updated its Third-Country National Integration Policy to incorporate immigrants' home nations as a third significant actor, creating a three-way process. Countries of origin aid integration in three ways: 1) they integrate migrants before they leave; 2) they help them in the EU, such as through embassies; and 3) they prepare them for temporary or permanent return with experience and knowledge (EC, 2011, 10).

The European Commission now recognises that 'nations of origin can have a role to play in supporting the integration process' (EC, 2011, 10). Country integration policies depend on migratory history, social structure, and socioeconomic and political factors. Refugees and asylum seekers without a public status are the most vulnerable and should be protected from all harm. A refugee is someone who leaves their home country or does not wish to return for fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality or political opinion under Article 1 of the 1951 Geneva Convention. UNHCR helps apply the Convention throughout time and space.

If they cannot or will not protect, political parties or groups controlling the state or a major part of its territory, as well as non-state corporations, may be prosecuted under Article 6. State, political parties and foreign organisations are covered by Article 7. The Commission requires all protection list entities to meet standards.

3. The specificity of social work in the process of the integration of migrants into Lithuania society

Qualitative research and content analysis show that migrants face housing, employment, legal, financial and information challenges during integration. Lithuanian social workers assess the nature and severity of migrant social issues before intervening. Information, consulting, mediation and emotional support for migrants are micro-level social aid. Intermediate social work interventions include migrant social networks, socio-cultural events, and volunteer coordination. Social workers who help immigrants integrate use the following macro-level interventions: disseminating information on migrant issues, conducting and disseminating research, and sharing best practices. Social workers are crucial to pushing for fair migration and refugee laws. They design and coordinate community support programmes, advocate for stronger resettlement services, conduct research, assist newly arrived migrants, collaborate with humanitarian aid organisations, provide safe age-appropriate housing, training and education, and assess and provide appropriate services. Interventions address migrant, community and group failures.

Because they help integrate migrants, non-governmental organisation (NGOs) social workers should not be ignored. My volunteer organisation, the Red Cross, has social workers working on various initiatives every day. Migrants are divided by age here.

Many instructional sections are for children. These sections aim to make them feel part of society, and lower the risk of low self-esteem, sadness, anxiety, PTSD and inferiority complexes. The programmes offer games, educational conversations, the chance to interact with local children, and entertaining films about diverse cultures and nations. The social worker assesses each child to see if they have a mental health issue and meets their basic requirements.

A closer examination of EU-funded project-based programmes shows that they have 'transformed' government migrant integration strategies. However, state policies and non-governmental initiatives may have synergies in the future. This is due to the new migrant integration measures outlined above. Social workers address migrants' social issues by offering immigrant information and advice, managing conflicts, and providing emotional support. Social workers advise immigrants on health care, and legal and business issues, and consult with authorities on

housing, employment, home economics, education validation, and children's and adults' education. When helping migrants, social workers act as middlemen. They usually resolve housing disputes between migrants, landlords, employers and the public. In addition, they accompany migrants to various institutions. To stress that social workers support migrants emotionally by listening to their stories and empathising, social workers must be empathic, helpful, good listeners, non-racist and non-discriminatory to fulfil their duties and meet migrants' needs without bias. They must trust themselves and the people they aid, and they cannot fight when others are hostile.

Adults seek assistance with work, health insurance, housing, licensing, and other life concerns every day. Some people have trouble speaking Lithuanian, therefore social workers interpret. They seek the help of law-and-order specialists in non-social work settings.

Social workers assist elderly adults who cannot read or write with application forms. Most old people do not have iPhones, so social workers have to use their phones to create email contacts for them, apply for them on the app, show them how to check their email for updates, and teach them how to reply.

Although social workers almost typically operate in conformity with governmental constitutions and regulations, the legislation seeks to restrict how far outside the government they may help. Most non-profit organisations in Lithuania, especially the red Cross, lack the financial stability to rely fully on their own resources to operate the organisation. Instead, they depend on funds from the EU and projects that occasionally receive significant government funding, which may have an influence on their decision-making.

Another issue is communication. For example, if a person from Afghanistan or Syria who only knows Arabic comes to Lithuania to seek shelter, there will not be a translator to assist them. There is a severe communication barrier. Even though English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world, it is still challenging to find social workers who can communicate effectively in it without any problems. However, despite their limited resources, Lithuanian social workers are making significant efforts   to meet international standards.

Skills. When you contrast Lithuanian social workers with those from other nations, such as the UK, Germany and Belgium, you can see that Lithuania is lacking in many areas. Social professionals in Lithuania do not have a lot of exposure to issues like race, religion, ethnicity, etc. Most cases they deal with in this country are from close neighbours whose diversity is not as extreme as their own, making it easier for them to handle. However, if they were to deal with vast numbers of migrants from countries like Syria or Afghanistan, or Africa, they would find it extremely difficult to manage these differences.

Despite the fact that the number of refugees in Lithuania is not large compared to other European countries like Germany, Spain, France, Belgium, etc, Lithuania lacks the main facilities or infrastructure for the integration of a huge number of migrants. Organisations such as the Red Cross are setting up facilities to speed up migrants' integration processes. Organisations that have received financial assistance from the European Fund for the Integration of Third-Country Nationals have worked with a certain proportion of non-EU migrants. These migrants come from different countries. In this scenario, it will be more difficult to find a comprehensive solution, because the number of migrants involved will be significantly higher, and the demands of specific migrant groups will vary in terms of their desired legal status and the obstacles to integration that they will face in Lithuania.

4. NGO practice in the process of integrating migrants into Lithuania society

Migration is a difficult topic in Western civilisation due to the large influx of people from emerging and poor nations. This article discusses Lithuanian migrant integration policy, focusing on NGOs and integrating procedures. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) help the poor meet their socio-cultural needs. Successful integration requires third-party encouragement because migrants come from different social and cultural backgrounds. NGOs act as a connecting bridge or catalyst that facilitates integration by making it simpler for stakeholders to communicate.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) help integrate migrants, since they are neutral, government-free, and work to improve vulnerable people's lives. Fundraising and government, community, and employment advocacy are their activities. Major humanitarian groups lobby together, and Komunikacijos kampanija # Bukim Pazistami, which invites migrants to share their Lithuanian experiences, viewpoints and thoughts, raises cultural awareness. Sixty municipalities nationwide participated in the national exercise. Migrants from different European or global countries shared their perspectives and experiences about their homeland, including traditions, food and culture. NGOs play a crucial role in supporting their integration into the new society. Here are some ways NGOs help migrants integrate:
- Language classes: Language is a major integration hurdle. NGO language classes assist migrants learn the new language. This improves communication with host community members and access to important resources.
- NGOs offer employment services to assist migrants in finding work and starting a new life. Job training, resume writing, and placement are included.

- NGOs can aid migrants in finding inexpensive accommodation and assist with applications and negotiations.
- NGOs offer health-care services to migrants, particularly mental health treatment.
- Legal support: NGOs assist migrants with legal and immigration proceedings.
- Social support: NGOs offer emotional support and counselling to help migrants adjust to the new culture and environment.
- NGOs can promote cultural interchange between host community members and migrants. This promotes cultural diversity awareness and appreciation.
- NGOs may advocate for migrant rights and ensure their views are heard. This involves supporting policies and laws that help migrants integrate into the host society.

NGOs offer several services to help migrants adjust to the new society. These services include language classes, employment, housing, health care, legal, social, cultural exchange, and advocacy. NGOs are crucial to migrants' integration by offering these necessary services.

NGOs listened to Lithuanians and examined the country geographically. Lithuania's young population and lack of manufacturing and retail facilities in rural areas have led most migrants to settle in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda (Muraleedharan, 2020).

One of the three lobbying techniques of the Organisation for Migrant Integration is connecting migrants and locals. The other advocacy methods include media orientation and national and European integration funds and grants. These measures helped the organisation restore positive views among migrant and native communities. News items and participation in the national radio LRT show *Ryto garsai* (Morning Sounds) helped the non-governmental organisation tell Lithuanian migrants' stories. The non-governmental organisation received EU Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund subsidies for national and European integration.

After reviewing this problem, it can be stated that political unrest, wars and environmental disasters force people to leave their homes. Since everyone deserves a better life and a fresh start, the host society should work with this group to promote peace and cooperation. The complexity and variety of human behaviour make it unpredictable. A specialist in the field would study and provide solutions that meet the needs of both the migrant and the host community. The social worker helps integrate this vulnerable population into the host society and ensures migrants follow rules. The state regulates migrants and must pass laws to meet their requirements. This fosters community; thus, the state should consider including migrants in poli-

cymaking. The state should also choose a respected migrant representative who is respected by the community. A person who can control a demonstration by lowering the volume. NGOs can promote communication between migrants and the state, and advise the government on successful support programmes, due to their direct contact with migrants and insights into their responses. Social workers and non-governmental organisations help migrants integrate in Lithuania and worldwide. Social workers assist migrants with cultural adaptation by providing support, advocacy and cultural sensitivity training. The Red Cross and other NGOs provide language education, employment assistance, housing support, health care, legal aid, social services, cultural exchange and advocacy. These services aid immigrants' integration. Additionally, institutions like the Red Cross help achieve sustainable development goals. These organisations work on human rights, freedom of expression, gender equality and human trafficking, and other Sustainable Development Goals. They often operate independently of government control; therefore, financial stability is essential for achieving their goals. Migration integration in Lithuania has been aided by the Red Cross. Its services have helped migrants learn languages, obtain legal help, and exchange cultures. These efforts have helped Lithuania become a migrant-friendly country. Migrant integration depends on social workers from non-governmental organisations. They help migrants integrate, and advance the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, NGO social workers need continual support from the government and private individuals to do their job well.

The problem presented in the article is confirmed by the research with the aim of showing the social integration of migrants in Lithuania from a social work perspective in the context of NGO experience and to perform a theoretical analysis of the phenomenon of migration in a global and a Lithuanian context, evaluating the reasons for and challenges of migration, and the general characteristics of Lithuania's migration and asylum policy.

Progress of investigation: The research received the approval of the Lithuanian Red Cross before collecting information from respondents. The respondents were provided with all information about the purpose of the study and the purpose for which their statements would be used. Respondents were informed that the interview would be anonymous

Data processing method: The data are processed on the basis of content analysis. This allows for the detailed presentation of the content of the work with comments and interpretations based on theoretical methodology.

Respondents: There were nine (9) respondents in total, from Vilnius and Kaunas (Lietuvos Raudonasis kryžius / Lithuanian Red Cross). All of them are social workers who are directly involved in the process of the integration of migrants in Lithuania on a daily basis.

Research ethics: The research was carried out without violating the rights of the research participants, and in accordance with research ethics principles: the research participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the method of data collection, all the participants agreed to participate in the study voluntarily.

5. Interpretation of the research results

The interview survey is divided into seven units. The *first unit* comprises demographic enquiries (age, gender, etc); the *second unit* addresses the reasons for migration and the challenges in accessing legal resources; the *third unit* examines social integration issues faced by migrants, informed by NGO experiences in Lithuania; the *fourth unit* explores the social integration process of migrants within the framework of NGO social work practice in Lithuania; the *fifth unit* focuses on collaboration with state institutions and other NGOs in the social integration of migrants in Lithuania; the *sixth unit* presents guidelines for the involvement of foreign consulates in advocating for the rights of nationals from developing countries; and the *seventh unit* shows exemplary practices of successful integration within the realm of social work.

In the article, the authors present only the units that best respond and illustrate the problem analysed in the article. Thus, the third, fourth and seventh units were selected. Demographic data was also presented.

Based on the information we gathered, the demographic characteristics of the respondents in the thesis are as follows: age range: 30–60 years; gender: seven females, one male; education: most respondents had a higher education (four had a master's degree, three had a bachelor's degree, and only one had a high school diploma). Despite the gender imbalance in the sample of respondents, with more women than men, we can assess this based on the social role theory developed by Eagly (1987), which states that gender stereotypes are created by the fact that men and women have different skills due to the gender division of labour, so it can be assumed that women dominate this profession due to their innate abilities to listen, care for people, and organise.

5.1. Unit III: Problems in the social integration of migrants in the framework of NGO experience in Lithuania

Here, we seek to learn about the difficulties that residents of developing nations (Third World countries) experience, and the issues they encounter during the integration process in Lithuania from the social workers' point of view.

Table 1 shows that Third World migrants face more obstacles than EU migrants. Third World migrants, unlike Ukrainian migrants, need to obtain a visa to cross the

Lithuanian border, and once in Lithuania, they are usually held in isolated camps in poor conditions for long periods of time, as the identification process is also difficult for them. As asylum workers have limited time to review Third World application files, and cultural and linguistic differences cause communication problems, the integration process takes time. As a result, they find it difficult to find work and meet their daily needs. Children under 16 receive free education, while those over 16 have to go through a complicated school admission process. Third World migrants usually do not have health insurance or family doctors, making health care difficult. Even students with temporary residence permits and insurance have problems with health care. The study shows that Third World migrants face racism, discrimination and legal status issues. Therefore, policymakers need to assess the specific obstacles these migrants face, and develop policies and programmes that meet their needs and help them integrate more easily into Lithuanian society.

Table 1. Challenges faced by people from Third World countries
in the process of integration in Lithuania

Category	Sub-Category	Respondent Statements
Over all challenges	Challenges	R1: 'I work mostly with Ukrainians, Belarusians and Russians, so I cannot really say' R2–R5: (Asylum seekers from Third World countries face various challenges based on their status. Those seeking asylum find it difficult to cross the border into Lithuania without permission. Those who successfully cross must hand themselves over to migration officers for identification, which can take time due to temporary confinement for safety reasons) R7: 'Like I said, Lithuania was unprepared for the influx of Third World refugees, so many of them were housed in small camps and lacked basic requirements like warm clothing, blankets and human rights' R8: 'Unlike migrants from neighbouring European countries, migrants from Third World countries had to go through a lot to apply for asylum' R7: 'The government says they came illegally so they got what they deserve'

Category	Sub-Category	Respondent Statements
	Examples of educational opportunities	R1, R3. R4, R8: (In terms of education, Third World country migrants, if they come with children, all the children have a right to education, the same as others, but for those over 16 it is a problem for them to get access to education) R2: 'I think education is no problem' R7: 'People who come with identity documents find it easier to go through the documentation process, and so if you have money to pay the fees, you pay and go, but if you do not have money, there is no way to school'
	Health and employment	R1: 'This is still a big issue for migrants from Third World countries. The lack of health insurance makes it difficult to get treatment' R2: 'Employer experience with migrants usually determines it. Negative experiences with a migrant group will prevent companies from hiring from that location, causing a problem' R3–R8: (Employers of migrants are likely to hire more) R7: 'Migrants are prevented from obtaining employment with specific companies due to the language' R1: 'When we were looking for a home for a Nigerian migrant, all the landlords said they didn't rent to black people. It was terrible, but such instances are rare' R7: 'People who have been granted asylum are permitted to work, while those who have not been granted asylum are prohibited from doing so' R8: 'People without IDs can't open bank accounts, so they can't work. We found jobs that accept cash, but people are reluctant to do so due to the law'; 'Most companies hire Lithuanian speakers, then Russian and English. Africans have a slight advantage due to their English skills, but Iraqis and Syrians have little or no English, which is a major issue'

5.2. Unit V: Cooperation with state institutions and other NGOs in the process of social integration of migrants in Lithuania

This unit aimed to explore the relations between the Lithuanian Red Cross and other NGOs and government structures, revealing how cooperation helps to realise more effectively the needs of migrants in the integration process.

Table 2. Cooperation with state institutions and other NGOs

Category	Sub-Category	Statements of Respondents
Cooperation ties with different institutions, sectors and organisations in solving integration problems	Employment	R1: 'Migrants are reluctant to learn the Lithuanian language, making it difficult for them to get jobs' R2–R5: (We help migrants prepare their CV, inform them of jobs available and how to go about the application process, and also in some cases act as middlemen between the migrant and his employer) R6: 'Employment is a very complex basis on several factors' R7: 'It is still problematic to get a job if you're from a Third World country based on the skills obtained and the difference it has with the company you want to work in, and it also goes to other nations, so it is all about obtaining skills' R2: 'The law states that if there is a job vacancy, the place should be offered to Lithuanians first who are qualified, and then foreigners, so we do cooperate with institutions that are looking for workers to get information if there are vacancies for foreigners' R8: 'We collaborate with the labour exchange to help find jobs for migrants'
	Living conditions	R1: 'Migrants themselves are responsible for their living conditions' R2, R4, R6, R7: (Housing is a big issue. At first there was accommodation for migrants, but now, with the high demand, what we do is we help them look for an available flat and negotiate the payment, since some of them have difficulties in understanding the language; at times house owners are not willing to let their house out to foreigners, especially from Third World countries, due to the lack of trust, so we try to build up trust) R2: 'We do not fight for better living conditions, what we do is find a place for migrants and negotiate the payment, so the migrants have to pay for their housing costs'

Category	Sub-Category	Statements of Respondents
	Educational possibili-ties (requ-alification, children's education)	R1: 'Migrants have all opportunities to learn and improve, just like Lithuanian citizens' R2–R8: (All migrant children of school age have to study for free, so we make sure they register in a school and undertake language classes seriously to catch up with local children. We organise an educational programme to teach about Lithuanian geography and culture for people who are up to that learning age) R2: 'We do cooperate with municipalities regarding possibilities for children's education and vocational schools regarding requalification. If a person says they want to requalify, our colleagues help them with that'
	Socio-cultural integration Language problems	R1: 'Migrants who want to integrate in Lithuania do so perfectly: they learn the language, accept the culture, and follow the laws of the republic of Lithuania' R2: 'It is a two-way process, you know, but at most times migrants are not willing to accept our culture, or some pretend to think it is better that way' R2–R8: (We help people prepare for state exams, we provide cultural training for people who have been granted asylum in Lithuania) R5: 'It is a two-way thing; it should not be imposed on them, as it can cause conflict'
	Health care	R1–R7: (We provide first aid treatment, and help migr-ants book appointments in hospital) R7: 'We help migrants get appointments with doctors' R8: 'We try to communicate with hospitals on changes to health policy'

According to the data presented in Table 2, NGO social workers play an important role in the integration of migrants in Lithuania. The interview responses show that the Lithuanian Red Cross cooperates closely with other state institutions and organisations in addressing integration issues in various areas. Regarding employment, the respondents noted that migrants have difficulty finding work due to language barriers and skill mismatches. The Lithuanian Red Cross helps migrants prepare CVs, provides information about job offers and application processes, and acts as an intermediary between migrants and potential employers. They also cooperate with the employment service to find suitable jobs for migrants. However, difficulties still arise in finding work for migrants, especially those from Third World countries. Regarding living conditions, respondents mentioned that housing is an important issue, and the Red Cross helps migrants find available apartments

and negotiate with landlords about the rent. They also cooperate with municipalities in finding suitable housing for migrants. However, the organisation does not fight for better living conditions, but focuses mainly on finding a place to live and coordinating the payment conditions for migrants. The respondents noted that migrant children have the same educational opportunities as Lithuanian citizens. The Lithuanian Red Cross helps migrant children register in schools and attend language classes so that they can better integrate with local children. They also organise educational programmes to teach migrants about Lithuanian geography and culture. The Lithuanian Red Cross also cooperates with vocational schools to help migrants retrain in their area of expertise. Regarding socio-cultural integration, the respondents noted that language learning, cultural acceptance, and compliance with the laws of the Republic of Lithuania are necessary for the integration of migrants. The Lithuanian Red Cross helps migrants prepare for state exams, and organises cultural training for those who have been granted asylum in Lithuania. However, the respondents noted that integration is a two-way process, and migrants must be ready to accept the culture and laws of the host country. Finally, the Lithuanian Red Cross provides first aid to migrants and helps to book doctors' appointments. They also communicate with hospitals on health policy changes that affect migrants. In summary, the Lithuanian Red Cross works closely with other NGOs and government agencies to help migrants integrate into Lithuanian society. Despite the challenges of finding work and housing, the organisation provides valuable assistance in various areas of integration, such as education, language, culture and health care.

5.3. Unit VII: Examples of good practice of successful integration within the framework of social work in NGOs

Table 3. Examples of good practice in successful integration

Category	Respondent
Successful integration process	R1: 'I have quite a few good examples of integration. Here are some of them: Two women with refugee status were diagnosed with depression last year when their integration began. With the help of volunteers from Lithuanian Red Cross for a day, both women have recovered almost 100% All the people I integrated have passed the Lithuanian language category I and the LR constitution exams. One family of Belarusian refugees bought their own house and decided to fully integrate in Lithuania, and in the future they may acquire citizenship of the Republic of Lithuania"

Category	Respondent
	R2: 'I have so many examples. We have people who came to our centre and studied the Lithuanian language and have finished and they are not working at their real qualification jobs. Some are now integrated into the field of music some doctors are working in hospitals, and teachers. Yes, I think that when some of these migrants stop coming to our centre it means that they did not like our services. Another reason is that they achieved their goal and are OK, they are happy, so our service is not needed. Taking a look at our statistics from the last three years, we had about 3,000 migrants coming in, and they all had their individual stories. Some of them, I think, they can say for themselves that they have got satisfaction learning the language, and now they can work, which to me is very important, and I am impressed that we were able to give them the assistance they needed' R3: 'We have helped to treat a lot of migrants who came with post-traumatic stress disorder because of the stress they undergo throughout the migration process, and they are OK now' R7: 'I know of one guy from Ghana who came illegally from Belarus and he has integrated here and is working and has not run away like the other guys, but usually many of them run away, I do not know why.' R8: 'We have good numbers who succeed in getting asylum status and stay to work in Lithuania, though the majority run away and move to France or Germany"
Unsuccessful integration process	R7–R8: (Many migrants are not comfortable with their situation here, so most of them run away to other European countries, like Germany and France' R8: 'I know of migrants who were sent back to their country, a lot of them based on the fact that their case was not valid.' R6: 'Some migrants were disappointed due to the fact that they expected more, but what they met was beyond their expectations, so they decided to return home'

The authors of the article share the respondents' experiences and best practices in assessment. Table 3 presents successful cases of the integration of migrants, despite the challenges they face in settling in Lithuania. Respondents to the study reported successful cases of language proficiency, employment in desired fields, and even acquisition of citizenship. However, there are also cases of unsuccessful integration, when migrants have fled to other European countries, fearing to return to their country or feeling disappointed with the services they received. The study shows that successful integration can only be achieved through cooperation between various organisations in the context of a positive refugee integration policy.

Discussion

The problem of integration of migrants in the Lithuanian NGO system in the context of social work experience requires additional complex research. Respondents in this research emphasised the challenges that migrants have to overcome in the pre-migration, post-migration, and integration stages. Social workers also noted that migrants from Third World countries face more challenges than migrants from neighbouring European countries.

Non-governmental organisations, especially the Red Cross, support migrants in the process of their integration into society by providing language training, employment, education, health care, legal, social and cultural services, and housing. Red Cross NGOs promote human rights, freedom of expression and gender equality, and have strategies to fight against human trafficking. As a result of these efforts to integrate migrants into society, Lithuania has become more friendly to migrants. Non-governmental organisations carry out their activities independently of the state, and therefore need financial stability to fulfil their mission.

The demographic characteristics of the social workers who participated in this research indicated that they are highly qualified; most of them have more than five years of practice in their field. Professionals working with refugees must disclose the situation and apply strategies that are suitable both for the migrant and the host society. The work of social workers and volunteers is to help migrants integrate into society as fast as possible, by providing support not only to groups but also individual assistance.

Social workers from non-governmental organisations have to help migrants in the process of integrating into Lithuanian society, and legislators must shape policies and programmes that meet the unique needs of third-country migrants. The state regulates the integration of migrants into society, and must adopt laws that meet their needs and requirements in this process; therefore, in this context, the state must find ways to include migrants in the consideration of draft laws on migration policy.

Examples of good practice reveal opportunities for migrants in situations of integration into society and confirm the fact that cooperation between NGOs and state structures can make the integration process more effective.

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