

novičke

Spring 2009

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PROGRAMME BASIS OF NOVIČKE

Novičke (The News) is an information bulletin with wish to provide individuals and institutions abroad with latest information on adult education and learning in Slovenia. We publish:

- descriptions and presentations of events and activities in adult education;
- reports on development, research and other programmes and projects; information on organisations, their needs;
- plans and activities;
- information on policies and strategies of adult education;
- latest news concerning the administration and legislation of AE;
- data on education programmes;
- opinions, standpoints and suggestions;
- announcements of forthcoming events, workshops, publications, seminars and conferences;
- presentations of new books, articles, learning aids and other novelties on the book market etc.

Novičke will provide brief, concise, objective and unbiased information.

Novičke will be published two times a year in English language and four times a year in Slovenian language. Users will receive Novičke free of charge. This is a policy we intend to continue, provided we are able to cover the costs of publishing from the public funds allocated to adult education.

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SIAE EVENTS

Report on the Review of adult education on offer in Slovenia 2008/2009

As part of our regular assignment of producing the *Review of adult education on offer in Slovenia*, for the 2008/2009 academic year we have once again compiled the range of education on offer from numerous providers of adult education. The collected data on education providers and their programmes on offer, as well as other important information on adult education, have been published on the website of the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education <http://pregled.acs.si> (in Slovenian). Data collection took place in May and June, and education providers submitted the basic information on their institutions and education courses via e-forms on the internet or on paper forms via e-mail or the postal service. Publication in the Review was voluntary and free of charge for education providers. We analysed the collected data on the providers and programmes on offer in the 2008/2009 academic year, and have presented the results in a final report, which can be accessed on the web (http://arhiv.acs.si/porocila/Pregled_IO_2008-koncno_porocilo.pdf - in Slovenian) and in the SIAE library. Below we briefly summarise the results of this analysis.

The Review of adult education on offer 2008/2009 presents 304 education providers, offering 5,324 programmes. The number of providers in the Review is further supplemented during the year. It covers public and private educational institutions and institutions whose primary activity is not necessarily education. There are predominantly private educational organisations and private schools (85), secondary schools and units for adults at secondary schools (79) and folk high schools (34), while there are also numerous other providers – professional colleges (24), public institutes (11), societies and associations of societies (9), third age universities (9), faculties and art academies (9), institutes (7), independent education centres in companies (7), general libraries (6), museums and galleries (5) and other education providers. The Review does not cover driving schools.

There are predominantly education programmes that are not publicly recognised (3,566 or 67 %), and these will be offered by 191 education providers. The duration of these programmes differs widely, usually from a few hours right up to more than a hundred hours a year. They are provided in the form of courses, seminars, lectures, study circles, meetings, excursions and so forth. The programmes are aimed at various target groups – those who are being trained for work requirements, and especially those who want to enhance their knowledge in various fields or spend their free time

actively. On offer this year are 1,755 publicly recognised programmes, or 33 percent of the entire range of courses on offer. These will be provided by 170 educational institutions. These are primarily courses that facilitate the acquisition of publicly recognised formal qualifications, and other publicly recognised programmes for adults (especially language courses).

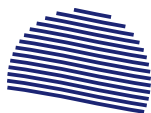
For the first time this year we have categorised the education programmes by type and field on the basis of the KLASIUS system of classifying education and training, specifically using its subsystems the Classification of types of activities and results of education and training (KLASIUS-SRV) and the Classification of fields of activity and results of education and training (KLASIUS-P).

Under the KLASIUS-SRV a full 80 percent of the courses on offer are intended for general non-formal education and learning. These kinds of courses are provided by 198 organisations. A much smaller proportion of courses is aimed at education for formal qualifications (18 %) and at preparation for testing and certifying national vocational qualifications (2 %).

This year again adults have the biggest choice in language courses (34 percent of all the courses on offer), especially English, German, Italian and French (according to the KLASIUS-P field arts and humanities (39.3 %)). Much smaller than that is the range of computer courses on offer (13.5 %) (the field of natural science, mathematics and computing (13.8 %)), courses dealing with business and administrative disciplines (10.4%), sales, human resources management and economics (field of social, business, administrative and legal disciplines (12.4 %)) and programmes for basic communication skills and knowledge and personal development (field of general education activities and results (11.7 %)). These are followed by the fields of technical disciplines, production technology and construction (8.6 %), services (7.3 %), educational science and teacher training (3.1 %), health and social security (2.4 %) and agriculture, forestry, fisheries and veterinary medicine (1.4 %).

In the future, too, we will strive to present the range of adult education and learning on offer in Slovenia as comprehensively as possible in the Review. This year we are beginning intensive cooperation with the Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education, on the portal <http://mojaizbira.si> (in Slovenian), for which we will periodically be providing data on providers and adult education programmes, and thereby presenting the possibilities for education and learning to the widest audience. In the future, too, we will continue to be an important partner for Slovenia's Statistical Office, since the Review represents a data source for numerous statistical surveys, while we will also maintain our traditional cooperation with CIPS guidance actors and the network of guidance centres.

Erika Brenk (erika.brenk@acs.si), SIAE



Awards presented for developing the quality of adult education

This year for the second time the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education presented awards for developing quality in adult education. Awards are presented to organisations and individuals making outstanding progress in the systematic assessment of the achieved level of quality of their work, and on the basis of established results are introducing changes and new features in order to further improve the quality of their work. These are organisations where concern for quality is part of the strategy of the managers and employees, and is based on responsibility towards the participants in education, companies, finance providers, the local environment and the profession. Quality is assessed through self-evaluation, and in this all employees discuss and are involved in the results of assessment and the measures to improve quality. The educational organisation invests a great deal in employees acquiring new knowledge to develop quality. The award for individuals is intended for those experts who distinguish themselves in participating in all the described processes and who invest a great deal in their own enhancement in this area.

Awards are presented every two years to a maximum of three organisations and three individuals that meet the criteria determined by the council of the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education, and they are confirmed by the Awards Committee.

This year's awards were presented at a formal ceremony held on 19 March 2009 in Ljubljana. In addition to several members of the Awards Committee, our invitation to attend the awards ceremony was extended to representatives of educational organisations and individuals that were the first recipients of awards for developing quality in adult education in 2007. Through this symbolic hand-over of awards from those who have already earned the award and who have thereby become ambassadors for the idea of expanding the culture of quality, to those who have joined them in this mission, we wish to encourage others who might wish to join this emerging movement for quality in adult education in future years.

This year the Awards Committee decided to present awards to three organisations and three individuals. In the group of **educational and other organisations** providing adult education and taking exceptional care to ensure concerted and comprehensive quality development are:

- Academia d.o.o., Maribor,
- Kočevje Folk High School,
- Celje Horticulture and Visual Arts School.

These are educational organisations that are especially distinguished in their systematic work for quality, which is reflected in the carefully designed annual plans for monitoring and evaluating their own quality, continuous searching for better solutions, testing out various approaches, learning for all employees and also in openly addressing the effects – those that are excellent and a reason for pride and those that are a challenge to find new and changed approaches.

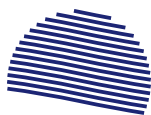
The individuals who have been very successful in their working environment in encouraging the development of quality in adult education and who are distinguished by activities aimed at constant development of this field include:

- Lilijana Brajljeh, SPIN Informacijski inženiring d.o.o, Šempeter pri Gorici,
- Nada Klučar, Secondary Commercial School, Ljubljana,
- Majda Kralj MA, Academia d.o.o., Maribor.

These are individuals who are distinguished by a strongly developmental orientation and a commitment to quality, which they spread in their own educational organisations and also further afield, through the contribution they make to developing the quality of adult education and lifelong learning in Slovenia.

All the award recipients are presented in greater detail on the website <http://poki.acs.si/en/awards/>.

Tanja Možina MA (tanja.mozina@acs.si), SIAE



Preparing for LLW 2009

Last year's Lifelong Learning Week, which yielded the biggest number of event organisers (676) and events (over 4,600) to date, confirmed that the transfer of the festival to spring was the right decision.

This year's LLW learning festival also sticks to spring dates (it is set officially to run from 11 to 17 May) and with a time frame of two months (the expanded dates are 1 May to 30 June). A large part of the preparatory activities have already been performed at the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education:

- the substantive annual LLW plan has been finalised, with the main dates being set, and it will be discussed at the beginning of April by the LLW National Committee, which will also confirm the proposed provider of the national LLW opening; this

year the task is being assumed by the Novo mesto Development and Education Centre, a long-time successful regional LLW coordinator;

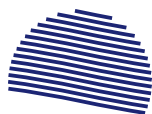
- the Slovenian (<http://tvu.acs.si/>) and English websites (<http://llw.acs.si/>) have been updated, and will be upgraded with some new features designed to provide more direct and effective interaction with visitors, and the two sites will continuously publish the latest information and indicators, including the announcement of events (<http://tvu.acs.si/prijava>);
- talks are in progress with certain strategic partners about various forms of cooperation: with representatives of the national coordinating committee for marking the *European Year of Creativity and Innovation (EYCI)*, with the two competent ministries and with others;
- certain graphic features (various logos, posters and advertising banners, letterhead, paper cubes and the EYCI 2009 logo) are already being offered on the LLW website, and printed promotional material (three different posters, the animating flyers *Examples attract* in Slovenian and English, balloons, folders in Slovenian and paper cubes) will be fully available in the first half of April;
- the LLW newsletter *TVU-Novičke 1/2009* (<http://tvu.acs.si/novicke> - in Slovenian) has been published, and this provides the preliminary plan for LLW 2009, responds to FAQs on participation at the festival of learning, highlights one of the three main topics of LLW - the *European year of Creativity and Innovation (EYCI) 2009* - and presents the recipients of SIAE awards 2008, whose life stories will be presented at the official opening of LLW 2009; the second part of *TVU-Novičke* is devoted to a look at LLW 2008 and indicators of its success;
- talks are underway with the providers of this year's opening, the Novo mesto Development and Education Centre; the main part of the event will again be devoted to presenting the SIAE awards for exceptional learning and professional achievements in adult learning, so work is currently in progress to record their video portraits;
- we met with the network of experienced and new LLW providers on 19 March at the first meeting of this year and exchanged information, ideas and also goodwill and energy to carry out the project, which in today's recession-tinted times will no doubt run up against some additional obstacles, while on the other hand it might contribute to overcoming them.

The shift in dates that we made for the presentation of SIAE awards for exceptional learning and professional achievements in adult learning, already brought us 15 new recipients last year, so our treasure trove of inspiring individuals and groups who have spent their entire lives enriching their own knowledge, and of representatives of the profession that facilitate fulfilling learning for others, has grown to 156 cases. We will be able to get to know the new recipients personally and through video portraits at the national opening on 8 May in Novo mesto, and in the autumn the procedure involving the call for SIAE awards 2009 will be set in motion. This year again we will select

from the treasure trove of previous award recipients a few cases that dovetail with the *EYCI* and/or *Education of older adults* – both of these are leading topics of this year’s festival of learning – and will incorporate them into the *Examples attract* campaign. *Education of older adults will also be a topic being discussed by experts on 20 May at the 13th Adult Education Colloquium in Ljubljana.*

We should also mention the third main topic of LLW 2009, which we will be implementing through the slogan *Learning – a sure way out of the crisis!* Some people have the idea that at times of crisis, investing in education and learning is one of those things that can be most easily dropped. We take a different view: lifelong learning is in fact one of the key mechanisms for personal and social development, so it makes sense to keep cultivating all forms of education and learning. Furthermore, new needs must be acknowledged, and we must respond to them with high-quality educational content and fresh, rapidly adaptable approaches. The organisers of LLW 2009 are therefore invited to cooperate through their events in the process of raising awareness among political, expert and media circles and above all the general public, by presenting their approaches and content, which should enable participants in lifelong learning to make a proactive response to crisis circumstances such as unemployment, the need for retraining, self-employment and similar.

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Adult educators discuss training conducted at the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education

In its almost 18 years of operations the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education (SIAE) has evolved as an important learning environment where adult educators are trained. Throughout these years learning here has been the focus for bringing together and professionally developing primarily educators working at folk high schools and certain private adult education organisations, while in recent years they have been more frequently joined by colleagues educating adults in formal secondary school programmes. We are delighted by this expansion, since it tells us that adult education is a quickly growing activity which, in addition to students, is being joined by increasing numbers of teachers and other experts. The inclusion of adult education in training programmes also indicates to us that the quality of educational activities aimed at adults is increasingly important. Given the European findings that adult educators are the most underserved category in terms of professional training, this kind of rejuvenation

that we have identified in this area is welcome and is aimed at the objectives that we have set in Europe for quality adult education.

As part of the assignment *Overhauling the concept of adult education training*, which we implemented in 2008, we performed a study with which we wished to obtain opinions, views and assessments of practitioners regarding:

- how satisfied they were thus far with the various aspects of our educational activities,
- what in their opinion have been over the years the good aspects of education and training they had been involved in at the SIAE, and what were the possible weak points,
- how our work could be improved in the future.

We regarded as especially important the opinions and views and especially the expressed need for training communicated to us by those who had to date not participated in education and training at the SIAE. They provided an excellent insight into certain needs to which we will have to respond in the future by building up our range of education on offer. Alongside this we were of course also interested in who are the participants taking part in SIAE training. Below we offer a few especially interesting results offered by the study.

Sample

The study, which was based on a questionnaire, involved 520 people. A total of 46.2 percent of them work in secondary schools, 36.9 percent at folk high schools, 13 percent were from private educational organisations, and 4 percent were from organisations providing adult education but which cannot be placed in any of the above categories. The majority of respondents from these institutions took part in various training programmes provided by the SIAE, but we also deliberately included in the survey people who had not yet taken part in SIAE training. These people represented 23.6 percent of all those surveyed.

We included the following educator types: principals, directors, teachers in adult literacy programmes, heads of adult education and heads of course areas, mentors in the *Project Learning for Young Adults* programme, heads and mentors of *study circles*, heads, informers and advisers in the *centres for self-directed learning*, heads and advisers in the adult guidance centres, and heads and members of the group for quality in adult education.

Typical participant in education

The typical picture of a participant of the training at the SIAE would be described as follows: female, 41 years old, university educated, with more than 10 years working experience in the area of adult education. Developing in front of us therefore is a person who is in the most intensive period of their career and is for the most part also internally motivated for education. From this description we may deduce that training at the SIAE is sought by professionally experienced, thinking and appropriately demanding people. Even if we draw back from such a personified profile, we can see that our participants in education are aged between 30 and 49, for the most part they hold university degrees and they have five to ten years of working experience. The largest number of those surveyed were working in education as teachers of adults in secondary schools (52 %), followed by educational organisers (21.6 %) and members of the group for quality in adult education (14.6 %). Here we should point out that those surveyed could indicate a number of roles, not just one, but the above were shown to be the most common.

Paths to knowledge

The study showed that the majority, almost 70 percent, most commonly gain their qualifications in the actual educational organisation where they are employed, with the SIAE taking second place with 40.7 percent, while the third most common response was international consultations, at 36.1 percent. They also learn to a large extent within international European projects. Of the respondents, 8.2 percent answered that they were not pursuing any qualifications at all. It is not clear from the responses what forms of education predominate within the participants' own educational organisations, but we were delighted to learn that the SIAE is in second place, since that could mean that it is known among educators as an institution in which they can gain professional enhancement and satisfy a considerable proportion of their educational needs.

Unfortunately we have also ascertained that the education offered by the SIAE is insufficiently recognised among educators. More than half, a full 52 percent, are not that familiar with what we offer, and 9.9 percent are completely unfamiliar. Most commonly they get acquainted with what we offer via the SIAE website, or we provide information via e-mail. The third most common source of familiarisation with what we offer is the brochure on training at the SIAE. They would also in any event prefer to have the information about training on offer at the beginning of the academic year through the brochure on training programmes, or a month before the educational event by being personally e-mailed about it.

How important is an adult education qualification?

As many as 82.5 percent believe that adult education skills are just as important in their work as skills in their basic profession, 8.9 percent think that these skills are less important, while 8.5 percent believe that adult education skills are even more important in their work than their basic profession. Such a high proportion of responses in which respondents express the view that specific knowledge on adult education is just as important or even more important for their work than the knowledge they have in their basic profession, is certainly an indirect expression of their need for adult education skills and training. Given that the respondents are predominantly people without teaching qualifications (55.7 %), we may indirectly conclude that they formed this view through their own professional experience and that in this they were also aware of the need for adult education training.

Of course here we were also interested in what educational content supports their work with adults, or rather, what are their educational needs. Most commonly the respondents expressed the need for the following content:

- **learning methods and techniques in adult education** – with emphasis on cooperative learning, subject linking adapted to target groups and on practical case studies;
- **motivation** – techniques of motivation adapted to the target adult groups;
- **guidance work and teaching vulnerable groups** – Roma, migrants, immigrants, older unemployed persons, drop-outs, persons with special needs;
- **current content linked to new features in adult education** – changes in legislation, new features in formal education (vocational education and national vocational qualifications), major public tenders and how to apply, keeping documentation, professional novelties (projects);
- **adapting formal vocational education to adults** – with emphasis on the Instructions for Adaptation, the Bologna Process, Implementing plans for heterogeneous groups of adults, adapting to the individual, assistance of the vocational education centre in adult issues;
- **special methods and didactics for adults** for mathematics, foreign languages, literature, practical classes, workplace training, people with special needs;
- **presenting good practices** – practitioners for practitioners, occasional attendance of lectures, tours.

Where the first two choices are somehow general and expected, since they represent the most vital part of any education course, the other most commonly expressed needs reflect the processes which in what is almost the past decade have been underway in adult education. The need for education among vulnerable groups is generally recognised and also defined in various educational policies. The provision of education – for instance for various target adult groups – is encouraged through a variety

of public tenders for the most part based on European funding. While these do not guarantee funds for the longer-term development and formulation of longer-term policies in this field, they do provide an important by-product, which is evident in the increasingly precisely defined needs, not just of adults involved in these issues but also educators helping them to learn. In the short time that adult educators have at their disposal to prepare for this kind of education, it seems almost expected that they want very specific training that will offer them a model on which they can create their own picture of what they should teach and how. Here there is certainly the danger of them falling into instrumentalist, non-reflective training that is removed from its primary purpose, which is to heighten sensitivity to the needs of various target groups and individual participants in education. The other danger that arises here is that there can be a flood of numerous forms of training for various target groups of educators that do not differ from each other considerably. Seeking a golden mean between fundamental and specific adult education knowledge is therefore an important challenge that we are facing nowadays. If at the same time we take into account the numerous possibilities whereby a person can acquire their knowledge and form the appropriate competences, the need for a clear definition of one and the other becomes even more pronounced.

Satisfaction of participants with training at SIAE

This question was without doubt one of the most important for us who are designing the training courses. In the survey we posed a variety of questions about this, ranging from questions about general satisfaction to satisfaction with the content, forms of learning, organisation and providers of training. In principle the participants have been pleased with the training at the SIAE, and specifically with the selected content, with the professionalism and level of adult education competence of the training providers and with the actual organisation of training. No one was dissatisfied. The great majority (almost 100 %) of those who assessed the training both in basic adult education training programmes, in specialised programmes and also in training programmes to support SIAE development projects, believe that the SIAE provides modern and useful skills, that this kind of training is important and that the SIAE is the organisation that should also be providing this training.

Among the training providers whom the participants identified as excellent, they highlighted the following distinctions: professionalism, accessibility, openness and sensitivity to the needs of participants, friendliness and respect for participants, consideration of the experiences of participants and personal experience of the educator in the field in which they are teaching. The absence of such qualities in individual providers is what most bothers participants. By analysing the responses provided by the respondents, we were able to confirm that educators who teach educators work as a model or criterion that is followed by the participants consciously or unconsciously.

The same is true of institutions that provide training for educators. In our case this applies to us.

To close

The issue of the SIAE mission in training adult educators is important, and we have also set this mission for the coming period. Training adult educators takes place at various places and is diffuse, frequently also hidden, and not recognised. The professionalisation of this occupation is a hot topic and a challenging issue throughout Europe. In comparison with the training of other educators this field has to date been lagging behind. With clearly defined messages from various European and national documents and specifically defined objectives in terms of improving the quality of adult education work, a time is coming when we will devote ourselves concertedly to this issue not just in the institutions already dealing with it, but also on other levels. The concept of lifelong learning enters to the largest possible extent through the door of adult education. Adult educators are the most important factor in its quality, so it is our duty to devote special attention to them.

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SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE

Family literacy programme at the Ciril Kosmač Primary School in Piran

The Ciril Kosmač Primary School in Piran is the first Unesco Asp school in Slovenia. In addition to this it holds the title of a Healthy School and a Children's Rights-Friendly School. The school is attended by pupils of Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian, Italian, Albanian and other nationalities. We strive to run an open school that has the cooperation of parents, teachers, the school advisory service and school managers as partners, with the aim of developing positive interpersonal relations and of parents being trained for responsible parenthood in the area of the educational needs of their children. We are aware that work with children is more successful if parents are included. Cooperation between the school and parents is conducted in various forms and in different ways. Alongside the established forms we are also implementing year-long free programmes for parents.

In the awareness that reading and writing are essential skills for the successful education of children, we place great emphasis on them in group forms of cooperation with parents on the class level. We offer parents various lectures of an informational character, at which we inform them of the possibilities and methods of developing reading habits in children. Three years ago we offered parents the free education programme *Let's Read and Write Together* which was developed by the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education. The programme is intended for parents and their children from grades 1 to 4 of primary school. It is planned so that children and their parents learn together and at the same time. Children can learn more in cooperation with their parents than if they do some activity independently, and at the same time they are more motivated.

The programme is headed by the team of Vesna Prunk and Sonja Stanič, with a great deal of mutual cooperation. In the first year the programme was conducted under the aegis the Ministry of Education and Sport and the European Social Funds. Parents and pupils were pleased with the programme, so we continued it last year and this academic year. For the past two years the costs of the programme have been partly covered from funds in the municipal budget, and we secured the funds by applying in a public call for projects in the area of social activities issued by the Municipality of Piran. The municipal budget funds enabled us to continue implementing the programme in 2008 and 2009, when there were no other public funds for implementing the programme. In this way we met the expectations of the parents. The actual organisation, preparation

and implementation of the programme is a considerable task, so we also invest a great deal of voluntary work in it.

In this we take into account the guidelines we gained from training to conduct education courses for a group of parents and children. At the school we adapted the organisation of the programme such that meetings take place throughout the academic year from November to May, two lesson hours every other week outside school hours, in the afternoon. We place emphasis primarily on content involving collective listening, oral communication, reading and writing. The objectives, content and activities are adapted each school year to the needs of the new group of parents and children from our local area, and also to the cultural and social characteristics of the families. The programme involves parents who regardless of their prior education wish to be familiarised with effective methods and techniques for learning reading and writing. They are aware that without professional help they are not sufficiently successful, so they join the programme.

Parents usually want their children to attain an education at least one level higher than what they themselves have, and especially at the beginning of schooling they are internally motivated to help their children.

At the first informational meeting we present clearly defined education goals: understanding child development, improving the skills of observing, listening, reporting, reading and writing, identifying reading material for children and adults and recognising the importance of literacy for everyday life. We also agree on the timetable for meetings. Work is conducted in a small group, with adapted forms of work. There is a lot of learning in a fun way, through games. It is conducted dynamically, with all members being active participants. We try to observe clarity, building on knowledge and working step by step. All this offers those involved the possibility of feeling successful and personally satisfied.

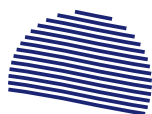
For the children we prepare attractive educational content and activities that are tied to reading and writing, and through these we also indirectly educate the parents, without their deficiencies being put in the spotlight. When we conduct activities with children, we always explain to the parents why we have opted for a certain activity, content or form of work and what literacy target we want to attain with it. The parents gain experience in how to help their children and how to encourage them in reading and writing. We take into account the possibility of choice. We make it possible for them to be able to influence the content and methods of work. We select the content on the basis of their strong points, so we can develop in them a sense of personal satisfaction and success. At every meeting we are careful to satisfy the participants' fundamental psychological needs (the needs according to *W. Glasser*) *for love and belonging (belonging to the group, cooperation, sensing our closeness and the closeness of the other members, a feeling of friendship, a sense of security), for power and recognition*

(significance, respect, self-confidence), freedom (independence, freedom of movement, creativity, self-determination, free expression and being heard) and for fun (joy, laughter, relaxation, pleasant feeling, enjoying pleasurable moments, spending time happily). Fun is an incentive for learning.

We enable the participants to share experiences and to learn from one another. At the end of each meeting we evaluate the work together with participants. At the same time we obtain feedback on the success of the meeting. The programme *Let's Read and Write Together* that we are carrying out at school is a programme where parents and their children spend afternoon periods in a pleasant and high-quality way, and in so doing they acquire fundamental knowledge and skills to participate more successfully in developing the literacy of their children. We are aware that the successful development of children depends on the quality cooperation of parents and the school.

Nowadays parenthood should not be understood as a natural gift and natural ability. We may also understand it as a responsible vocation. Sometimes it is performed without any kind of preparation. Professional staff at the school must therefore help parents to discover their parenting abilities and to be able to encourage their children and motivate them in school work. Parents and the school hold the threads of the child's future in their hands. Child development is our fundamental assignment, so our mutual work is exceptionally important.

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Ciril Kosmač Primary School, Piran



Guidance for those attending courses at Grm Novo mesto – Centre for Biotechnology and Tourism

Grm Novo mesto – Centre for Biotechnology and Tourism is composed of five organisational units: the Grm Agriculture School and Biotechnology Grammar School, the Secondary Catering and Tourism School, student hall of residence, Vocational College and Inter-enterprise Education Centre. The first two units also offer self-directed adult education.

The make-up of the participants in this part of the education programme is highly diverse. These are young adult students (15-18 years old) who have previously given up

education and are continuing it following the break, and adult students studying full-time or alongside their jobs. Some attending adult courses are employed, and some unemployed. The motivation to enrol in education is to gain appropriate public certificates of qualifications or to acquire pre-qualifications for education. They are therefore externally motivated, since in this way they gain the possibility of promotion at work, for which they need an appropriate level of education. The other motive is obtaining subsidies in agriculture, for which they also need appropriate qualifications.

For the most part participants are motivated only externally, and they lack internal motivation. In the education process participants and the school encounter numerous obstacles. Participants usually have considerable difficulties communicating, and are incapable of adequately expressing their wishes, needs and difficulties. In many cases they have personal difficulties that affect them strongly. They might be in some form of hardship from which they see no way out, and they have no support for education from their family or the environment in which they live, since knowledge is not valued. Many of the participants have special needs, which need to be recognised and for which the course needs to be appropriately adapted. In view of all this they have a low self-image, they lack confidence in their abilities and they quickly give up.

The school itself also encounters many obstacles on this path. This is self-directed education, not organised lectures as in other forms of education, so participants come individually. In this they have no social group on which they can rely, so the teacher needs to be all the more accessible. Owing to the organisation of work at the school it is not possible for professional staff to be there just in the afternoon. All the staff who work with them are fully employed and would find it hard to change their timetables, while the participants frequently come when they have problems, when they feel the need and their motivation has dropped. If the professional staff are not available then, it can easily happen that the participants give up hope, lose their will and do not return. There are additional difficulties with the materials, since there are still none for the overhauled programmes. The materials are too abstract for them and they have a difficult time finding essential information. For the self-directed courses the school has no approved coordinator who could ease the work of everyone involved.

In such a situation just the relationship between the participants and school can enable them to feel accepted and wanted, since they need much more than what we can offer. They need specific work and help, since they are farming people, employed in agriculture or industry, or are unemployed. They are strong in their own fields, and can achieve exceptional results stemming from their work. Their knowledge is not learned from books, but from work, non-formally. They need specific pointers about how to approach learning. They need to be shown how to use a textbook and how to organise themselves. Frequently they need individual help to explain what is unclear, which is even more important since there are no organised lectures.

At this point the school invites the cooperation of a Mobile Guidance Point, which successfully fills the gap. The Mobile Guidance Point is a remote unit of the Novo mesto Guidance Centre, our partner. The Guidance Centre is intended for all adults who need help in opting for education or during learning. It offers participants an individual approach, and provides them with security, a sense of success and acceptance, and the candidate has the possibility of reflection, confirmation and evaluation. Just the presence of another person is important, since it sheds light on an issue from another viewpoint and can help coordinate activities. Another advantage is the option of remote access, since the Mobile Guidance Point can come to the school or a person's home, which adds a new dimension. In this way it can help resolve various problems and determine specific learning difficulties and personal problems.

The Mobile Guidance Point is also a great aid for the school, since through the presence of another person it gains a wealth of feedback and suggestions for work, and together with employees guidelines are formulated on a teamwork basis for further work, and where necessary the participants are referred for further consultation.

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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Meeting of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks held under the auspices of the French Presidency and combined with a major conference

Following the 24th meeting of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB) at the European Commission, which we held in April in Bled (and on which we reported in the May-June/2008 *Novičke*), in November the representatives of Member States gathered again for a working meeting, this time in Paris. The one-day meeting was intended primarily to present:

- activities for developing new indicators (planning research on adult skills – PIAAC, on the professional development of teachers – TALIS, on civic skills – ICCS 2009, on linguistic capacities – ESLC, the pilot research on *learn to learn* and so forth);
- achievements in 2008 and planned tasks in 2009 for the CRELL research centre, the overhauled EURYDICE unit and the European statistical system – EURO-STAT (which reported on the first results of the European survey on adult education (AES), which do not yet include Slovenia); the work of all these institutions supports the work of the European Commission and they contribute information for the *Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training : Indicators and benchmarks 2008* (for 2008 this was published at the beginning of July at http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/progressreport_en.html);
- the efforts of the UNESCO institute for statistics, the OECD and EUROSTAT to revise the standard classification of educational activities, ISCED-97;
- the structure of the Progress report 2009 and the debate on national websites on which the individual country is presented through indicators and target values;
- material which is currently being addressed by various committees and working groups on the EU level and be presented to the public in December as the *Communication from the Commission: An updated strategic framework for European co-operation in education and training* (http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc28_en.htm); this now contains instead of the five benchmarks adopted in 2003, a full 10 benchmarks set in four thematic groups: *lifelong learning and mobility, quality and effectiveness, equality and citizenship and innovation and creativity*.

Alongside this last document, the greatest attention was drawn by the intention of EUROSTAT to change the definition of the target group '**early school-leavers (18-24 years) who have left education early**' without acquiring secondary education qualifications. A shift was proposed to the annual average of quarterly data and a different method of obtaining this indicator from the Labour Force Survey, since it should only cover that part of the target population which in the four weeks prior to the survey was not involved in **full-time education** (hitherto: in **any form of education and training**), but excludes pupils who were on holiday during this time. An advantage of the new method of determining the indicator is the possibility of further structuring of the results in respect of participation in non-full-time education programmes and employment status, while greater comparability between countries is also expected. Under this method the value of the indicator increases both on the national and European levels. For the latter it is true that the proportion of young people who have left education early, for 2007 amounts now to 16.3¹ percent, which is around one percent more than according to the average definition of this target group. The national data for 2007 are still in the process of verification. The majority of SGIB members did not express support for this proposal, and the main message from the quite stormy debate is that the proposed change requires some thorough consideration, and most importantly it should not be implemented before the end of 2010, since up to that time the reference period will be running for the programme 'Education and Training 2010'. Another factor weighing against this change is that at the forefront of the political and professional agendas is the strategy of lifelong learning, so it makes no sense for the research to exclude participation in non-formal learning.

Following the SGIB meeting a conference entitled 'International comparison of education systems: a European model?' was also held under the auspices of the French Presidency. It was intended to present the advantages and weaknesses of European education systems, with emphasis on the need for regular and objective evaluation of the functioning of these systems with appropriate indicators and target values.

The two-day event was attended by around 300 participants, who represented the political, expert, research and administrative spheres in the field of education. In the plenary session the audience was addressed by leading political representatives, including *Valérie Pécresse*, French Minister of Higher Education and Research (she stressed the idea of a European university ranking), *Odile Quintin*, director of the Education and Culture Directorate at the European Commission (she made reference to the December publication of the Commission's report on future challenges in education), *Frank Vandenbroucke*, deputy minister, head of the Flemish government and Minister of Labour, Education and Training from Belgium (he mentioned the ministerial meeting related to the Bologna Process, at which they will evaluate what has been achieved and plan further steps), *Gordon Clark* of the European Commission and others.

¹ The target value for the European Union by 2010 is 'at most 10 % of young people who leave education early without attaining secondary education.'

The speakers stressed the importance of international as well as national research and comparisons and the role of indicators and target values in the process of monitoring the fulfilment of the European Union's strategic objectives. The introduction to the expert part of the plenary speeches was provided by *Norberto Bottani*, a key person in the creation and development of the INES network at the OECD, with a paper on 'International indicators of education: a 20-year story'. His main idea was that it is only when indicators (e.g. the first issue of the publication *Education at a Glance* in 1992) provide an education system with some unpleasant mirror image that the profession and politicians start dealing more intensively with the reasons, studying the education process, evaluating achievements and so forth. A completely specific case was then presented by the Minister of Education, Family, Women and Culture of the German state of Saar, since there, after very unfavourable results of PISA research, they fundamentally overhauled and improved the education system and its monitoring, while they also achieved significantly better results in later PISA research.

Further work was organised in three parallel workshops:

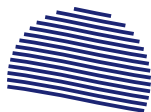
- **Evaluating achievements in compulsory education:** speakers highlighted three main topics: the aims, actors and implementation of national and international evaluation; the status of teachers, their professional development and the organisation of the education system; and the issue of equality – the European, German and American aspects were presented. There was mention several times of the point that much research is being conducted, and that it has similar methodology, but it is not linked, although a great deal of money and effort could be saved if there was cooperation.
- **Higher education:** in this workshop the debate related to typology – classification of higher education institutions and their ranking. The aim of these efforts is the creation of a European consortium and providing classification which would replace or supplement the famous Shanghai ranking of universities, and would better reflect the structures, features and values of European higher education. To this end there is a need to develop our own indicators and standards, and we need to have in mind both the advantages and possible pitfalls of such efforts.
- **Vocational education and training:** for this the point is that there are considerable data available, but there is a need first of all to set clear political questions, and only then to formulate appropriate indicators and target values. We were given a presentation of the experiences of staff at the competent European institutions – CEDEFOP, ETF and EUROSTAT, and of experts from other institutions and various member states.

In the concluding part speakers once again stressed the importance of indicators and drew attention to caution in their use, since indicators must be in the function of pursuing goals, and not the other way round, or as was summarised by *Alejandro Tiana*, former Spanish education minister: it is important to have clear goals, to know the

levers that cause change, and to use tools that lead towards the goals; indicators are just one such tool. Emphasis was also placed on the value of national research – on the level of international comparisons these are not directly taken into account, since they do not fulfil the criteria of comparability between countries, but they reflect the specifics of individual education systems, which are often the reasons for phenomena at which international research can only point. A word of caution was also expressed that there is an increasing amount of international research, and this represents a considerable financial outlay for Member States, so a coordinated and linking approach in terms of content and finance is essential.

The conference proceedings will be available at <http://www.ue2008.fr/> and <http://www.education.gouv.fr/>.

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Contribution of the education system on the path to a European society of lifelong learning

The Slovenian Institute of Adult Education has concluded research on the *Participation of employees from small and medium-sized enterprises in formal education*. This research (Subproject 4) is part of the five-year international project *Towards a Lifelong Learning Society: The Contribution of the European System: LLL2010*, which is being conducted simultaneously in thirteen European countries. The purpose of the international project is to study how much the education systems in the participating countries contribute to fulfilment of the Lisbon goals, while substantively the project focuses on the role played by education systems in fulfilling lifelong learning and as potential factors of social integration.

Subproject 4, which was carried out in 2008, researched the participation of employees from small and medium-sized enterprises in formal education from the aspects of the business strategy of the company, the HRM strategy, management methods, factors that encourage/hinder participation in formal education from the management aspects and the aspects of the participants themselves. The purpose of the study is to prepare a broader conceptual framework regarding the effectiveness of lifelong learning, taking into account the organisational and individual's aspects of education.

The small and medium-sized enterprises that participated in the research were selected on the basis of previously defined criteria – type of ownership and sector of

the economy. We also endeavoured to achieve the greatest possible balance of those interviewed in terms of gender and education. In each company a maximum of five interviews were held (with managers and those employees who have participated in formal education). Certain data were obtained in advance about the company's line of business, and especially about the strategy of developing human resources. A detailed survey was conducted on nine companies, of which three were small (10 to 49 employees) and six medium-sized (50 to 249 employees). Four companies were involved in the manufacturing sector, and five in services. Interviews were analysed using qualitative methods. For individual companies, case studies have been prepared.

Special attention was devoted primarily to the following issues:

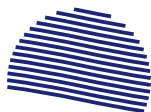
- What is the importance of formal adult education for the company?
- What are the patterns of support/lack of support for formal education in companies?
- What are the institutional obstacles in access to formal education?

We anticipated that small and medium-sized enterprises have certain advantages over large ones owing to flexibility, the specific organisational structure and close cooperation with users. In our cases, however, it is clear that the small size causes certain difficulties. Owing generally to a lack of staff qualified in the personnel field, limited scope for cooperation with external education and training providers and limited financial capacity, small and medium-sized companies rely more heavily on those forms of work organisation and management styles that support learning alongside work and in the relevant occupation.

Among small and medium-sized enterprises there is a clear difference in how they approach the education and training of their employees, especially regarding participation in formal education. The first group frequently has no aids and strategies regarding human resources development and management. Their approach is non-systematic; usually the workers themselves are the ones that encourage participation in education and then negotiate with the employer over support for education. In these companies participation in formal education is based on the individual's interest and motivation, while the corporate needs for training are elsewhere. On the other hand medium-sized companies usually have a human resources expert, who is in charge of training. Such companies have developed a more systematic approach, and the human resources strategy is a constituent part of the corporate strategy, the management adopts an education and training plan, and the procedures are more formalised and standardised. It is evident that small and medium-sized enterprises are not distinguished by their encouragement of employees with lower levels of qualifications to enrol in formal education programmes. The interviewees were enrolled primarily in programmes classified as ISCED 3B and ISCED 5 - in line with the belief expressed by one of the participants: *»Nowadays secondary education is no longer sufficient.«*

Based on the study we proposed measures and activities that could help remove the defined obstacles on the organisational and individual level. These measures are presented in detail in the report on *Participation of employees from small and medium-sized enterprises in formal education*, which is available at the SIAE library and at: <http://www.acs.si/porocila> (in Slovenian).

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Presentation of the project Guidance in the workplace

In the period 2007–2009 the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education is a partner in the European Leonardo da Vinci project on the transfer of innovations, entitled *Guidance in the workplace - GM2* (<http://www.guidanceintheworkplace.eu/>). The project presents the transfer of knowledge and experiences from the previous project entitled *Guidance Merger* (2002–2004; <http://www.guidancemerger.org/>) and the development of new approaches to providing information and guidance to promote lifelong learning and developing the careers of employees in the workplace. The new project emphasises in particular the development and implementation of approaches to evaluating the already acquired knowledge and experience of employees as an important part of the processes of providing information and guidance.

The project stems from three basic assumptions:

- Guidance can be an important stimulus for employees to seize the opportunity for lifelong learning.
- Employees often find it harder to gain access to guidance than for instance unemployed persons.
- Information and guidance will contribute more effectively to the development of lifelong learning among employees if they are provided in their working environment.

We decided to participate in the project because as in other European countries, data in Slovenia indicate that not all employees have equal access to new knowledge, and that less educated employees (those with less than four years of secondary education or without any vocational qualifications) and those in small and medium-sized companies are in a worse position.

There are five countries participating in the project, these being Slovenia, Italy, Romania, France and Sweden. In implementing the project in Slovenia, the SIAE is actively cooperating with the Federation of Free Trade Unions of Slovenia and with three guidance centres for adult education, which function as a free guidance service for adults in education at three folk high schools: In Koper, Maribor and Novo mesto. Advisers from the three centres will be the main providers of guidance in the workplace. They will collaborate with trade union organisers and company managers, and primarily with those in charge of human resources development in companies. The purpose and aims of the project are also supported by the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce.

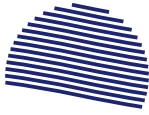
Working on the above assumptions for the project, the partners in Slovenia set the goal of developing and testing out in practice specific approaches to providing information and guidance for employees in the workplace in selected small and medium-sized enterprises in three regions. In the selected companies we wish to try out the approach to guidance in the workplace through two fundamental goals:

- presenting to employers the possibilities of learning for their employees that can benefit both the employer and employees;
- encouraging and motivating employees to learn, which will contribute to the higher quality of their work and personal life.

Prior to implementing specific activities in selected companies, in April we will start up training for union organisers and advisers who will provide information and guidance in the workplace in three companies. As part of the training, in March a study visit was made by a group of six professional workers to a partner organisation in France, the CIBC - Centre Interinstitutionnel de Bilan de Competences Artois Ternois (<http://www.cibcarras.org/>). The aim of this visit was to become familiarised with their work in the area of employee guidance and education, with emphasis on identifying various approaches to evaluating and recognising employee knowledge and experience, which is heavily emphasised in France.

Specific activities relating to information and guidance for lifelong learning in the workplace in the selected three companies will take place from April to June. In June, all those involved will also evaluate the results and plan activities for the future, in the desire for the positive experiences and results in the selected companies to be an incentive for other companies.

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Visit by representatives of the community of Leasowe near Liverpool

In the middle of January we were visited by representatives of the community of Leasowe near Liverpool, associated with the Open University institution, which develops and markets programmes. Based on a British publication issued by the NIACE in 2006 entitled *Learning Democratically Using Study Circles*, they identified Slovenian and Norwegian study circles as possible partners in the *Grundtvig* project, through which they wish to activate a community in which conditions are problematic.

We invited the mentors of study circles to the meeting. We knew very little about the visitors, but given our own pictures we counted chiefly on a fruitful dialogue, which then indeed took place in a small group. Experiences were presented by two mentors from very different environments – *Peter Virant MA* of the Pergam trade union and *Marija Imperl* from the municipality of Radeče. The representatives from the United Kingdom – *Roy Scheriff*, director of Leasowe Development Trust, and *Lynne Wilson* from the lifelong learning centre in the town of Leasowe – presented the staggering social conditions in two areas on the margins of Liverpool and an initiative for a common project to develop a programme of learning in the local community.

Common to all of us was the effort to develop learning on the local level as a precondition for development in our home or working environments. It turned out that activation is possible only through trust, which is developed slowly, with good mentor leadership and a clear goal. For that very reason our apparent difference was not a hindrance – we had the same goal, each with our own experiences and willingness to continue (possibly jointly).

Finally we should mention the open discussion that developed on the basis of the presentations. Massive and extraordinary problems may be tied up in a strongly entrepreneurial thinking (the case of UK) or in a (partly preserved) cooperative approach and high quality of the natural environment (the case of Slovenia). The face of poverty in both countries might be different, and we are relatively unfamiliar with it. We wish to prevent it, including through learning. For that reason we were very happy to meet and learn from all the presentations and discussions. We are looking forward to success of our Grundtvig initiatives.

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God's blessing on all nations,
Who long and work for a bright day,
When o'er earth's habitations
No war, no strife shall hold its sway;
Who long to see
That all men free
No more shall foes, but neighbours be.

F. Prešeren: The Toast

Slovenian national anthem

