

TEMPLATE FOR THE GOOD PRACTICE

What is a good practice?

A good practice is not only a practice that is good, but a practice that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model. It is a successful experience, which has been tested and validated, in the broad sense, which has been repeated and deserves to be shared so that a greater number of people can adopt it.

Please follow the instructions included to fill in the template. You can replace the guiding questions for each element with your description.

Mandatory fields are defined by *

Element	Description
Title*	<i>Psychosocial Support in a Vocational Education Institution in a Border Region</i>
Name of the VET Provider	State professional-technical educational institution "Snovsk high vocational school of forestry"
Thematic domain	<p>What is the thematic domain covered by this good practice? More than one domain can be indicated</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Innovation • Digital • Green • <u>Inclusion</u> • Entrepreneurial • Career guidance • Lifelong learning • Creating partnerships/skills ecosystems
Introduction*	<i>Snovsk High Vocational School of Forestry is located in a border region of Ukraine that has been affected by war-related challenges, population displacement, and increased psychological pressure on learners and staff.</i>

In this context, vocational education institutions not only provide professional skills but also play an important role in supporting learners' well-being, social adaptation, and continuity of education.

To respond to these challenges, the institution has developed a comprehensive psychosocial support system that combines psychological counselling, resilience-building activities, support for vulnerable learners, and the creation of a safe educational environment. The system is based on trauma-informed principles and has been integrated into daily educational practice since 2022.

Stakeholders and Partners

Beneficiaries:

- students;
- internally displaced students (IDPs);
- orphans and children deprived of parental care;
- students with disabilities;
- children of military personnel and combat veterans;
- students at risk;
- teaching and administrative staff;
- parents and the local community (indirectly).

Users of the practice:

- teachers;
- vocational training instructors;
- school psychologist;
- social pedagogue;
- school administration;
- parents.

Partners:

- local social services and child protection services;
- healthcare institutions;
- non-governmental organisations, including NGO "LAMPA";
- international and humanitarian projects, including Save the Children and the programme "Childhood Under Protection: Integration and Psychosocial Support for Children of Chernihiv Region".

Impact*

The practice has contributed to improving the educational environment and learning conditions while positively influencing the emotional well-being of learners.

Key results include:

- increased emotional stability and sense of safety;
- improved adaptation and integration of vulnerable learners;
- reduction in conflicts and bullying incidents;
- higher engagement in learning activities;
- improved communication between students, teachers, and parents;
- increased openness and willingness to communicate;

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- *improved ability to recognise and express emotions;*
 - *development of self-reflection and awareness of personal strengths;*
 - *stronger group cohesion and mutual support;*
 - *development of non-violent communication skills;*
 - *reduced anxiety and emotional tension;*
 - *increased self-confidence and motivation for personal development.*

The practice supports educational continuity during periods of displacement and uncertainty, helping learners remain engaged in vocational education and training.

Evidence of impact:

- *observations by teachers and staff;*
- *feedback from students and parents;*
- *positive behavioural changes observed during activities;*
- *attendance and participation records.*

Innovation and Success Factors *

The main innovation of the practice is the integration of psychosocial support into the daily life of a vocational education institution rather than treating it as a separate service.

The practice combines several complementary approaches:

- *trauma-informed education;*
- *art therapy techniques;*
- *body-oriented activities;*
- *emotional intelligence and resilience development;*
- *cross-sector cooperation between the school, NGOs, and social services.*

The institution applies a holistic model that includes:

- *a trauma-informed educational environment based on safety, trust, and support;*
- *psychological counselling and crisis response;*
- *targeted support for vulnerable learners;*
- *bullying prevention and promotion of a culture of respect;*
- *development of non-violent communication skills;*
- *resilience-building activities;*
- *support for teachers and parents.*

Success factors:

- *close cooperation between educational and psychological staff;*
 - *active involvement of school leadership;*
 - *learner-centred approach;*
 - *continuous professional development of staff;*
 - *partnerships with civil society organisations;*
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- *systematic and consistent implementation.*

Constraints*

The main challenges include:

- *frequent air raid alerts and security risks;*
- *limited availability of qualified specialists;*
- *high levels of stress among students and staff;*
- *risks of emotional burnout among educators;*
- *limited resources for systematic support programmes.*

These challenges are addressed through:

- *cooperation with external services and projects;*
- *training activities for staff;*
- *integration of psychosocial support into everyday educational practice;*
- *mutual support within the school community.*

Lessons learned *

The implementation of the practice has led to several important conclusions:

- *psychological safety is a fundamental condition for effective learning;*
- *regular small-scale support activities are often more effective than one-time interventions;*
- *teachers play a key role in identifying learners' needs at an early stage;*
- *cooperation between schools, families, and external services increases effectiveness;*
- *trauma-informed approaches improve both well-being and educational outcomes;*
- *even short-term group art therapy programmes can have a significant positive impact;*
- *creative methods help young people discuss difficult experiences without additional retraumatisation;*
- *mental health support contributes not only to well-being but also to educational success.*

Replicability and/or up-scaling

The practice can be implemented in other vocational education institutions, particularly in regions affected by conflict, displacement, or social challenges.

It can be integrated into educational programmes, student support services, school counselling systems, and international technical assistance projects.

The practice does not require significant financial investment and can be adapted both for large urban institutions and for small schools in rural and border communities.

Conditions for replication:

- *staff training in psychosocial and trauma-informed approaches;*
- *access to psychological support services;*
- *commitment from institutional leadership;*

- cooperation with social and healthcare sectors;
- effective internal coordination mechanisms.

Contact details

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URL of the practice

The practice is documented through internal institutional materials and reports prepared by partner organisations.

Institution website:

<https://snovsklis.ptu.in.ua/psihologichna-sluzhba-11-36-02-08-01-2024/>

Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1BLhVQ1Dou/>

Related publications:

“Safe Environment” Collection
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U7MQFc7YR-Ezi0hG5270SL5WD8zN2TIZ/view?usp=sharing>

“Social and Emotional Learning Practices” Collection
https://drive.google.com/file/u/0/d/1uVWQNE0CF5EesnahlYeIMbHK-2ZB94_a/view

Related resources that have been developed

Related Resources Developed

- internal guidelines on psychosocial support;
- methodological materials for teachers;
- psychological first aid and counselling tools;
- information materials for staff and parents;
- psychosocial support training programmes;
- materials on non-violent communication;
- resources on resilience and emotional literacy development.