

## Freed from theory – Linking an NGO initiative with formal schooling

### Poland

#### DESCRIPTION

The Freed from theory (*Zwolnieni z Teorii*) initiative is a **competition where upper secondary (including VET) learners collaborate to carry out social impact projects in real-world settings**. Teams receive guidance from accredited educators and professionals.

These projects are assessed against criteria including effective management, communication and the extent of evidence confirming the existence of the social issue addressed. Participants who successfully complete their projects receive certificates in project management accredited by the Project Management Institute and are invited to participate in the final. The most successful teams receive awards presented by senior officials, such as ministers and CEOs of prominent companies.

**In 2019, 25% of upper secondary students participated in this initiative, and in six years, more than 3 000 projects have been implemented, benefiting 25 million people.**

While conducting these social projects, **participants develop transversal competences**, including:

- **personal, social and learning competences: teamwork, time management, self-confidence;**
- **civic competences: active participation in community life, critical thinking, taking responsibility for others;**
- **entrepreneurship: the ability to take the initiative, make decisions, build partnerships, solve problems, exercise creativity;**
- **cultural awareness and expression: understanding local contexts, communication, empathy.**