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#GetInvolved

State of the Art Report [POLAND]

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1. Data about democracy and discrimination in VET

- **Are there studies about discrimination in VET and on the labour market?**
- **Are there policy initiatives regarding the topic of supporting/compromising democracy?**

Introduction

Discrimination, lat. *discriminatis*, or "differentiation", is a common form of social exclusion, manifesting itself in less favourable treatment of a given person than another in a comparable situation, due to some characteristic (e.g. gender, sexual identity, age, disability, religion or political beliefs, ethnic or racial background, etc.)*.

The phenomenon of discrimination has always existed and it results, in a sense, from the Darwinian theory of evolution, according to which, to simplify, only the strongest have a chance of survival. The public good is never the same as the particular interests of individuals. So is the idea of the Community of "unification in diversity" and the community principle of non-discrimination just a cliché? Yes and no. The very idea of non-discrimination has evolved since the creation of the European Union and although it is not questioned as such in the EU bodies, its practical application in the Member States is still far from ideal.

Legal protection against discrimination in Poland results directly from Art. 32 of the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, the Act of June 26, 1974, the Labour Code and the Act of December 3, 2010. (the so-called equality act) on the implementation of certain provisions of the European Union in the field of equal treatment, which protects against discrimination based on sex, race, ethnic and national origin, religion, belief, belief, age, disability or sexual orientation. Most Poles accurately recognize discrimination in the labour market and in the services market (69% -77%, depending on a specific example of discrimination), while in these areas only about 29% of the community know that such measures are actually prohibited by law. At the same time, based on the research commissioned by the Human Rights Ombudsman in 2015 and 2017 and the Eurobarometer research (2012 and 2015), a steady increase in beliefs about the existence of discrimination in Poland can be observed.

According to the respondents, the most common discrimination is based on: gender (49%), ethnic origin (44%), gender identity (42%), people's disabilities (36%), religious beliefs and beliefs (32%), atheistic views (28%), and age 55+

(25%). About 40% of respondents do not know about the rights of a person experiencing discrimination in the area of employment and services.

In Poland, especially since joining the European Union (2004), there have been various political initiatives aimed at supporting and promoting democracy. Examples:

1. "Citizens for Democracy Program", implemented in the period 2013-2017, with the budget of EUR 37 million, run by Batory Foundation in partnership with the Polish Children and Youth Foundation that concentrated its activities on:

- supporting the development of civil society,
- increasing the involvement of non-governmental organizations in building democracy, social justice, combating hate speech, counteracting racism and xenophobia, sexual harassment, violence against women, problems of the Roma minority and understanding between cultures;

2. founding initiative and membership in Common Democracy (est. 2000) - an intergovernmental coalition of democratic states with a global reach, whose main goal is to promote democratic principles and strengthen democratic norms and institutions;

3. implementation of democracy issues into the core curriculum of general education by the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of 23.12.2008,

4. initiative to adopt and ratify by the Republic of Poland in 1991 the Convention on the Child Rights (UN 1989), guaranteeing the rights of children regardless of skin colour, religion or origin.

2. Examination of existing VET programs:

- **Are topics like democracy already part of the training programs?**
- **Are there antidiscrimination parts in it?**
- **Are there participation opportunities for the students?**
- **Are there special trainings for the teaching and training staff?**

The subject of democracy is part of the general education program in primary and secondary schools. Currently in Polish education it is assumed that shaping attitudes, conveying messages and developing skills should be treated as mutually complementary dimensions of the teacher's work. It is recommended that the school's tasks include civic education understood more broadly than providing content in subjects such as history or social studies. The teaching content is formulated in such a way that it also focuses attention on shaping social and civic competences. Citizenship Education (CE) and Human Rights Education (HRE) are part of the general education curriculum in all EU countries and are usually integrated with other subjects. In

Polish secondary schools, they dominate in two subjects, i.e. ethics and history and society.

Recommendations for students and parents participation in school governance, or student activities in core school bodies such as student council and school councils, are found in nearly all education systems, and most countries provide guidance for teachers to evaluate students' progress in citizenship education. Our country offers guidelines and materials to prepare students for active participation in society and equip them with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes to make a significant contribution to the development and well-being of society. Unfortunately, less attention is paid to citizenship education programs in vocational education. Trade schools or vocational training schools have provisions in their statutes about shaping students' citizenship, respect for tradition and national culture as well as attitudes of respect for other cultures and traditions, but it boils down to the common use of textbooks: "Knowledge about the society", "The rulers and the ruled", "Europe and the world", and to a much lesser extent usage of the projects, didactic games and other inclusive working methods.

Contents on counteracting discrimination in Polish general education programs in primary and secondary schools are implemented on the basis of many didactic sources. For example:

1. The Educational Reform Centre (ORE), as an agency of the Ministry of National Education, offers ready-made teaching materials and educational lesson scenarios for teaching staff to be used in schools, for example: "Anti-discrimination and intercultural education", "Discrimination and legal provisions", "Multicultural school" , "Tolerance towards cultural diversity. School's tasks "," Intercultural competences. Educational materials for teachers' councils" and others.
2. ORE has also prepared the educational project "School of democracy - School of Self-governance - Social and civic competences of students and teachers", which promotes civic and human rights education, understanding negative phenomena in society and shaping attitudes of empathy and solidarity, etc.;
3. Centre for Civic Education - in its "Learning School" program provides expert packages, eg. in the project "Let's talk about refugees. The power of cultures in school", with separate materials for teaching staff, school pedagogues and psychologists, class teachers, school heads and others.

Primary and secondary school students participate in civic programs that are adapted to their age and intellectual capacity. Methods involving students in working for the benefit of local communities (field lessons), project method, discussions (e.g. the need for security, affiliation, acceptance) etc. are especially preferred. Preparing a young person for the role of a citizen requires exercise in order to develop important social and civic competences.

The teaching staff of schools improve their educational skills in the field of democracy or discrimination in VET in the form of pedagogical training councils (internal professional development) and specialized training courses. This applies especially to young teachers who are required to develop professional competences as part of their professional promotion (courses, workshops, methodological conferences, seminars, etc.). Teachers have access to free educational resources for VET at the Education Reform Centre, Civic Education Centre, pedagogical libraries, UNESCO Initiatives Centre (intercultural education, civic education, human rights, etc.). In the years 2014-2016, the ENGAGE Project (Teachers Educational Centre's activity) carried out research on the level of preparation of educational staff to perform the tasks of civic education in Polish primary schools. Over 60% of respondents declared sufficient skills thanks to individual professional experience and self-education in this area. Approximately 28% of teachers provide specialized institutionalized training, and over 10% of the surveyed group reported a lack of skills and knowledge in this field. The conclusions of the research formulated the most important premises to improve the current situation in this field through:

1. new materials and tools to be used during lessons for civic education,
2. increasing the time spent on tasks that go beyond the school's teaching of knowledge to students,
3. training for teachers of all subjects,
4. experts' advice.

3. Existing competitions?

- **Collect existing competitions regarding the topic democracy (Antidiscrimination, diversity, participation possibilities etc.)**
- **Collect existing labels**

In recent years, many educational projects that deal with the subject of democracy and its development have been implemented in Poland., Examples:

1. Project "School of Democracy - School of Self-governance". Social and civic competences of students and teachers. Materials for conference participants - 2012
2. Education for Democracy Foundation; "School with class" - the only recognizable brand on the Polish educational market,
3. Democracy Day in Gdańsk,
4. The City of Poznań: call for proposals for the "Promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms as well as civil liberties as well as activities supporting the development of democracy",
5. Batory Foundation: "Democracy in action" Programme - supporting the activities of social organizations dealing with the protection of human rights and equal treatment, opposing all forms of discrimination and exclusion, guarding the observance of the principles of a democratic state of law,
6. Batory Foundation: Active Citizens Programme - National Fund, implemented from the funds of the so-called Norway Grants and EEA Grants, supporting activities undertaken by social organizations in 4 areas:
 - involving citizens in public affairs and social activities,
 - protection of human rights and equal treatment,
 - strengthening groups at risk of exclusion,
 - support for the development of the civic sector;
7. The Batory Foundation: The Women's Rights Fund (in connection with recent decisions questioning fundamental human rights, including women's freedoms and ... the convention against violence against women) offers financial support to social organizations and financial initiatives that work to protect women's rights and provide help them - intended for emergency aid, support and advice, legal and advocacy activities; (from the ombudsmen)
8. Polish National Federation of NGOs: Civil Society Development Strategy (2005) and supporting education for civic activation, activities to improve the quality of life and civic inclusion, and the development of a strong civic sector.

4. Already existing trainings and workshop methods

- **Diversity training, training in human rights, antidiscrimination, democratic structures etc.**
- **Collect existing training methods**
- **Pro & cons**
- **What is usable**

In Poland, we have a number of institutions specializing in training related to the subject of democracy or combating discrimination. Numerous studies are available from various activities, including international projects financed by EU funds. However, there is an urgent need to refine the detailed actions and their thematic scope.

Our project deals with the issues of strengthening democracy and anti-discrimination activities in VET (vocational education and training), but in the available literature I have not found methods and techniques specific to this field of youth training. On the other hand, there are general methods of the Polish education system, used in civic education, that we could use during the implementation of the GetInvolved project. Here are the most important of them:

1. working by project method,
2. lessons / activities in the field,
3. lecture, work with the textbook,
4. discussion, debate,
5. didactic games,
6. role play.

The following forms of activities may be used in the project:

- artistic initiatives - exhibitions, performances, various forms of cultural expression,
- studies and publications prepared by various working / project teams, presented in school, city space, media, networks, etc.,
- events organized for the school community: concerts, shows, meetings with representatives of other nationalities,
- visits to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) acting for or cooperating with representatives of other nationalities,
- visits to institutions monitoring the socio-political situation in minority groups,
- cooperation and exchange of information with entrepreneurs, representatives of associations, associations and others,
- awareness workshops to sensitize to specific problems, e.g. intolerance,
- joint projects for a selected group at school and outside (e.g. at the workplace),
- analysis of documentation and applicable processes, e.g. employee recruitment documentation.

These activities can be addressed both to students, the teaching team, parents and guardians, representatives of employers, target groups of the project, in particular in the form of a workshop that activates workshop participants, gives the opportunity to work on the attitudes and self-awareness of participants and requires high personal and professional. It would be advisable to support the workshop activities with other forms: a cultural event, publication, exhibition, etc., which should increase the effects of project activities.

Summary:

The analysis of the situation of civic education in Polish schools shows that this field requires systematic and consistent creation. The main barrier is the lack of cooperation within the school community, insufficient involvement of the school environment, including employers providing practical vocational training for students of vocational schools and apprenticeships for students of technical schools. In order to initiate new trends in civic education in VET, it seems advisable to train change leaders who will be multipliers of activities in this area, using the full potential of the school community and its surroundings.

Final information:

We initially invited 3 vocational schools to the project:

Zespół Szkół Morskich in Darłowo,

Zespół Szkół Technicznych in Szczecinek,

Zespół Szkół in Nowe.

All these schools educate young people at the levels of: First Degree Industry School (vocational school) and Vocational Technical School (secondary school, ending education with a vocational exam and high school diploma), in various professional profiles:

ZSM Darłowo: shipping engineering, marine navigator, logistics technician, technician of devices and renewable energy systems

ZST Szczecinek: electronics technician, construction technician, wood technology technician, landscape architecture technician and motor vehicle technician,

ZS Nowe: logistics technician and electronics technician.

Schools provide practical training for their students with collaborating companies, participate in Erasmus mobility projects in the Vocational Education and Training Sector, and have experience in international cooperation. We suggest that the trainings for teachers / trainers conducted



as part of GetInvolved and the developed training materials, methodology and teaching techniques should be general enough to be applicable at various levels of VET education (vocational schools and vocational technique) and for various professions.