

Varaždin County, Croatia



Mechanical engineering and traffic school



Keyword(s):

technical training, initial and continuing training opportunities, employment



Introduction

Mechanical engineering and traffic school in Varaždin works on education for all occupations/professions in the field of mechanical engineering and transport required by the labour market (12 different occupations). Varaždin County is the founder of the school. Since its establishment in 1995, a vocational school for mechanical engineering and traffic started with professional education for its students - regular pupils and adults.

Students educated for the occupations in the field of mechanical engineering have practical work in the school's workshop and produce different kinds of metal products. These products are offered for sale to the public, but also to the companies which have needs for them but do not want to produce them by themselves. The school also has a driving school where students are trained to become drivers, but services are also offered to the public. During the time appears also the need for Periodical training of drivers for COD 95 and driver's training for ADR - European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road.

In our school, students learn to apply the acquired theoretical knowledge and develop entrepreneurship. In Croatia, very few people participate in adult education. The data from 2019 show that a total of 14.9% of the adult population did not even finish high school (average EU: 21.9%). The participation rate in adult



education is low (2.9% in Croatia, the EU average is 11.1%)¹. That's why it is very important that the school has regular groups of adults enrolled in the courses each academic year.

Main challenge

The connection between the school, the economy, the labour market, and the local community has been cherished constantly because vocational schools depend on these good relations. Mechanical engineering and traffic school is VET school and we have to give the economy these specialists it needs. In order to be able to "produce" such specialists, the school has to educate its teachers and employers too. They have to be able to answer to requests of the economy and follow the development of technology in their areas of interests. Like by our Norway colleagues, the most important challenge is attracting and retaining the right competency. The challenge is also to obtain the information on which the education will be planned and implemented to satisfy the demand of the labour market.

Timing

We started in 1995 with the foundation of the school, and we still work on the same topic. We just improved and developed new courses and programmes during the time.

Objective

Our vision is a school that will be a centre of excellence in the areas for which we educate and educate our students (mechanical engineering and traffic). Our goal is to provide students and adult learners with the acquisition of competencies, knowledge and skills that will enable them to live and work in a changing environment.

Target groups

Students and adult learners being educated for mechanical and traffic occupations, but also their teachers.

Geographical range

Varaždin County and counties nearby (Medjimurksa County, Koprivničko-križevačka County for ex.)

Stakeholders and partners

Varaždin County is the founder of the school and (together with the Ministry for education and sport) takes care of all human and material preconditions for education implementation.

¹

https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/default/files/document-library-docs/et-monitor-report-2019-croatia_hr.pdf

We collaborate a lot with the Agency for VET and adult education, which help us to apply the best standards of education.

We constantly work with the companies from our county and whole Croatia, in order to understand better what kind of professionals they need and with which skills and knowledge, as well as learn from them about technologies used in the economy at the moment. The companies send us their employees to educate them in very specific areas as Periodical training of drivers for COD 95 and ADR. Unemployed people ask us the new qualifications which should help them to find new jobs.

Strategy / materials

We actually work on the realisation of the goals of Varaždin County Development County, Varaždin County Human Resources Development Strategy and Draft of School's Development Strategy. The school is financed through the Ministry for education and sport and Varaždin County as a founder. We also participate in different EU projects and activities and contributions of adult learners who attend our educations.

We rely on communication means used by the Ministry and County, and within different projects, we use the communication means asked within each specific project. Used communication materials are as follows: web site, FB profile, leaflets, video etc. Our work, as well as our strategies, are participatory, inclusive and gender-sensitive. We educate female learners for untypically female professions, and we also have special programmes for the students with difficulties. The students (regular pupils and adult learners) are the centre of our work.

Resources

We use the school budget and the work of our teachers, and in special cases, we use financed through projects' budgets.

Compliance with SDG's

SDG 4, SDG 11.

Innovation(s)

Education linked to entrepreneurship and aimed at the economy. We are part of centre for competencies in the area of mechanical engineering for Nord-west Croatia.

Evaluation

We only register the numbers of students. From time to time we ask our students to evaluate the program they participated, and its reflection on their career progress after ending the program (qualitative evaluation).

Success parameters

Labour market demand for our students

Impediments

Material conditions which simulate these in the real economy, are very expensive to organize.

Teachers are overwhelmed at work.

People in Croatia are not used to paying for a good education.

Very often the employers do not want (or have no time) to participate in the work of educational institutions and give the information on which they can plan their educational programmes.

We work on all these issues on daily basis.

Replicability

All VET schools in Croatia are part of the Croatian educational system and work the same way. Similar approaches may be applied anywhere if the institutional framework is supportive.

Concluding remarks:

The school has many development potentials: possibilities of internationalization of business, the introduction of new curriculums and teaching methods, development of new products and services in school workshops etc. Innovation, insistence on quality and application of the latest achievements from the industries for which we educate our students, will enable the school to continue to be a leader and a leader in trends in educating students for various occupations required by the labour market.

The main challenges are further investments in equipping the school, stable partnerships with the founder (Varaždin County) and all other partners (employers, ministries, AVETAE, parents, students, etc.).

Website/Facebook profile of the initiative:

<https://www.sips.hr/>

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