Initial and continuing VET teacher training

Ukraine

DESCRIPTION

In Ukraine, the professional development of teachers in vocational education and training (VET) is regulated by the Law of Ukraine "On Education" and the Law "On Professional (Vocational) Education", mandating 150 **hours of training every five years** for educators. Professional training is provided by authorized institutions such as the University of Education Management, the Bila Tserkva Institute of Continuing Professional Education, and regional methodological centres like the one in Khmelnytskyi. Additionally, VET institutions themselves support teacher development through in-house methodological training activities.

In order to develop teachers' competences for democratic culture, events are organised for teachers to learn new methods and approaches to teaching democratic values: seminars, workshops, trainings, online courses, webinars, internships, and exchange of practices between teachers and educational institutions.

The training focuses especially on the following issues:

- openness to cultural differences and to other beliefs, worldviews and practices, responsibility, self-efficacy, and tolerance for ambiguity;
- valuing human dignity and human rights, cultural diversity, democracy, justice, fairness, equality and the rule of law;
- self-study skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, listening and observation skills, empathy, flexibility and adaptability, language, communication and multilingual skills, collaboration, conflict resolution;
- knowledge and critical understanding of oneself, language and communication, understanding of the world: politics, law, human rights, culture, religion, history, media, economy, environment, sustainable development
- student self-government in VET institutions as a means of forming social activity and civic consciousness of students;
- promoting gender equality in vocational education.

An example of promoting a culture of democracy within VET is the pedagogical training program developed by the **Methodological Centre of Vocational Education and Training for Engineering-Pedagogical Workers in the Khmelnytskyi region**. Launched in 2020, the program focuses on the topic "**Technology for the Development of Critical Thinking"**, and is offered in full-time, distance, or blended formats of 12 hours. It emphasises theoretical understanding and practical application, equipping educators to apply critical thinking methods in their own teaching practices and foster democratic values in the classroom.

IMPACT/ REFLECTIONS

The trainings have had a significant **positive impact on teachers, contributing, in turn, to the development of students' ability** to critically analyse and actively engage in civic thinking, which is the basis for the development of a culture of democracy in society.

Survey results indicated that participants of the "**Technology for the Development of Critical Thinking"** course acquired important skills and knowledge:

- Teachers noted that the training helped them to better **analyse critically information**, separating facts from opinions, developing their ability to assess the reliability and credibility of information sources;
- The trainings helped educators learn **to recognise propaganda and manipulative techniques** such as exaggeration, distortion of facts, and emotional appeals. The teachers gained knowledge on how to counter disinformation and disseminate accurate and verified data;
- Teachers have gained practical knowledge on the **use of critical thinking technologies**, promoting the development **of students' ability to independently analyse and evaluate information**.