

Citizenship education at Firda

Netherlands

<https://www.firda.nl/over-firda/brede-vorming>

<https://www.firda.nl/sites/default/files/2024-03/Firda%20visie%20op%20burgerschap.pdf>

DESCRIPTION

Firda operates **six MBO colleges (VET institutions)**, each with its own **citizenship department, allocating specific hours for its members to participate in citizenship education activities.**

There is a Firda-wide working group consisting of one teacher from each college, who is allocated one day per week for this role. A separate working group focuses on financial education, with one teacher from each college dedicating half a day per week to this. A knowledge circle focuses on digital citizenship.

Firda's model emphasises a "**Broad Education**" approach which goes beyond VET to prepare students for life. This intensified citizenship education approach follows the merger of ROC Friese Poort and Friesland College, and **it aims to foster independence, self-awareness, resilience, and confidence, ensuring students can participate meaningfully in society.** Citizenship education is central to this model, **promoting critical thinking, social responsibility, and active civic engagement**, and at Firda is **integrated into the curriculum through structured lessons and extracurricular activities.**

Key elements include:

- **Participation:** Students take part in activities promoting active involvement in their communities;
- **Knowledge:** Providing students with essential information across four main domains, ensuring they understand their civic rights and responsibilities.
- **Skills:** Emphasising 21st-century skills necessary for personal and professional success;
- **Values and virtues:** Encouraging reflection on democratic values and moral principles;
- **Identity:** Supporting students in developing a strong personal and professional identity through diverse experiences and self-reflection.

Citizenship education is delivered by **qualified teachers** and includes **160 hours of dedicated instruction.** The curriculum is **flexible, allowing integration with other subjects and practical experiences.** Students compile a **Citizenship Portfolio** to showcase their learning through various activities and reflections, culminating in a final presentation. Firda also **supports teachers** through **professional development opportunities** and an annual Citizenship Inspiration Day.

While most citizenship activities are school-based, some extend into the **community** and **involve collaboration with external organisations and enterprises**, providing real-world engagement opportunities for students.

REFLECTIONS

- Emphasise **building networks** to support and enhance citizenship education
- Quality education is delivered **by well-trained teachers.** Firda has developed a post-HBO program on citizenship in collaboration with a university of applied sciences;
- Encourage **active learning communities** where teachers can develop and share best practices;
- **Continuous reflection on practice and the integration of real-world experiences** are crucial;
- Ensure the **focus and vision are maintained**, especially during changes such as mergers;
- Provide **experiential learning** to create meaningful education for students;

- Collaborate with the **arts and culture sector** to inspire, reflect, and engage students through the power of imagination.

IMPACT

Evaluations indicate that while **students provide positive feedback** about several activities, the **overall impact on student behaviour and societal contribution has room for improvement**. Experts suggest that **linking the students' personal lives more closely to citizenship activities** could make them more relevant and impactful. Additionally, **increasing the visibility of these activities** within the educational program could enhance their effectiveness.