

Program “Care about health” in an Agricultural and Chemical School

Serbia

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Brief description of the example

DESCRIPTION

Due to the increasing number of women suffering from cervical cancer and children suffering from smallpox in Serbia, both due to misconceptions about vaccination, **it became crucial to inform students, particularly those in relevant vocational profiles, about the importance and possibilities of vaccination and the dangers of Genetically modified organisms (GMOs).**

The program, "**Care about Health,**" was introduced to **first-year students** at the Djordje Radic **Agricultural and Chemical School in Kraljevo**. It was based on research work conducted at the Institute for Public Health in Kraljevo and aimed not only to promote health awareness but also to foster responsible citizenship by encouraging critical thinking, informed decision-making, and active engagement with societal issues.

The program consisted of **two lessons, maths and biology**, for the first-year students specialising as **chemical/pharmaceutical technicians**. The students conducted **research on the HPV and MMR vaccine**, and they **surveyed their peers about their knowledge and opinions about vaccination and GMOs**. The research also involved **collaboration with the local Institute for Public Health** and its doctors. The students who conducted the research **created a short video** and presented the results of the survey to other students and teachers at the school thus assuming the role of **peer educators and contributing to the school community’s understanding of health-related issues**.

Among the activities, in the maths lesson, students engage in an escape room activity organised as Google questionnaires that could be accessed by QR codes. The students also solved percentage calculation problems related to vaccination and GMOs, which allowed them to expand their knowledge about vaccination and the advantages and disadvantages of GMOs. This helped them develop not only numeracy but also the competence to evaluate and interpret real-life data—an essential element of CDC's competence areas such as critical thinking, knowledge and critical understanding of the world, and analytical and cooperation skills.

The program encouraged discussions on **ethical issues** and **moral dilemmas** surrounding vaccines and GMOs, thus supporting the development of CDC competences such as valuing democracy, human rights, and cultural diversity, as students were encouraged to engage with differing perspectives, think critically about societal challenges, and participate in respectful dialogue.

Through this interdisciplinary and participatory approach, students developed both subject knowledge and a stronger sense of democratic citizenship—becoming more informed, responsible, and active members of society. By linking curricular content with real-world issues, this program promoted functional knowledge and interdisciplinary learning. It empowered students not only to master academic content but also to develop as active, informed, and socially responsible citizens, fully aligned with the principles of citizenship education and the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture