

## National Competition SCHOOL OF EQUALITY

The National Competition was launched through the Career Rocket website and detailed information and a special Invitation Letter was sent to the Ministry of Education and Science in order to be disseminated through the Regional Inspectorates of Education. A special invitation was sent to all schools that have participated to the different trainings within the project.

The Competition was based on a Self-Evaluation Form published at the Career ROCKET website.

GERT foundation and GPF foundation set-up a working group, which screened in details the 43 returned self-evaluation forms giving a combined score from 1 to 10 to each school applying the following criteria:

I. The school is working actively and on purpose for equality, protection against discrimination and building tolerance towards differences both within the education process and during the out of school activities.

II. The school applies the principle of equality in the process of career orientation of girls and boys.

III. The school actively seeks external for the education system partners (such as business partners) to support and promote the career choices of girls and boys.

IV. Exhaustiveness and content of the answers in the questionnaire.

As a result of the screening of the self-evaluation forms and discussing the different indicators the working group selected 10 (ten) schools which were closest to the criteria of the competition.

Some of these schools have been visited on the spot by the partners, others have been interviewed additionally by phone. Representatives of the working group have met the school managers and some representatives of the pedagogical teams of the schools as well as some students from each school, to discuss the thematic of the competition and the content of the self-evaluation form.

Comparing the abovementioned criteria of the 10 schools- finalists the team selected as winner of the **National Competition "School of Equality"** the Professional School for garment production **Nedka Ivan Lazarova** from the city of Rousse (the biggest city located on the coast of the river Danube).

The followers of the winner and holders of the label were four additional schools:

- **The professional school of economics „Aleko Konstantinov” from Kardjali**
- **The Secondary school “St. Paisiy Hilendarski” from Dupnitsa**
- **The Secondary school „Hristo Botev” from Kozloduy**
- **The professional school of economics „Ivan Iliev” from Blagoevgrad.**

The other five schools have also shown some very interesting initiatives and good indicators but there was much to be done on other important indicators.

The team offers here a short description of the winners and the motivation for the decision of awarding the label.

## 1. Professional School for garment production Nedka Ivan Lazarova, Rousse

The Professional School for garment production



Nedka Ivan Lazarova has no written policy on equality, protection against discrimination and tolerance towards differences, but it has many school documents containing texts and rules regulating the theme of the competition. The documents foresee activities connected to the promotion and the maintenance of the equality between girls and boys both in school and in out of school activities, as well as in other school practices.

The school community comprises representatives of five ethnic groups: Bulgarians, Turks, Roma, Armenians and Ukrainians. The school implements practices

oriented to the work in a multicultural environment aiming at raising the intercultural competencies of all the participants in the education process.

There is Centre for Career Development built in the professional school. This is a centre hosting some out of school activities oriented to familiarise the students with the opportunities for career development and professional growth offered by the labour market, including the local one.

The traditional days of Open doors in the school are also focused on equal opportunities for professional realization of girls and boys. The number of boys in the professional school is lower than the number of girls but there is a sustainable trend of narrowing the gap promoted by the school management.

Each single out of school activity in the professional school is closely linked with the profession taught to the students. Also, each such activity gives the opportunity for professional expression. In this way the students learn how to work in team and see the perspectives given by the profession. Girls and boys complement themselves according to their individual skills and qualities in order to achieve the final goal of a presentation.

The professional school for garment production has a fruitful partnership with the Industrial Chamber of Commerce. They organise meetings and events to share best practices in the field of entrepreneurship and career orientation of young people.

The professional school maintain an enabling environment for professional development and presentation and in the same time tent to enlarge the horizons of students by opening their eyes for art and culture, technologies and interpersonal relations in order they can find their own perspective and place there in.

## 2. Professional high school of economics „Aleko Konstantinov“, Kardjali

The school abides to number of documents regulating the equal opportunities and protection against discrimination, including on the basis of gender.

Different initiatives in the frames of both the regular school program and the out of school initiatives are organised in order to make the students aware of the linkage between human dignity and the basic human rights as a basis for their protection; different activities are implemented to extend he understanding of the role of civil society for the protection of human rights. The school organizes regularly round tables with the participation of students, teachers and parents to discuss interesting themes. In 2019 the theme of the roundtable has been "Let's break the stereotypes in our life!".



Concerning the professional orientation of students, the school organizes regularly events dedicated to the career choice: a Day of the Bankers; a Day of the software programmer; a Day of the accountant; a Day of the economist; Days of digital literacy and a Week of entrepreneurship. The students are encouraged to participate in number of national competitions oriented to the professional choices of youngsters.

The school strives to enhance the skills and the competencies of both the students and the teachers at all levels in order to ensure a better

integration to the labor market in the future. The school focuses specifically on acquiring knowledge and skills required by the contemporary labor market. There is also institutional partnership between the collective of the teachers and the business circles in the region through the Industrial Chamber of Commerce of the town. The school participates regularly in the industrial exhibitions and seminars.

### 3. Secondary school „St. Paisiy Hilendarski”, Dupnitsa



The Secondary school „St. Paisiy Hilendarski” developed and applies number of school regulations, which contain texts on the promotion and maintenance of the balance and equal opportunities of girls and boys in the school and in the out of school activities. In the frames of the education process and during the out of school activities the students are being familiarized on purpose with human rights, the influence of gender stereotypes on the attitudes and behaviors of girls and boys; economic and social aspects of the inequalities based on gender. Discussing these thematic issues the teachers aim to make the students aware that

the equality between women and men is an important element of democracy and it is also a prerequisite for the fulfillment of human rights and social justice.

In the school there are different “clubs on interests”: half of them are created around STEM – digital creativity, natural sciences, mathematics and technologies. The main idea is through the activities within the clubs to support the development of key competencies of the students in the respective fields and thus to support their professional orientation.

### 4. Secondary school „Hristo Botev”, Kozloduy

The school applies the principle of equal opportunities including on the basis of gender. The collective of teachers abides to the unified requirements in the work with students and implements the normative documents, which ensure the gender equality, the protection against discrimination and tolerance to differences. The principles of equality are also in the basis of the school rules and in the regulation of the activities of the Students’ Parliament.



Traditionally the school organizes the celebration of the holidays of different ethnicities where the habits and customs are being played. The teachers encourage equally girls and boys to participate in competitions, project and other school initiatives.

The school organizes the celebration of the international women's day (March 8), focusing on its history, namely the struggle for equality and human rights of women, but also of the Day of the fathers, focusing on the role of men in the upbringing and education of children.

In the education process the equal opportunities of girls and boys are linked to the possibilities of better career achievements by better motivation of students to follow their dreams instead of the stereotypes.

## 5. Professional school of economics „Ivan Iliev“, Blagoevgrad



In the frames of different school and out of school activities the teachers and the students of in the professional school of economics discuss the themes, which aim to raise the awareness and sensitivity of students towards the equality including gender equality; to change the stereotypical thinking concerning the choices made by girls and boys for their career; to make a change in order to establish a real equality between girls and boys..

There is a students' club in the school called "Active European citizens" in which the values of the EU are discussed, including the gender equality and equal choices in career development. The annual Fair of Study Enterprises organized by the school gives the opportunity to girls and boys to participate actively in the presentation of the professions which they are learning for, and to demonstrate that both girls and boys have equal chances to follow their dreams.

As a recognition for the successes in the initiatives connected to gender equality, the winners of the competition have been encouraged and supported financially to become the centers of the Career Festivals organized within the project. The schools received also special Certificates for their participation in the competition and their good achievements.