

Good practice: Vocational Courses (various vocations)

21st Century Skill connected:

Learning skills: communication, social responsibility, critical thinking

Literacy skills: Information technology

Life skills: initiative, productivity, engaged learning

Give an explanation of how this good practice works. Examples from websites, videos or other media are necessary.

Vocational courses in Polish prisons are organized in each prison school that exists on Polish penitentiary map. There are 18 penal units where prison schools operate and these schools are obliged by law to have it organized (apart from the vocational courses, schools also organize general education). The types of courses are up to the headteacher and the head of the prison – it depends on possibilities and availability of resources.

Vocational education covers initial vocational education, vocational education in a given profession and all forms of vocational training and professional development. Therefore, vocational education can be defined as all deliberately organized activities and processes leading to preparation for the profession, including professional orientation and in particular the preparation to carry out professional duties.

Vocational education in Poland is a component of formal education system. After completion of vocational training in basic vocational school (among which prison schools are), students can take the exam confirming vocational qualifications. The examination confirming vocational qualifications is not mandatory. Diploma confirming vocational qualifications are issued by Regional Examination Boards.

In addition to the educational system vocational training is also conducted by the Polish Craft Association and in the form of vocational training of young people (this form is not present in Polish prisons; only outside prison walls for non-prisoners). Formal confirmation of qualifications acquired this way is carried out by professional examination organized by the examination chambers of crafts, which issue journeyman certificates and masters diplomas. These documents are equivalent to diplomas issued by Regional Examination Boards.

The widely understood vocational education also includes all non-formal and informal forms of education and training and elements of higher education system, such as higher vocational schools.

Explain how this good practice helps solve problems/stimulates social vocational skills in your country. If possible, provide data of how successful the good practice is.

Polish Qualifications Framework (PQF, *Polska Rama Kwalifikacji*) is an eight level structure containing the descriptions of requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and social competences, which correspond to a given level of qualification. Each level is assigned to the corresponding level in the European Qualification Framework. The main assumption of Polish Qualifications Framework is to provide clarity and transparency of qualifications.

Polish Qualifications Framework is defined at three levels: Polish Qualification Framework referred to the European Qualifications Framework on the first level, the qualifications framework for general education, higher education and vocational education and training on the second level and sectoral qualifications frameworks on the third level. Sectoral qualifications frameworks contain the descriptions of the requirements in terms of knowledge, skills and social competencies specific to particular sectors of the economy. In

the first instance five sectoral qualifications frameworks have been developed: for banking, tourism, sports, telecommunications and IT. Institute for Labour Market Analysis in a consortium with Altkom Academy participated in the preparation of Sectoral Qualifications Framework for IT.

Integrated Qualifications Register (IQR, *Zintegrowany Rejestr Kwalifikacji*) covers qualifications issued in Poland. Integrated Qualifications Register is going to act as the “connector” between different qualifications subsystems, which has functioned autonomously so far. The Integrated Qualifications Register will function as a repository, storing all data associated with the registered qualifications in digital format. The information collected in the National Qualifications Register will be made available through National Qualification System Internet portal. The qualifications register will include those qualifications whose quality is guaranteed by defined procedures and monitored by a specific entity. The register will include qualifications regardless of already existing qualifications registers and lists or those that will be created in the future in Poland as needed by specific departments, sectors, communities or institutions.

Entering a qualification into the register will mean that it is assigned a PQF level. Thus, any qualification entered in the register will also be referenced to a level of the European Qualification Framework.

Under the law register will include all qualifications issued by education and higher education systems. For example, matura exam is going to be assigned to the fourth PQF level, and bachelor to the sixth level. Inclusion of qualifications related to the regulated professions regulated will be determined by the competent minister responsible for the given professional area. Other qualifications are going to be included into register on request of stakeholders such as representatives of industries, professional organizations etc.

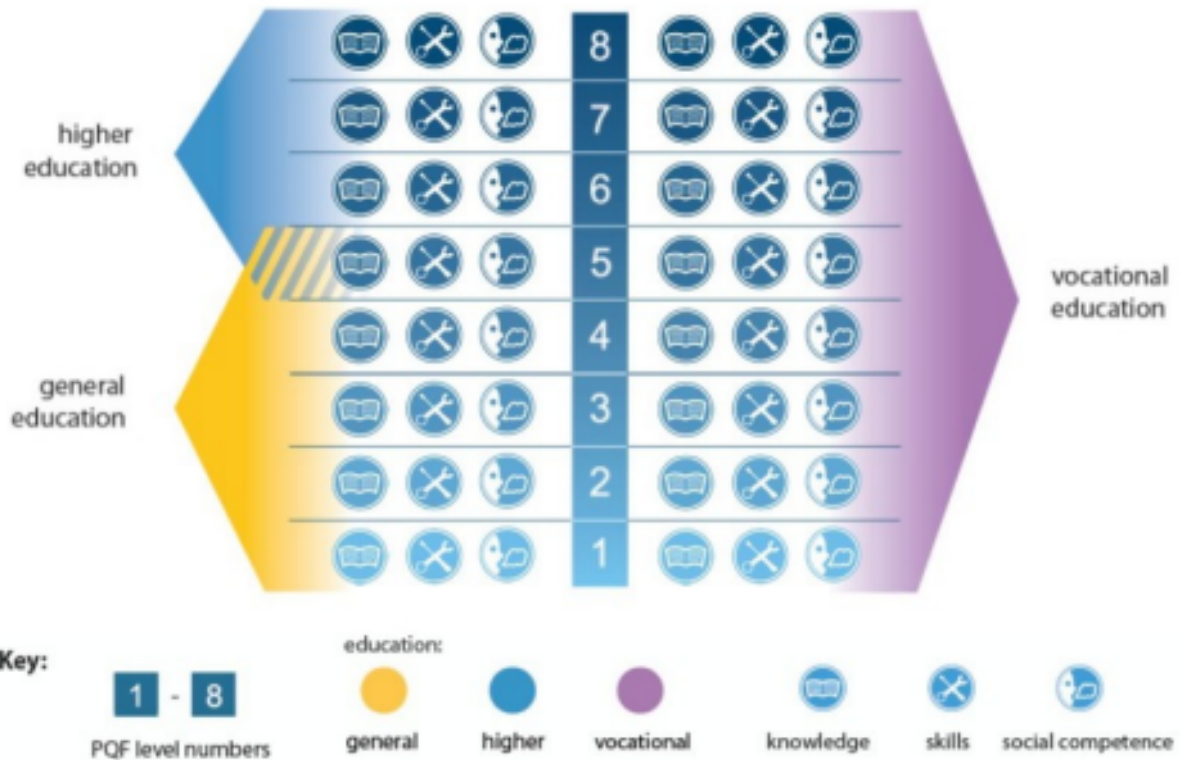
As one can see at the diagram below, on a whole, any vocational course has in its official, national curriculum social competence subjects. They may vary in name (the legislator gives some flexibility to the headmaster of the school where such a vocational course is organized), however most common names of these subjects are “social competences”, “running your own economic activity”, health and safety”, “personal competences”, “IT skills”, etc.

To be able to receive a formal certificate a student must pass all exams while taking their education. To pass an exam, one has to get transitional/intermediary credits in the named above subjects. That means they have to receive certain social skills before receiving final, vocational educational certificate.

Explain in one or two sentences how this good practice matches with the connected 21st Century Skill.

To pass a national exam (in any vocation) is a difficult achievement. There are vocations, where percentage of passes is not even more than 50% nationwide (that includes all types of school, not just the prison ones but also the outside ones).

Providing a student actually passes the exam and receives national, formal qualifications (backed up with a relevant certificate), means that they have been equipped with proper skills, not just the vocational ones, but also social competences.



The structure of the Polish Qualifications Framework

Good Practice Vocational Courses Appendix 1 – pictures from classes

Good Practice Vocational Courses Appendix 2 - link to a film on 100th anniversary of the Prison Service

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UdDx5u2izQo>

(part from 5:40 through 6:24 showing a vocational class example in Płock prison)