

With the Development of People – We Prosper

Collection of Programmes, Projects, Experience and Ideas

Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund



SLOVENE HUMAN RESOURCES
DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOLARSHIP FUND



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA
MINISTRY OF LABOUR, FAMILY
SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES



Investing in your future

OPERATION PART FINANCED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION
European Social Fund

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A Word from the Team



We succeeded. The employees of the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund have collected some of the best stories, experience and professional papers depicting their work as well as that of the profession and of the users of our services. We don't do this every day, so learned a lot about each other and about cooperation with colleagues in the process. We also gained new competences and would like to thank all the stakeholders.

At the close of the European Cohesion Policy for the 2007-2013 Financial Framework for Slovenia, the idea matured to prepare an overview of the diversity and importance of our programmes. This collection encompasses stories that started as ideas and are the result of harmonisation with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport and other organisations. The publication of calls for applications was followed by selection procedures, project implementation and adaptation to the vast and complex administrative procedures. The results are in your hands, in this booklet and the environment of the project participants. In retrospect, we and the users have established that our programmes encourage many positive changes and open up new horizons.

The articles in this collection will lead you from the introductory presentation through figures, demonstrating the extent and scope of the programmes, to the presentation of the contents of these programmes. We also invited experts to make their contributions to this publication, i.e. those with whom we have cooperated in the past and wish to cooperate with again.

The substance of our programmes and the successful implementation results as well as the contributions of experts on the education and development of employees are presented in three content sets:

- **Development of competences for success in work and life in education** (for primary school children, secondary school and university students, employers and educational institutions);
- **Employee development** (Slovenian companies, employees and management personnel, human resources departments, vulnerable groups and newly employed young people);
- **"Scholarships** which help the youth increase educational level to gain the best possible preparation to enter the labour market following their studies and to develop their competences".

The "scholarship" content set presents various scholarship programmes, their purpose and also the results through the personal stories of scholarship recipients. The first part illustrates the co-financing programme for company scholarships, the primary aim of which is to connect education with the labour market in the sense of providing adequately educated human resources. This is followed by the presentation of the Ad futura programmes for promoting outgoing and incoming mobility, contributing especially to greater competitiveness and employability. This involves a wide range of activities for which scholarships are granted, namely participation in international competitions, study visits and practice, study and research abroad and scholarships for study and research by foreign citizens in Slovenia. Furthermore, it presents the scholarship programme for Slovenian minorities in neighbouring countries and for Slovenians around the world, strengthening their connection with the home country. The final part presents the awards for sustainable development and the Zois scholarships for education or supplementing the education of talented and versatile students.

We would like this collection to take readers into a world of human development on all levels, from children in schools to elderly employees in companies. We are entering the reality of everyday learning, where education is no longer a one-off exercise for life. Instead, it is a way of life and a condition for economic and social success.

Katja Lampe, Doris Sattler and Aleš Vidmar

Through the Development of People – We Prosper



The story of the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund was launched in 2006 with the transformation of Ad futura - Scientific and Educational Foundation of the Republic of Slovenia into a public fund based on the Resolution on National Development Projects for the 2007-2023 Period.

The Fund thus began realising the vision of becoming the central institution in the Republic of Slovenia for promoting the development of human resources and scholarships.

Throughout the years, we have created and implemented various programmes to develop the competences of students and employees and to boost corporate competitiveness. We have been an active partner in developing the competences of individuals and institutions from the very beginning. Our programmes promote the growth and development of people from primary schools and universities through to companies, where the practical training of human resources and employees of all ages plays an important role. It is our goal to contribute to positive changes in Slovenian society through our work.

In the period of the EUROPEAN FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK 2007–2013, we used 55 million euros from the European Social Fund to include over 120,000 people in various forms of training and education through 25,335 approved projects. Since 2002, we have distributed 37,153 scholarships worth a total of over 177 million through scholarship programmes and granted 650 sustainable development awards.

By co-financing projects and managing programmes, we promote positive changes in society, focusing on the growth and development of our country. Our work is directed by social responsibility towards all citizens, especially those included in education and employees.

On this occasion, as we are completing the programmes co-financed by the European Social Fund based on the Operational Programme of Human Resources Development for the 2007-2013 Period, **I would like to thank all the providers of funds and key partners for participating in the realisation of our mission: the Government of the Republic of Slovenia, the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, as well as employees of the Fund for their great work and commitment. I would also like to thank everyone who devoted their energy and funds to improving the development of their own colleagues and students and contributing to the development of competences that should be constantly upgraded.**

Programme evaluations and positive responses from our users indicate that we are encouraging the growth of the entire society, which we are very happy about. We are looking to the future with this in mind and with new plans and ideas.

This collection comprises part of the impressions presented to the general public, because we wish to change the slogan "No development of people – no development at all", which our colleagues used to remind and motivate corporate and institution managements, into a new slogan that would (again) place Slovenia among the most successful countries: **"Through the development of people – we prosper!"**

Franc Pristovšek, Managing Director

European Social Fund and the Challenges of the New Financial Framework



Funds are beginning to be drawn from the Cohesion Fund for the new 2014–2020 financial period. They will be drawn based on the 2014–2020 Operational Programme approved by the European Commission in December 2014.

The Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (hereinafter: MDDSZ) is one of the key entities mediating access to the European Social Fund, while the key implementers of our measures are the Employment Service of Slovenia and the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund.

We successfully drew from the European Social Fund in both previous periods. In 2004–2006, we distributed more than 99% of the available funds, even though this was the first implementation period, in which we had a lot to learn. The MDDSZ was exceptionally successful in the 2007–2013 period as well. By the end of the implementation period, i.e. 31 December 2015, we will have spent all the available funds totalling EUR 404 million.

In the 2007–2013 period we carried out nearly 200 operations/instruments and included more than 155 thousand people in training or employment.

The goals set for the respective period have almost all been attained and in some cases exceeded, despite the entirely altered economic situation. The main implementers of our measures, the Employment Service of Slovenia and the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund, contributed significantly to these results. The fact that the funds have been spent efficiently is attested by 22 analyses carried out in cooperation with the Employment Service of Slovenia, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, the Economic Institute and independent external evaluators. The MDDSZ activities in the framework of the Operational Programme of Human Resources Development for the 2007–2013 Period were subject to 32 audits by the European Court of Auditors, the Court of Audits of the Republic of Slovenia and the Budget Supervision Office of the Republic of Slovenia. All audit reports from both European and Slovenian audit bodies establish that the use of the European Social Fund by the MDDSZ has been successful, efficient and correct.

In the new financial framework of 2014–2020, the MDDSZ will for the first time be able to draw funds from

the European Social Fund, the Youth Initiative and the European Regional Development Fund.

The preparations for drawing are in the final phase. The publication of the first calls for application depends on the establishment of the drawing system, which is the task of the Government Office for Development and European Cohesion Policy, and is planned to be carried out in the autumn of 2015.

According to the 2014–2020 Operational Programme, the MDDSZ will be in charge of implementing priority axis 8 – Promoting employment and supporting transnational labour mobility and priority axis 9 – Social inclusion and the fight against poverty, and we will also participate in priority axis 10 – Investing in education, training and vocational training for skills and lifelong learning.

More funds are available for the current period. Approximately 370 million euros are available for employment, about 180 million euros from the European Social Fund and 56 million euros from the European Regional Development Fund for social inclusion. In other words, more than 600 million euros is available for these priority axes. Other ministries will be partially involved as well (the Ministry of Education and Sport, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology). Furthermore, the MDDSZ will have approximately 50 million euros at its disposal for priority axis 10.

Many challenges lie ahead. Crucial for the successful drawing of funds will be good implementing institutions, which include the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund, which has been given the key role in implementing programmes targeted at employed persons and young people undergoing schooling.

Zoran Kotolenko, Director of the Cohesion Policy Office at the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities

The Fund's Story in Facts and Figures

The investment of the European Social Fund's programmes into human resources development, managed by the Fund with the support of the ministries competent for employment and education will exceed EUR 80,000,000.00 in 2015.

Through eight programmes, we included over 120,000 persons in activities (23,000 primary school students, 26,000 secondary school and higher school students, 3,365 university students in project implementation, 460 young

people in first-time employment, 7,700 adults in obtaining secondary school education and more than 60,000 employed persons in upgrading their competences).

Programmes of the European Social Fund (ESF) in figures*

Programme name	Period	No. of calls for applications	Applications received	Approved	% of approved applications	Funds paid by 31 December 2014
Diversifying the School Programme	2011-2015	3	453	207	46	3,768,426.60
Practical Training with Work	2008-2015	7	14,725	13,235	90	17,737,596.48
Creative Path to Practical Knowledge	2013-2015	2	910	457	50	2,631,625.00
Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Employees	2011-2015	2	1,593	370	23	3,506,947.70
Competence Centres for Human Resources	2010-2015	2	120	19	16	5,592,543.27
Qualification and Training of Employees	2008-2015	6	7,474	2,034	27	11,026,182.00
Youth Mentorship	2013-2015	2	833	491	59	1,361,018.61
Reducing the Education Deficit	2007-2013	2	12,253	8,522	69	9,941,844.12
TOTAL		26	38,361	25,335		55,566,183.78

*The table does not include the instruments of Single regional scholarship schemes (8 calls for applications since 2008 more than 3,450 scholarship recipients, EUR 14,736,995.23 paid).

A substantive overview of the programmes of the European Social Fund and human resources development

What we offer	Programme name	Content	Minimum included (still in progress)
Practical experience in education	Diversifying the School Programme	- the use of new teaching methods in primary schools - higher standard of educational work - greater motivation to learn	50% of Slovenian primary schools 23,000 primary school students 400 employed teachers
Competence development for employability	Practical Training with Work	- practical training with work at employers for children attending vocational and technical education - greater responsiveness of schools to the needs of the labour market	26,000 vocational and technical school children 12,000 employers
Connecting the worlds of education and professional work	Creative Path to Practical Knowledge	- specific development project needed in the corporate sector, carried out by children under educational mentorship and supervision of a mentor from the corporate sector	438 Slovenian companies 88 other organisations 3,365 students
Improving employees' qualifications and employability	Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Their Employees	- human resources support to companies - systematic investment in personal and career development of employees - development of management competences, communication, cooperation,	370 companies 18,000 persons 30,000 included in LCG
Greater motivation, efficiency and loyalty of employees to the company	Competence Centres for Human Resources	- connecting companies within the industry in developing employee competences - support by project office to the entire partnership, produced competence model	19 industries, 300 companies 11,000 employees in companies and 35,000 included in training
	Qualification and Training of Employees	- performing training projects as needed by companies - as of 2013, an emphasis on the elderly, the disabled, women with a lower level of education	34,500 employees 45,000 included in training
Market success and company competitiveness	Youth Mentorship	- first-time employment for youth up to 30 years of age - inter-generational knowledge transfer - improving mentors' competences	460 mentees (newly employed) 385 employers 370 trained mentors
	Reducing the Education Deficit	- gaining a higher level of education and retraining of adults - opportunity to improve the standard of living - realising the concept of lifelong learning	7,700 persons achieving secondary education (completed)

Through the development of people – we prosper: companies, educational organisations and individuals are aware that "No development of people – no development at all!"

Inclusion versus included persons

The number of included persons or employers is measured at the level of a call for applications/operation. Due to the various target groups, there is usually no duplication. Inclusion equals participation, and one person may be included in several activities.

Our Programmes Put Human Resources Development Theory into Practice



Today, we speak of lifelong career guidance as early as kindergarten. In the earliest period of an individual's life, competences start being shaped for their further professional and personal development. And this is something that should be invested in throughout their life. There is a motto in the business world: if you do not grow, you regress.

The task of the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund is to connect the educational system with the private sector and promote investment in employees. We carry out programmes for target groups throughout the vertical plane – from primary school and vocational education to higher education. We facilitate the transition from education to employment and encourage companies to invest in all employees, including those with the lowest level of education and disadvantaged employee groups. The European Social Fund allows us to put our theory on human resources development into practice. Besides co-funding scholarships, in 2008–2015, the Fund conducted eight human resources development

programmes for educational institutions, adults and companies.

More than half of all primary schools were included in the activities in the scope of the Diversifying the School programme. Teachers attracted children to cooperate with the help of appealing activities that enhanced their competences and acquired practical knowledge to gain affirmation and increase self-confidence. The activities were excellently received by students, parents and teachers.

The key to success for young people after they complete education is their practical qualifications. We reimburse employers part of the costs they incur by providing practical training to students of secondary schools or higher vocational colleges, to facilitate their decision to provide practical training with work.

Connections between students, companies and faculties are established through the implementation of the Creative Path to Practical Knowledge programme. Students carry out specific development projects for the private sector and society at large supervised by a mentor from the faculty and a mentor from the respective company. This programme enables mutual transfer of knowledge and cooperation between educational and business spheres. The said projects facilitate the transition from education to employment. The Youth Mentorship programme is designed specifically for this purpose. Training mentors using a quality training provider proved necessary and desirable.

Employee development in companies is also promoted by the programmes Qualification and Training of Employees, Competence Centres for Human Resources Development and Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Employees.

These programmes have encouraged intensive investments in employees and provided clear feedback indicating that serious work with employees rapidly yields concrete and measurable results. These include reduced absenteeism, reduced production rejects and fewer complaints, an improved corporate climate and increased employee commitment. The possibility of training and personal development is one of the key drivers of motivation for employees.

The successful implementation of human resources development programmes in companies requires the management's commitment to implementation quality. Even though we advocate that as many employees as possible become included, it is the vision and drive of key personnel that motivate employees and create conditions for suitable work with them. The crucial contribution of our programmes lies in the development of every individual, allowing them to gain suitable competences for employment as well as the personal and professional development of every individual.

Cooperation with companies, individuals and educational institutions that receive funds is important for the success of programmes. The Fund monitors the entities implementing programmes, encourages them and guides their activities to maximise the gains from the funds awarded.

The quality of the services provided and in-depth work with target groups will continue to be the focus of the Fund's programmes and a guide for our future work.

Nomen est omen: Ad futura – For the Future

Ad futura - Scientific and Educational Foundation of the Republic of Slovenia was established by a resolution adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia dated 6 July 2001, with the aim of taking action for the future. Its mission was to provide an international educational dimension to promising students, researchers and others. At the end of 2006, the public fund was transformed into the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund based on the Resolution on National Development Projects for the 2007-2023 Period. With the help of the European Social Fund and the ministries in charge of employment and education, the activities for the existing target groups expanded and activities for new target groups were introduced – for primary school students, employers and employees.

Andrej Kohont PhD, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences

Competences in the 21st Century: Between Expectations and My Competences



Imagine two co-workers at an interview. Both satisfied the conditions for the job. They had suitable knowledge and work experience, and you assessed their personal traits as appropriate for the team they would participate in. After several months, however, you establish that they perform work assignments differently. Why? There is no straightforward answer, but it is likely that they have different competences. The better of the two is more competent, meaning that not only do they have the knowledge and skills needed for the job but also apply them faster and more appropriately and successfully.

If we stick to staffing and selection, competence can also be defined by another example, namely an interview for salesman at the Swedish multinational Ikea. On their website, you will find a picture where a human resources officer invites the candidate into the office with a disassembled chair on the floor, and says: "Put the chair together and sit on it." The invitation shows that this

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3. Brewer, L. (2013): Enhancing Youth Employability: What? Why? And How? Guide to core skills. Geneva: ILO.
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method can be used very effectively to check if a certain candidate has the competences expected for a certain position.

These two cases demonstrate the core of the concept of competences and verification of an individual's competences. Let us take a closer look at the term competence and try to define it.

Competence is an integral whole of interrelated abilities, knowledge, motivation, self-image and values that an individual can, wishes to and is able to successfully use in a given situation. This means that competence can only be referred to when this integral whole of knowledge, abilities, motives, self-image and values of an individual is placed in the framework of the social and physical environment in which the individual performs a certain role or task. The standards and requirements in a given situation significantly determine the (in)competence of an individual (Kohont, 2005). Competence therefore depends on three factors: the specific situation, the individual and the organisation.

The individual's competences are classified by levels and dimensions. They can be classified by level as follows:

- a) key, basic and generic,
- b) work specific and
- c) organisation specific.

And they can be classified by dimension as follows:

- a) expected,
- b) actual,
- c) progressive or distinguishing,
- d) described competences of an individual (Kohont, 2005).

Recently, competences have been mentioned primarily in the context of education, employability, transitions on the labour market and development in the context of lifelong career.

In relation to this, the ILO research on core competences entitled Enhancing Youth Employability: What? Why? and How? is interesting. Among the competences and characteristics that are significant today and perhaps will be even more so in the future, it highlights the following: oral communication, reading, writing, problem solving, the ability to learn and apply learning strategies, adopting decisions, assuming responsibility, a positive attitude to work, organisation and efficiency, cooperation, team participation, self-confidence, positive self-image, adaptability, enthusiasm and motivation, self-discipline, sincerity and integrity and the ability to perform work independently. It is worth mentioning the EU publication Key competences for lifelong learning (MOVIT, 2006), which lists: communication in the mother tongue and in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression. The issues of education and monitoring its effects in terms of competence development are dealt with by the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) in the 21st Century Skills and Competences research (Ananiadou, 2009). In this area, the focus is on the competence of an individual to search for sources and model information, effective communication, collaboration and virtual interaction, ethics and social impact and social responsibility.

An individual's competence is vital in today's world. It is shaped by interaction between man and the environment, where it is crucial to complement the individual's own activity and responsibility for development through support at the social, educational and employment levels.

Urška Marentič, Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training

Competence Development in Vocational Qualifications



In Slovenia, we started developing the vocational standard in vocational education 15 years ago as an interface between the educational system, the labour market and the private sector that connects the fundamental purpose of education and economic goals. The vocational standard determines vocational qualification by defining the necessary knowledge, skills and competences, which is why when developing vocational standards, the work and business processes are recorded as the fundamental basis for building the competences needed for the active management of more extensive assignments in various contexts.

In addition to vocational competences, a very important role in modern qualifications is played by the key competences. These shape an individual's professional growth and the performance of various roles in society. Key competences are indispensable, not only for a career, but also for personal development, integration in a wider social environment and lifelong learning. In the scope of the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, we have prepared an analysis of key competences and proposed a set of these for inclusion in the vocational standards, taking into account the

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The key competence model includes the following competences:

- communication and maintaining good mutual relations;
- acting in unpredictable situation;
- ensuring one's own professional development;
- ensuring control and the quality of one's own work in accordance with certain standards;
- planning and preparing own work;
- communicating in at least one foreign language;
- operating in line with certain principles and standards on the protection of the environment and awareness of environmental protection;
- use of computer technology.

labour market needs and European recommendations in this area.

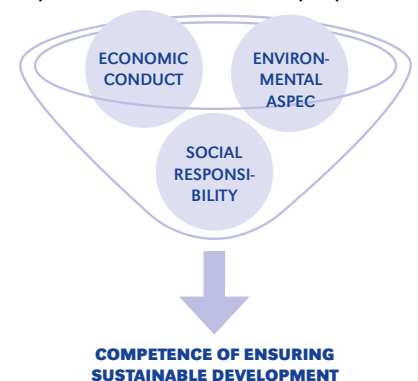
Special attention was also devoted to developing the competence of sustainable development, including the ability to consider the sustainable development concept in terms of cost-effectiveness (an individual's ability to activate, use and connect the knowledge and skills acquired in the planning, preparation and organisation of work, the management and supervision of work and quality), the environmental aspect (the individual's ability to activate and employ their knowledge and skills gained in a space and environment management in a given situation) social responsibility.

Every education involves the development of professional, personal and social competences. Therefore, national standards for individual key competences have been developed in Slovenia, and these should be mastered by all vocational education graduates. They include: entrepreneurship, information and communication literacy, health and safety at work, environmental education, social skills, learning to learn, planning and career guidance. Within educational programmes, the specific focus of

individual key competences is created upon integration into various programme units or when the implementing school curriculum is drafted. Some key competences, such as entrepreneurship, can be highlighted in an independent vocational module.

At the Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, we are aware how important it is to develop and expand the key competence of entrepreneurship, because on the one hand it introduces entrepreneurship as a real career path and on the other it increases the employability of young people, as they are better prepared for the expectations and requests of employers. In 2014, we started implementing the project of the European Social Fund entitled "I am Opening the Door Myself", the purpose of which is to encourage entrepreneurship in education and training with the aim of developing entrepreneurship among young people.

Comprehensive vocational qualification involves both key competences and vocational competences. This is why in the future the development of competences will include the most advanced employers from industry, craft and services, who will define the needed vocational and key competences, taking into account the development trends in their activity. We will also take into account the ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations) model of intersectoral skills and competences, which focuses on the skills and competences found in all employment and learning environments as well as many other situations in -everyday life.



Nataša Kunčič

Diversifying the School Programme



School should be diverse!

"What you learn as a child stays with you for life." This is the saying that teachers and parents use to persuade children that they are studying for success in life and not merely for a grade. In today's society, it is important to develop competences as well as formal knowledge. Education doesn't automatically lead to employment, and employers have high expectations. They expect commitment, energy, ability, responsibility and the desire to learn, among other things.

Children have an opportunity to gain a range of skills, abilities and knowledge, mostly in their spare time, after school and when engaging in various additional activities. An important role is played by the selection available and the availability of funds. In the scope of the Diversifying the School programme (hereinafter: POŠ), we funded the implementation of activities without grades and the relaxed development of competences, relations and independence using the European Social Fund.

Children were given an opportunity to successfully integrate in the social environment, and we provided support for children with learning problems, also providing psychological and social development.

We have diversified schools

For four school years, we have provided access to various activities promoting creativity and the development of children's competences, mainly those from less developed areas. School has been diversified for over 20,000 children, and in more than half of all Slovenian schools, we provided for the employment of over 400 teachers

carried out more than a thousand activities by the end of 2014. We estimate that the last call for applications will result in the inclusion of an additional 15,000 children. Some teachers have been working on the programme since the very start, and some of the children are happy to have been involved in activities since 2012.

Individual schools included in the POŠ programme created various projects, such as learning foreign languages, computer workshops, natural science workshops, sports activities and many other things, helping children gain new knowledge, improve their school performance, facilitate integration into a new environment (especially for children from vulnerable groups), have the possibility of free learning of foreign languages and spend free time with their peers and actively socialise during the school holidays. During the implementation of the POŠ programme, it turned out that it exceeded expectations and was a welcome diversification of the primary school action plan. Additional activities offered by schools were received by children and their parents with delight and high expectations.

Most frequent diversification

Teachers at schools strive to encourage children to participate in a diverse range of areas – from gardening to photography, theatre, singing, dancing, cooking, robotics and more.



Young detectives in a "forensic lab", place of investigation: Fokovci Primary School.



Preparing for winter: children from the Slivnica Primary School near Celje made bird feeders.

Children were encouraged to research various professions; they tested themselves in the private sector and learned about various countries (their cultures, geographical characteristics, language, etc.).

Through activities, the children adopted less common roles such as chemists, meteorologists, mediators, robot manufacturers, etc.).



Slovenia and Diversifying the School programme

Because the municipality development ratio was taken into account, most participating schools were from the Podravje and Pomurje regions, followed by schools from the regions of Central Slovenia, Notranjsko-Kraška and Savinjska. Schools from the Gorenjska region and South-Eastern Slovenia were less represented.

How to proceed?

The past few years have seen numerous positive effects from school diversification, affordable to everyone, regardless of the family budget. Parents, teachers and principals would like this programme to exist in the future, because the children need and deserve it.



After the first two calls for applications, the Fund diversified the day for 1,300 children!

With the help of the Centres for School and Extra-Curricular Activities, the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund organised "Diversify the Day" trips in the first week of April 2014 for students of selected schools who participated in the programme.

Trips were organised to more than 20 locations around Slovenia. More than 60 schools, almost 1,300 children and 120 teachers participated. Children spent the day in nature, enjoying archery, climbing, sledding, exploring caves and a mine and performing a series of other interesting activities.



Conference with children and for "adults"

After the trips, the children's achievements were presented to the general public. In Maribor, we presented the past years' results and children gave a live demonstration of some activities to the audience (ballet dancers' performance,



The Pohorskega bataljona Primary School in Oplotnica during corn husking.



Cinderella theatre show performed by the students of the Bogojina Primary School.

hip hop dance performance, Cinderella theatre show, young accordion player's performance, etc.).

The children impressed the assembled spectators, because all of them, from the youngest to the oldest, did an excellent job and awed the audience.



Young accordion player from the Poljčane Primary School put the audience in a good mood.

Primary school impresses Snaga Maribor

With the help of the Poljčane Primary School and in cooperation with the Fram kindergarten, the company Snaga Maribor made use of a public toilet on Partizanska cesta – Bobby to demonstrate how waste material can be used to make even a toilet greener.



What do parents think?

"We are happy to have this opportunity, because our children are deprived of many things as it is."

"I am very happy that children are starting to get to know nature and simple things, not only computers and modern gadgets."

"This is a contribution to a child's overall development needed for life."

"We are satisfied with the programme, because the workshops are free of charge and of high quality."

"I think it is worth commending that the Diversifying the School project motivates children to spend their free time engaging in activities, learning new things and doing different tasks."

Talking about school with enthusiasm?

"Parents of primary school-age children are satisfied with the available activities and are happy for the children to join in. The mother of a girl from 5th class said that her daughter was coming home full of zeal, enthusiastically talking about the activities they had carried out and how they had spent their time. Primary school-age children most enjoy activities related to animals (the School ZOO), music (English karaoke) and spending the night at school (Night Reading Hours). Children at a higher level often practice morning activities, such as 'It is Easier to Learn Together', because they believe that the explanation they receive during these activities helps them understand the learning content," say Barbara Hrastnik and Adina Deučman, teachers of the Diversifying the School programme at the Franc Rozman Stane Primary School in Maribor.



Children from the Franc Rozman Stane Primary School enjoyed learning about the gardening basics.



Children from the Slivnica Primary School near Celje became familiar with gardening as well as making bird feeders.

Learning tradition and contact with nature

"This programme allowed our school to perform activities helping children learn about the organic production of food and indigenous plant species, healthy nutrition, seasonal and traditional dishes, domestic animals, breeding methods and farm work and acquire a respect for farming.

The Diversifying the School Programme has been very well received among children and records the highest visit rate of all our activities. As many as 70% of all children from the initiating primary school participated in the programme. This percentage equals about 50 at partner schools," says Neva Brce, principal of the Košana Primary School.

Improved mutual relations

"This project allows us to have a different kind of contact with children in an

environment that is more relaxed and homely than the classroom. I think we got along well with the children, and they enjoy these activities (there are increasingly more of them and they always enjoy doing things). We also laugh a lot. The relations between children have also become stronger. Activities are carried out at four schools (the initiating school, two branches and the partner school) and the fact that children from various schools are combined proved very welcome. New ties have been established. Teachers often ask us about what we do in the scope of activities, because children like talking about them," says Tanja Glasenčnik, teacher of the Diversifying the School programme at the Podgorje Primary School near Slovenj Gradec.

"We have been conducting the Diversifying the School programme at our school for the third year in a row and we are very satisfied. We realised that mutual relations at the school changed significantly, children are more tolerant, understanding and help each other on their own initiative. We also observe that they have become more independent, that they take initiative and propose activities, not only in the scope of the programme, but also in general – even in classes. Children have also gained more self-confidence and self-assurance.

The programme does not only enrich the 'grey' everyday work at school, but contributes to efficient use of time, including spare time – either when children are free in between lessons or in the afternoon when they have nothing to do at home. Within the programme, children carry out customised activities that they enjoy, which is why a high visit rate is recorded for individual activities. Being a small regional school in the outskirts of Slovenia, this programme helps us offer children activities that they could not otherwise participate in because of the current financial situation (visits to galleries and museums and participation in workshops, various sports activities outside school – adrenaline park, rafting, etc.)," says Suzana Deutsch, principal of the Fokovci primary School.



The Vransko - Tabor Primary School enabled children to enjoy sports activities.

Competence building

"All children, regardless of social standing, participated in the projects of the Diversifying the School programme. We noted that the creativity and innovation of children are without boundaries and should therefore be promoted and developed in the future as well. Besides gaining specific knowledge, children also acquire important communication and organisational skills, take on assignments and learn about teamwork and accepting responsibility.

The programme offers them a chance to express themselves and to discover and strengthen their strong points," says Vitomir Kaučič, teacher of the Diversifying the School programme at the Ivan Cankar Primary School in Ljutomer.



Gorišnica Primary School reviving old farming habits.



"ACTION!" shooting of the "Flash in the Future" (Preblisk v prihodnost) film at the Ivan Cankar Primary School in Ljutomer.

"It is important for a school to offer children more diverse content than the regular programme, which is curtailed. Not only do children acquire new knowledge and skills, but they also become familiar with new learning methods and find it easier to connect learning with their everyday routine. A teacher conducting a workshop is 'closer' to children, the lesson is relaxed and children themselves propose content for the workshops," says Jelka Horvat, teacher of the Diversifying the School programme at the Miško Kranjec Primary School in Velika Polana.



Young chefs at the Loče Primary School.

School tailored to children' wishes?

When the substantive concept of the project was being designed, we mainly took into account the wishes of children, trying to offer what they had been



Students from the Gustav Šilih Primary School know that one should bravely look into the future and be responsible at the same time.



Exhibition of products made by students from the Središče ob Dravi Primary School.

deprived of as children in rural areas and because of their parents' social standing. These new activities (music school, dance school, language lessons, etc.) made a very positive impression. We also enlivened the local scene through various events, bazaars and performances where children very much enjoyed exhibiting their creations. Through performances, they consolidate their self-image by doing something they are good at and enjoy. The local people are happy and proud to follow the progress of our students and children," says Metoda Ljubec, teacher of the Diversifying the School programme at the Miklavž Primary School near Ormož.



Creative workshops at the Ljubo Šercer Primary School in Kočevje.

Relaxed school – better discipline?

"The programme has boosted the activity in the town, since children make more public appearances, which contributes to cooperation and mutual learning. Non-formal learning comes to the forefront, and the children's role transforms into a teacher role and vice versa, continuing into lifelong learning.

A teacher is accepted as a mentor, co-participant, assistant and leader, and the relationship with the teacher is therefore much more genuine, friendly and open. Spending 'free time' together helps improve communication and discipline during the regular educational process," say Peter Podgoršek, principal, and the teachers of the Diversifying the School programme at the Rečica ob Savinji Primary School.



Playful and creative students of the Franc Rozman Stane Primary School in Maribor.

Side effects – planning the future?

"We provide space and a safe environment for children to undertake individual work, personal conversation, exchange of life experience and perhaps planning the future through some of the project contents. The Diversifying the School programme allows project objectives to be realised by schools with the help of content and activities that are lacking at home, that the children are most interested in and that are the most reasonable, feasible and achievable," says Milena Ivanuša, principal of the Kobilje Primary School.





$$1+2=3$$

"What you learn as a child stays with you for lifetime."

Anton Ukmar Primary School in Koper, a bit differently

The Diversifying the School programme has been carried out at the Anton Ukmar Primary School in Koper for the past four school years with over 600 children under the name "School a Bit Differently". According to principal Gabrijela Dolinšek, the activities at school contributed to the development of key competences: foreign language interaction for the first three grades (basic English classes), mathematical competences and basic competences in science and technology, digital literacy with an emphasis on the safe use of the Internet for children in the first and second three-year period and learning to learn, which was and still is mainly targeted at children with learning problems and children from vulnerable groups. More leisure activities were introduced, as the children and their parents displayed great interest.

Genuine young chemists

"The natural science workshop called 'Creating and exploring' offers talented and interested children the chance to do research and practical work that cannot be performed during lessons because the processes are lengthy, complex and demanding or because working in larger teams is not possible. Children have become genuine young chemists. They even entered a chemistry contest with their chemistry experiment video. Among other things, they compared the characteristics of elastomers, prepared from various glues and other polymers. They became familiar with the application of certain herbs in cosmetics and medicinal products and used them in making creams, ointments and soaps. In most of the children attending the workshop, we have noted progress in observing substance and changes as well as the development of laboratory skills and analytical and synthetic thinking," says Izabel Jurman, teacher of the Diversifying the School Programmes project.

Participants's opinion

"The extra-curricular activity has generated great interest in me for making useful things. I learned about the work of a chemist and pharmacist and decided that when I grow up I will develop a medicine or food supplement for people with a stressful lifestyle. I notice that I have become more precise, more observant of details and dig into certain content," says Mark, 6th class student

"And the Kid will Help Himself" is one of the activities that offers students help with everyday homework and learning. We are grateful for an additional explanation of the lesson and the time for learning in order to eliminate obstacles and problems that sometimes appear among us. We are a large group of children who like to have fun when doing homework. At the end of the week, when our brain is already tired, we do fine arts and make the classroom we spend the afternoons in nice and neat. Students make new friends; we are happy to accept new students into our group and want them to feel good.

Views on the activity "And the Kid will Help Himself" were given by a 6th class student: "I like participating in this activity, because students help each other when there is something we do not understand. I like how peaceful and quiet the classroom is when homework is being done. We also help each other with oral work, taking on the role of teacher and student and grading each other. I also enjoy e-school because the teacher and my friends understand me and we can make things and have fun."

Children are also becoming more self-confident with each day. This is mainly evident when we are making agreements with teachers and bear the responsibility for the assignments we receive.

"It is indeed a nice feeling if your teacher trusts you and if you prove you can be a reliable person, which I am especially proud of."

THE MAGIC OF THEATRE

I am roaming around the school, observing what is new, wondering.

I enjoy languages and theatre, but how can these be synced. LA MAGIA DEL TEATRO, that will be the thing!

Goodbye to books, notebooks, benches and chairs; students are looking forward to diverse study. Those eager to move and the curious ones are learning Italian and emitting good vibes.

Preparing the scene for third-graders is more of a challenge. You should grab cardboard boxes, colours and fabric and quickly plunge into work. Listen and dance to the Italian music, make cone-shaped dolls and put together a story. Let imagination rule the classroom. We should sing together and have fun with little fear of the preparations for the show.

But look, a group of enthusiasts are on stage, waiting to show parents what they have learned. Let us greet them with applause and keep our fingers crossed, saying goodbye to stage fright.

At the end of the play, performed in Italian, we all bow, thanking the POŠ for helping us bring our ideas to life.

Alenka Likar,
teacher of the Diversifying the School Programmes project



The Koper Primary School superbly presented the activities – children did ballet-dancing, sang English poems, performed short plays and staged performances in the English and Albanian language, played guitars and more.

Interview Interview Interview Interview

Interview with **Francka Mravlje**, MSc, from the Poljčane Primary School

1. Your school participated in the Diversifying the School Programme project. What do you think the participation in this programme has contributed?

Despite the efforts of many principals and teachers, Slovenian schools are still based on efficiency and a classical approach. A teacher is perceived as a source of knowledge, which is passed onto students through explanations. The students are 'recipients' of already discovered, described, established and final findings, facts, etc. External motivation predominates, communication is conducted from the top down, there is little autonomy and an individual's value is defined by deliverables. Only the highest ranks are valuable, measured in terms of knowledge mastered and the number of correct answers that a student can memorise. The shift from learning by memorising to learning by thinking is a lengthy process.

From the beginning, the Diversifying the School Programme project has been conceptualised as "something different", unlike school life, but similar to a child's play. This is why we have been performing the activity for three years in the spirit of Bliss Carman: "Set me a task in which I can put something of my very self, and it is a task no longer; it is joy; it is art." Most activities have been designed so that children are offered less structured tasks that they can carry out in accordance with their interests, abilities and perceptions. Sometimes they are very successful, sometimes less so. But with every activity children learn something about solving tasks and about themselves.

2. You say that the Diversifying the School Programme project is "something else" for you. How do you perceive the commitment and participation of children in the programme?

Adults expect children to replace play with learning and toys with books, notebooks, pens, etc. when they enter school. But we overlook how natural it is to learn through play. Parents wish to relieve their children of all burdens, thus preventing them from learning

spontaneously, from persisting in spite of failures ... How is a child to realise their ideas, test themselves and find flaws in an approach if adults simply show that their idea is not good, efficient, reasonable and wise? The more messages like this that a child receives, the less they trust themselves and withdraw into passivity, leaving activity to adults.

The activities in the Diversifying the School Programme project are designed to enable children to do as much 'work' as possible themselves. Because the concept is not to learn first and then play (if there is time) but to learn from the play (activity); then students are always very willing to participate. They become enthusiastic, but ...

Often there are problems at the very beginning. Children expect, want, even demand instructions, rules, direction from adults so they won't make mistakes. They believe adults know the shortest path to the goal. Why work, try and risk, if everything is known? "Tell us what we need to do, explain how and we will do it – providing it is interesting enough," is their way of thinking. This is why the leader insists that children propose a plan and carry it out and supports (rather than comments on) their activity.

Do goals get achieved? Not always, but processes are more important than goals. Children think, 'review' their experience, put forward ideas, compare them, talk about them, judge them, choose one, carry it out in practice and observe the effects and consequences. Observing the consequences fills children with wonder, joy and thoughtfulness. If they were not successful, they become curious and want to repeat the activity in a different way.

This experience and decisions of the children confirm that the project is important.

3. Children do a lot of the work themselves in these activities. Which competences do they develop in the process? Can you give us an example?

Children develop the following competences:

- social: communication, cooperation, task division, management, conflict resolution, realising responsibility, etc.;
- physical and manual skills, persistence;
- learning and creativity: solving problems (from idea to product), looking for new ideas, forecasting, testing, repairing, observing and explaining, substantiating, etc.;
- emotional and motivational: expressing wishes, considerations, expressing feelings, identifying others' feelings, etc.

Example:

The relaxation corner for the third three-year cycle students enables the development of competences to take part in the following activities:

1. preparing for work (protection of the premises, safety at work);
2. painting and assembling furniture, sewing pillows (deciding, mixing paints, accurately painting, handling furniture before the paint is completely dry);
3. furniture layout plan, change of plan, rearrangement of elements;
4. tidying up (cleaning, washing, storing unused material).

The Diversifying the School Programme project invites children to engage in tasks for natural development, combining socialising, play, creativity, work, fun, enterprise and innovation. It is especially important that children get feedback about their efficiency in the engaged activity. This makes them more prone to think about how a task could be performed differently, more efficiently and perhaps with less effort. Children have a natural need to re-do a task differently, in a better way. If anything, this diversifies learning at school.

**"Set me a task in which I can put something of my very self, and it is a task no longer; it is joy; it is joy."
(Bliss Carman)**

Bernarda Savšek and Primož Kos

The Bridge between School and Employer

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."
(Confucius)

Let us imagine three people. A teacher, an employer and a student. A teacher educates to expand the knowledge of a discipline. Theory is what matters to a teacher, as well as history. An employer expects a new employee to be motivated and capable of performing work at a moment's notice. The employee is also expected to be able to independently tackle even the most demanding tasks from the very first day and without any special instructions. And how do the students see their role? If they are not named general manager the day they arrive, they certainly will become one soon considering they are the most competent and any older employees are obsolete.

It is this triangle of perceptions (deliberately caricatured) that the Practical Training with Work programme (hereinafter referred to as: PUD) penetrates. The programme is carried out, with the support of the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sport, by employers and educational organisations conducting vocational education and training. The successful and high-quality performance of the

practical side of education requires connection and cooperation between schools and employers as well as the adequate qualification of persons performing the process of practical training. School offers the employer professional assistance and advice on practical training with work, monitors practical training with work and observes whether the prescribed documentation is suitably kept.

Connecting education and practical training with work is one of the major areas for introducing young people into the work process and employing them. Employers conducting practical training with work therefore have a significant impact on further development and a successful career. The purpose of the project was to financially support the PUD implementation. Through the latest calls to apply, we attracted a large number of students and employers.

In 2013 alone, there were 4,902 students included in the programme, doing practical work at 3,683 employers. A total of 6,728 programmes were carried out. The programme has been carried out since the 2008/09 school year and over 35,000 programmes have been implemented since then.

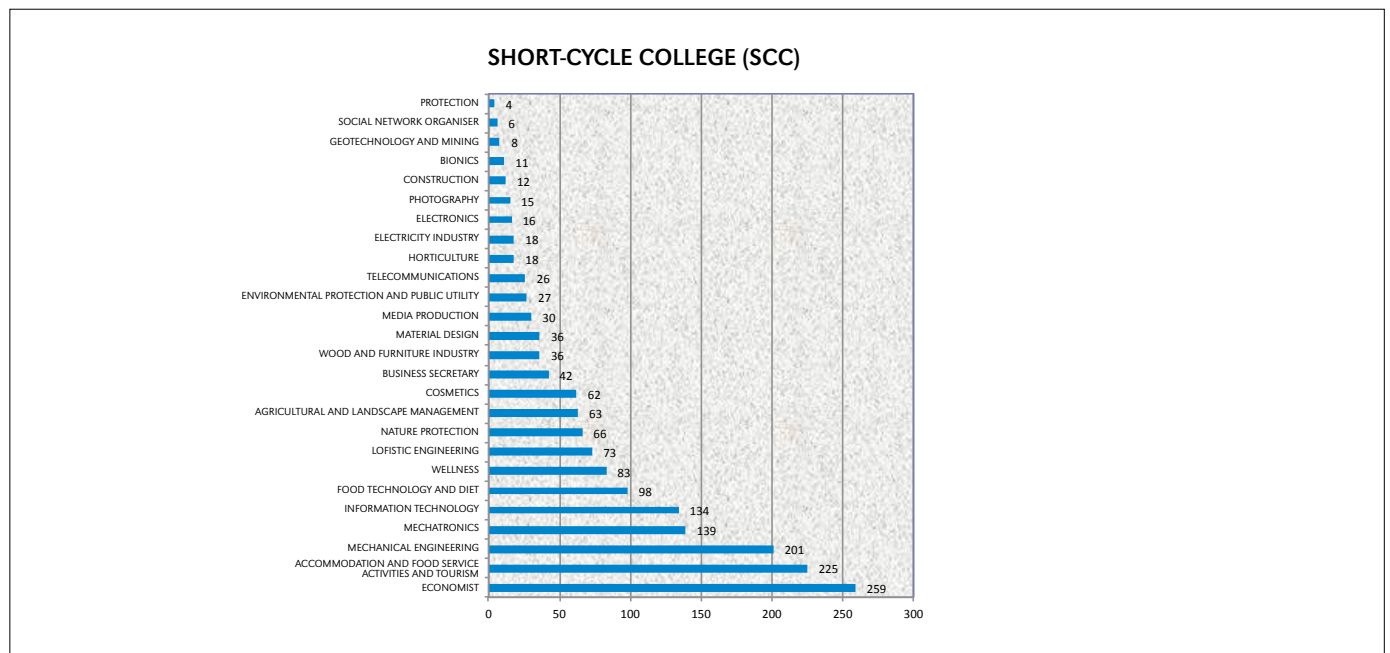
Achievements:

- more employers offering practical work;
- greater connection and cooperation between schools, employers and students;
- higher quality practice.

The best proof of a project is good examples, which were extremely numerous in this case. We present a small number below due to limited space. The examples show how practical training with work can provide benefits to all of society, how good work can persuade an employer to hire a person and how good practical training strengthens the school as well.

Partnership for clean environment

In the framework of practical training, students Maja Čirič, Veronika Masten, Vesna Kerič and Luka Mihelič cooperated with Komunala Kranj and Biotechnical Centre Naklo (BC Naklo) and planted the boundary of waste field B of the Tenetiše hazardous waste dump with indigenous plants. They were mentored





BEFORE: Project team of students and mentors at the first viewing of the waste site.



AFTER: Waste site in the spring with visible results of planting.

by Blaž Bajželj from Komunala Kranj and Tomo Romšek from BC Naklo. The learning objectives were achieved: becoming familiar with indigenous plants, their habitat and spreading, planting indigenous plants, determining the status and existence of illegal waste dumps and their consequences for ecosystems and participating in sampling, analysis and the evaluation of leachate. The students also participated in raising the local population's awareness of the progress of closing the Tenetiše hazardous waste dump. The practical results speak for themselves.

From the PUD to summer work and employment

Every year, the accounting firm EUROS Mojca Žveglič - sole proprietor offers practical work to at least one student of the Celje School of Economics from the economist programme (HS), accountant module. Since 2010/11, the firm has participated in the PUD every year. When the sole proprietor needs additional assistance, especially in the summer, she always calls on one of these students to work for her. One of the students will be employed part time, replacing an absent employee.

Jezeršek convinced

"Student Luka Kozjek showed exceptional interest in work in the scope of practice and exhibited rapid learning and accepting responsibility. Luka continued working with us based on a student employment referral form and occasionally assumed the responsibility of event manager at some less demanding catering events. Student Blaž Švigelj continued working on the basis of a student employment referral form and demonstrated excellent work quality.

At the end of 2013, Blaž became self-employed and our regular contractual partner." Jezeršek, Creative Culinary Solutions

Grm Novo mesto – Biotechnics and Tourism Centre is a school that allows some students to perform practical training with work at the school.

Student Gregor Jurejevčič trained a young horse and produced a manual describing the procedure for preparing young horses for riding with the help of mentors Urška Trobec and Matej Zobec.



A good example of the importance of practical training with work arose at the Grm Agricultural School and Biotechnical Gimnazija, where two students were employed by the Sevnica Agricultural Associate and first underwent practical training with work.

Practical training with work makes students enthusiastic about the profession!

"The company Deichmann has been present on the Slovenian market since the end of 2006. At present, it has 24 subsidiaries. Since 2010, it has been cooperating with trade schools all over Slovenia. Since the profession of salesperson has been devalued and is seen as undesirable, we initially had severe problems in attracting students to perform mandatory work practice in our company. We set ourselves an ambitious goal – to make students enthusiastic about the profession of salesperson!

In students, Deichmann sees the potential for fresh ideas and a major opportunity to gain new and competent staff. We are convinced that practice is an important source of key competences for the job of salesperson. Students acquire insight into the work of a salesperson and manager. At the same time, work in a company is a reference that helps individuals when looking for employment opportunities.

Successful and quality education of students requires suitably qualified persons (mentors) who conduct practical training and education in work processes. Subsidiary managers took part in the training called "Training mentors for students in practical training and education in companies".

For practical training with work of an even higher quality, we offer students a 2-day internal seminar on the topic of the Company's philosophy/products/customer service,

where those present obtain an insight into the Company's vision, become familiar with the products we offer and get advice on how to improve sales skills that they can use in practical training and further work: in short, the purpose of the seminar is to present the work of a sales person as an attractive and interesting job, offering possibilities of promotion, and to enable the necessary level of independence.

Last year, 44 students were on mandatory practical training in our company. We expect there will be at least 15% more this year. So far, we have employed two secondary school students and four faculty students who performed practical training in our company," says Suzana Jež, Manager of Human Resources Development Department.



Marko Bohte: "During practical training in the second year of the Electronics programme of the Higher Vocational College within the Novo mesto

School Centre, I produced a diploma entitled The implementation of machinery vision in the LabVIEW development environment with the company IKU. Professional practical training offers students an excellent experience of cooperation with companies and enables them to become part of their teams. Students in their final years have exceptional conditions for drafting a diploma thesis based on practical training. The value of this training lies in the fact that a student is shown the functioning of systematics in companies."

Practical training in Gorenje, in Velenje – Gašper Pšeničnik and Tomaž Brešar, Velenje School Centre, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science School

Gašper: "I became familiar with elements, work methods and certain standards that I had not known in practice. I increased my knowledge and skills by mastering the reading and use of plans, the importance and tasks of various electrical components, metal shaping, the use of pneumatic elements, programming switches, making bores and the use of Rid switches, control panels and photo curtains. I became familiar with various types of electric saws, hand tools and materials. I can describe my relationship with my mentor from Gorenje, Mersed Jukan, eng., as being full of respect and interest and very useful for the future. I can see myself as an employee of Gorenje after practical training, engaging in further schooling, possibly going a long way with my own method of work."

Tomaž: "My expectations when starting this practice were to learn as much as possible that would be of benefit to me during further schooling and in my profession. I acquired certain skills with the help of experienced electricians

True experts indeed



Simon Miklič: "As a student of the Novo mesto School Centre, Mechanical Engineering programme, I attended a ten-day practical training in the company TPV, performing

work in a prototype workshop. I learned a lot, witnessing the progress of work from tool design to end-product manufacture. My superior gave me a task, namely to produce a prototype tool for making embossed nipples. Before work, I was given a plan with all the measurements, the tolerance and a description of the piece. Then I set to work. I had to design the product using the CATIA application and then the product was manufactured. After that, we calibrated the manufactured tool. Once calibrated and set to the right dimensions, we began embossing. In the end, the pieces were welded onto the car traverse and sent to the customer. I am happy that I was able to independently manufacture this prototype tool and construct it as I had designed it. I learned a lot in this practical training, and I will continue applying this knowledge. I met new people and found the work very interesting. I had no idea what a prototype workshop looked like before. The knowledge that I gained during practical training will be useful in further study and then in employment."



and the mentor, who helped me with various projects and entrusted me more demanding work as well.

The experience gained during practical training in Gorenje will be very valuable in my further career. During practical training, I learned to read and draw electrical plans, use various machines and work within a team where every project needed to be completed in a certain period. In private life, I know how to repair or connect various electrical machines (e.g. drilling machine, electric motors, house installations, draw electrical plans, connect video surveillance, alarm systems, etc.). My experience with the mentor was very good, and he always took the time to help me and explained everything that I wanted to know in the field of electric engineering. Having completed practical training, I see myself working for Gorenje, as it is a top enterprise and is continuing to develop in terms of being higher quality and more trustworthy, and I have no doubt that I will get a job I will enjoy and be happy to do until the end of my career."

PRACTICAL TRAINING WITH WORK – experience between school and occupation

Students enrolled in the media technician programme of the Secondary School of Mechanical Engineering operating within the Celje School Centre participated in the shooting of the Slovenian feature film entitled *Vloga za Emo* (A Role for Ema) as part of practical training with work provided by the Almedia production company. That way, they obtained valuable experience and were the first secondary school students in Slovenia to verify and assert their knowledge and the quality of their education. They worked under the professional guidance of mentors, carried out technical tasks and acquired competences as assistant director, assistant producer, director of photography, operator, sound editor and operator, assistant lighting director and logistics assistant. They learned about teamwork, communication and responsibility as well as established contacts in the field of film production. Their qualification is proven by the fact that at the end of the project, some of them became employed in the VPK production company and other similar institutions. Petra Rebernik, a student who was script supervisor and lighting assistant for the film *Vloga za Emo* says: "I am glad that I learned about my career ambitions in such an important project, and that I became familiar with all the steps leading to the creation of a film.

I was mainly impressed by the course of a film-making day, the professionalism of my colleagues and the mass film production."

Students of the Service Activities and Logistics Secondary School, operating in the Celje School Centre, successfully combine knowledge acquired in school with practical knowledge. This experience has been shared by Nik Pišotek. He describes it as follows: "I was on practical training with work at Avtotehnika Celje, where I supplemented the knowledge needed for practising the profession of vehicle body repairer. I learned various professional preparations and varnishing procedures as well as suitable communication with colleagues, and I became familiar with the organisation of

work and more. The experience connected with the electric car was even more valuable for me. This means of transport was created at our school by transforming a normal car and then presenting it to the public. I was a member of a team of students who displayed this electric car at the Car and Maintenance Trade Fair. Before that, I had to gain thorough knowledge of the project and the technical characteristics of the vehicle so I could answer questions. The questions I was unable to answer prompted me to learn more, but more importantly I successfully incorporated my knowledge into communication with visitors."



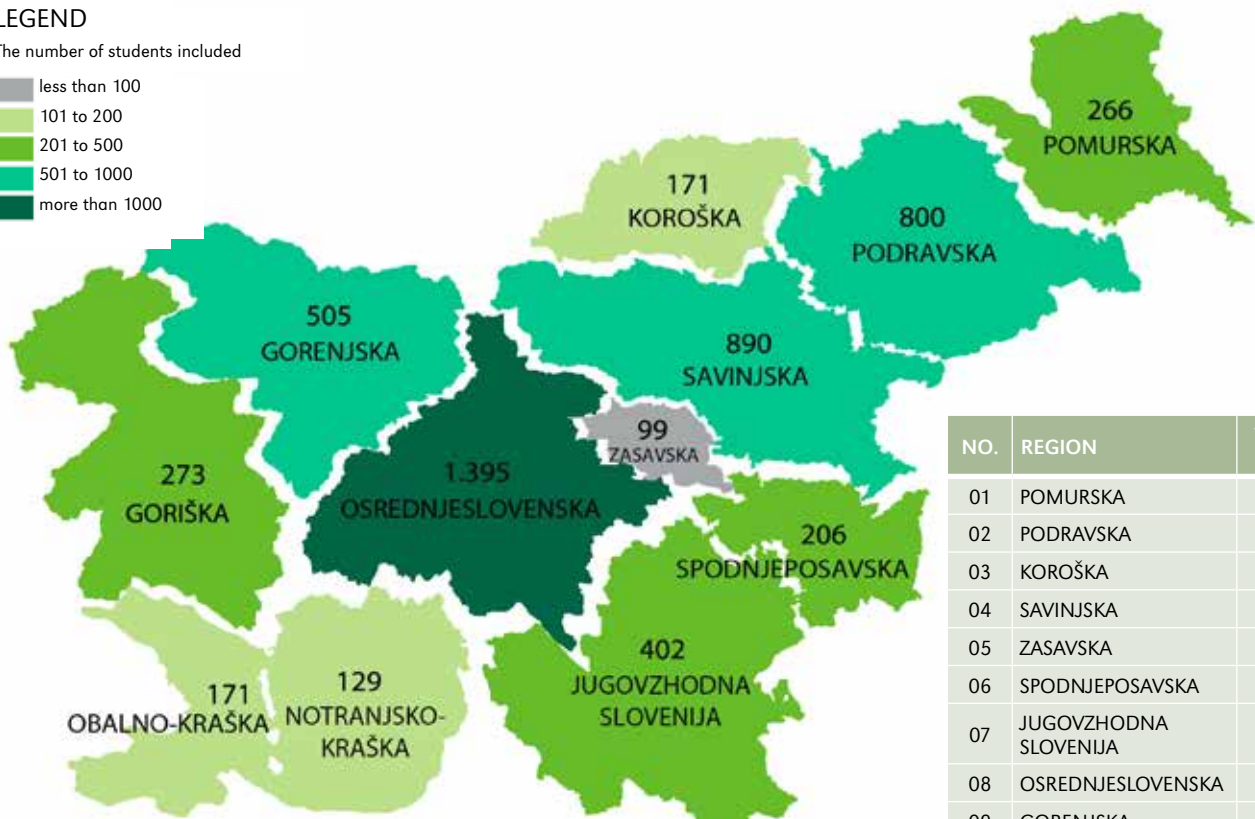
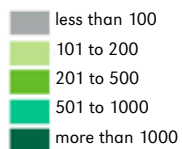


In the scope of the practical training with work, the students of the Service Activities and Logistics Secondary School repaired a damaged petrol-engine car and transformed it into an electric car.

The number of students in practical training per statistical school region (2013/2014 school year)

LEGEND

The number of students included



NO.	REGION	TOTAL ZS
01	POMURSKA	266
02	PODRAVSKA	800
03	KOROŠKA	171
04	SAVINJSKA	890
05	ZASAVSKA	99
06	SPODNJEPOSAVSKA	206
07	JUGOVZHODNA SLOVENIJA	402
08	OSREDNJESLOVENSKA	1.395
09	GORENJSKA	505
10	NOTRANJSKO-KRAŠKA	129
11	GORIŠKA	273
12	OBALNO-KRAŠKA	171

Considering the population size, the programme is rather evenly distributed across Slovenia. In terms of the number of students engaged in practice per statistical school region, the highest numbers, as expected, were recorded in the more densely populated and developed regions

Interview Interview Interview Interview

Interview with **Nataša Hafner Vojčić**

(Ministry of Education, Science and Sport - Secondary, Higher Vocational and Adult Education Directorate)

Co-financing of the Practical Training with Work programme from European Cohesion Funds is also projected in the new financial framework for 2014-2020

1. Do secondary school and faculty students acquire suitable knowledge and competences during practical part of training be assigned greater importance, a larger share in the total number of hours?

Vocational education and training is unimaginable without learning through work. The latest redesign of vocational education programmes in 2004 to 2006 resulted in a larger number of hours allocated to the programme focusing on practical training. In the coming years, new models for vocational education programmes are projected to be implemented, with an even greater share of training from employers. Our aim is to introduce pilot training based on the apprenticeship model.

2. How could cooperation between schools and employers be improved and the transfer of knowledge from companies to students be expanded?

Quality vocational education requires close cooperation between schools and employers. Employers can train students in their companies and take part in determining the content of the "school segment" of education (a part of the educational programme is determined by the school in cooperation with social partners). There are quite a few cases where some of these hours have been allocated to additional practical training with employers.

The purpose is that the student really becomes familiar with the work environment and socialises within it. Experience in the past few years has shown that goals will also have to be set for this part of the educational programme, but this will not be possible without the close cooperation of employers.



Some schools and employers have established strong partnerships, while things are not yet running smoothly elsewhere. The situation also varies among industries. In particular, small and medium-sized employers will need additional support (mentor training in companies, professional support for mentors by the school, guest mentor, assistance in administration, templates for various forms, etc.).

Setting up partnerships between schools and local institutions is a lengthy process, supported by the ministry in charge of education by various projects. In addition to schools, employers' associations should participate in establishing and strengthening partnerships as well.

3. Do you believe that the Practical Training with Work programme increases youth employability?

Yes, training at work can give students practical experience and help them become familiar with the labour market and establish contacts with potential employers. They have an opportunity to showcase their knowledge, motivation to train for their profession and the will to work as well as to become acquainted with

their potential employer. The employer is given a chance to train its future employee and to assess their professional and work potential. Employers increasingly appreciate this advantage, and it is often the case that when education is completed a student becomes employed with the employer where they gained practical training. We hope for as many of these cases as possible.

4. Is the Practical Training with Work programme going to be financed by European funds in the future as well and when will it start?

The Operational Programme for Cohesion Policy Funding 2014-2020 predicts further encouragement of employers to conduct practical training with work for secondary school and higher vocational college students. Schools and employers can expect the first call for applications in the spring of 2016.

5. Which occupations and types of practical training especially deserve support from European funds?

Priority will be given to education for occupations that are in the greatest demand by employers. Vocational education and training will be supported as a priority, comprising more practical training with employers. This will primarily entail programmes in the scope of which the trainee becomes employed by the employer as an apprentice. Various specialisation programmes and post-graduate training programmes are planned in this framework. Priority will also be given to training at verified training sites, based on individual apprenticeship contracts.

6. What will the priorities be and what are your ideas for the future?

We wish to simplify the procedure for incentives for practical training with work as much as possible, so we will take every opportunity to do so. We hope that the new instructions will provide simplifications enabling employers to gain incentives faster than in the projects carried out thus far.

Sabina Rajšelj, MSc, Matej Čeh

Creative Path to Practical Knowledge (PKP)

There were times when young people were not occupied with the question "What will my profession be after schooling?", however, these days all students must think about a job even during education and must proactively approach their employability and career planning or the creation of their own position of employment.

The path for the future

When young people search for employment, their acquired education is only the starting point and not always a solid one at that. It is therefore important that young people in various areas and situations gain practical experience and therefore the competences, knowledge and skills needed to enter the labour market.

Employers often highlight highly qualified personnel without suitable practical experience and knowledge, unable to effectively function in an interdisciplinary team, where integral comprehension and solving assignments is expected of them.

In order to enable young people to gain knowledge and experience for a successful transition from education into the work environment, the supporting measure called "A Creative Path to Practical Knowledge" is being carried out with the support of the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, described by Prof. Zoran Ren, PhD, from the university of Maribor, at the 9th Slovenian Innovation Forum as "the first state measure yielding the right effects".

Challenges in the private sector – opportunities for students

The call to apply to the PKP programme encourages the development of competences in students who in addition to regular study obligations wish to become part of "small research projects" to look for creative and innovative solutions for practical challenges in the corporate sector. They are assisted by work and educational mentors offering them expert support in project implementation.

Learning about my profession in practice!

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 ZNANOST IN ŠPORT

The operation is co-financed by the European Union's European Social Fund. The call for applications is organised in the scope of the programme called "Creative Path to Practical Knowledge" Operational Programme for Human Resources Development for the Period 2007-2013, 1st priority axis: Promoting entrepreneurship and adaptability, and preferred orientations 1.3, Scholarship scheme.

Interdisciplinarity is preferred

Projects include students in various fields of study. The interdisciplinary nature of most projects contributes to student networking in various professional fields. This is the method used to transfer knowledge among students, and the work performed

allows students to obtain generic or specific competences and competences that are specific for their profession and in demand in the private sector. Projects are carried out in various environments, from medical to chemical laboratories, from classrooms to study libraries, from researching in the forest to exploring faculty gardens and elsewhere.

Students gain useful knowledge in various fields, and the projects also cover modern research trends, e.g. the protection of natural heritage, environmental protection, biodiversity, kinesiology, health care, etc. Supervised by expert mentors, they search for solutions to optimise business and work processes, boost productivity, research the market, etc. - even develop prototypes that companies will later market after finalising them.

PKP attracts attention

During the implementation of the project, higher education institutions and the Fund organised various promotional activities in the media, at conferences, round tables, professional events and trade fairs and on a number of websites. Most of the higher education institutions presented projects at high-profile press conferences.



In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the Fund organised a press conference where chancellors and vice-chancellors of Slovenian universities commended the PKP programme as an excellent measure for transferring knowledge from higher education institutions into the corporate sector and vice versa. (Source: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport - MIZŠ)

Multiplier effects of the PKP projects in figures and statements

The results of activities carried out in the scope of the call for applications provided an answer to at least 206 challenges from the private sector, but more importantly, not only did the 1,320 participating students gain competences, but some actually became employed.

The 2nd call for applications resulted in the selection of 246 projects, and more than 2,000 students will acquire practical experience by the end of July 2015, not only in technical and natural sciences but also in the field of social and welfare innovations that will contribute to social progress.

Students learn about their profession in practice

PKP PROJECTS WERE SHOWCASED AT:

- The International Electrotechnical and Computer Science Conference ERK 2014** (Portorož)
- The Slovenian Innovation Forum** (Ljubljana)
- The Industrial Forum of Innovation, R&D and Technology** (Portorož)
- Biennial of Design, BIO 50: NOW** (Ljubljana)
- Supporting Science Teaching Advancement through Inquiry Conference** (Bled)
- 1. Grazer BIM Tagung Conference** (Graz, Austria)
- The International Field Robot Event** (Bernburg, Germany)



The Fund enabled the presentation of projects dealing with food production, nature protection and computer applications in the food processing industry at the International Fair of Agriculture and Food AGRA 2015 in Gornja Radgona. Photo: A student of the Novo mesto Higher School of Administration and Business presents the project "Developing an application for ordering sandwiches with local ingredients". (Source: Dolenjski list, no. 36/3392, 4 September 2014).

Connecting the educational sphere with the private sector

"Developing creativity when faced with specific challenges that companies encounter enables students to obtain additional competences, become familiar with the work environment and upgrade the knowledge they have gained. These projects are also extremely welcome as an opportunity for long-lasting liaisons and cooperation between educational mentors / researchers and companies, which is a strong driving force of new ideas and creative cooperation. Thus, young people are more aware of the importance of their career development and come face to face with the actual demands of the market," says Maja Makovec Brenčič, PhD, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ljubljana.

Human resources solutions for companies

"Among other things, the PKP project addresses the issue of 'gratis' work, which companies have recently opted for. For a company, a young and inexperienced worker first represents an investment. Genialis is a young high-tech company, and without the PKP project, it would have a hard time providing first work experience to so many students without a financial incentive."

Owing to good project implementation results, one of the students was employed by our company." Nejc Škoberne, PhD, Managing Director of Genialis.

Employment opportunities for students

"When working on a project, it is important to be driven by the desire to learn, create and work responsibly. These are the traits that a company notices and that persuade a company that you are the candidate they want to have on their team," says Zumret Topčagić, who created a job for himself at the company Redpitaya by means of the PKP project.

The connection between companies and students is preserved after the completed projects, because on the basis of good experience many companies decide to grant a scholarship, enable practical training or drafting of diploma and/or master thesis. Data show that a surprisingly high share of companies employ students or include them in work based on a student referral form.

PKP project results are beneficial to society at large

**Students for infants
Project: Musical lessons for infants**

Inspired by a similar programme implemented by the Graz Academy of Music, Private Music School Director Nataša Cetinski engaged participants of the PKP project to research and examine the teaching of infants. As yet, nobody provides musical lessons to children aged 1 to 3 based on Slovenian songs and cultural heritage. Such a music teaching programme would encourage the integral and musical development of children and on the other hand require adult participants to select quality music for small children. I set up this programme with the help of the Academy of Music and four students, who researched literature and musical content to organise a workshop as well as interdisciplinary

tknowledge about the characteristics of child development. Every workshop was carefully planned, focusing on a specific topic, and supplemented by experience from the previous one.

"I believe that the most important thing for students was the contact with the real environment, namely the musical school, where the customer is always right. This inspires a completely different feeling from that experienced when you prepare for teaching that never comes to life in reality. Students also learned about communication and fostering relations with customers. The Arsem Musical School acquired knowledge in a thus far unexplored field, penetrating an age segment of the market that has so far been beyond reach. This connection could definitely bring excellent results in the long run." Nataša Cetinski, Arsem Musical School.



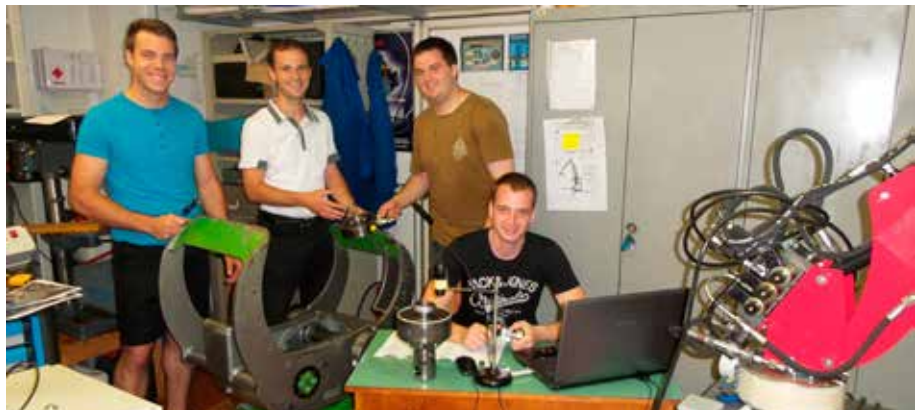
Children were enthusiastic about participating in the project workshop with students of the Academy of Music of the University of Ljubljana.

Useful and creative computer science

Project: Formulating media solutions for the Viva.si business model

In cooperation with the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, the company Studio Moderna sought solutions for a more efficient on-line presence of the Viva magazine, one of the leading on-line media offering information on illnesses, a healthy life style and well-being. Rapid interactive development warrants the modernisation of the portal and its contents, so the project was aimed at formulating suitable solutions to upgrade the business model. The project resulted in the decision to digitalise the booklet entitled My Health Diary (Moj dnevnik zdravja) in the form of an interactive on-line application, assisting users with prevention and offering advice on health care.

Students improve their employment options!



Students encounter challenges in testing and measuring the universal gripper in the project "Analysis of the operation of the first series KGL oil-hydraulic rotator" carried out under the auspices of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of the University of Ljubljana.

Opinions of users of the My Health Diary project, Viva.si: "All the project partners assess that participation in the project has been very successful: students gained significant direct and indirect benefits (upgraded competences, new know-how, networking, experience of a real work environment, professional references, etc.), and the end product was the realisation of the company's wish to gain a business solution while expanding the options for further quality upgrades of this solution." (Source: Final report on implemented project activities, 1st call to apply to the PKP, 2 October 2014)

PKP projects promote social responsibility

Project: Research and development of paraplegic clothing

"We gladly responded to the call to cooperate because the project represents a solution for problems with buying suitable clothes that wheelchair users have faced for many years.

We assess the project in superlatives and definitely hope it is upgraded." Slovenian Paraplegic Association

This project of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering Maribor, the company Miricotata and the Slovenian Paraplegic Association is a response to the lack of clothes for people with health problems, specifically bedsores, incontinence, restricted mobility



A student of the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana conducting a microbiological food test.



The on-line interface of the "My Health Diary" portal, created as a result of cooperation between the students of the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television and Studio Moderna (<http://www.mojdnevnikzdravja.si/login>).

of hands, muscular atrophy, skin irritation, etc. There are no suitable clothes available on the Slovenian market, so functional clothes need to be developed for the protection and health needs of paraplegics, bearing in mind fashion trends as well.

"By working on the project, I was able to use and upgrade my studies, step by step, through well-planned project activities leading me to the final goal, namely the development of functional clothing for paraplegics. I realised how important virtual prototyping is in the development of clothes tailored to the user and how it can be put to good use," says Irma Selimović, student of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering.

The fact that the PKP projects involve the transfer of knowledge in both directions is confirmed by the mentor Mira Strnad, who became qualified in using 3D CAD software for pattern design, virtual prototyping and the visualisation of clothes on a 3D-parametric body model to become part of the project. Through research on functional clothes, the company identified a new potential niche. It wishes to apply the knowledge gained to help development and thus become a provider of ready-made and tailor-made clothes for a special target group..

"Employee and student competence development is crucial for an individual to be able to use the acquired knowledge, skills, abilities, communication and presentation capacities to successfully and efficiently achieve the goals of the work environment, as well as to be able to listen and be open and susceptible to new challenges." Andreja Rudolf, PhD, educational mentor at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering.



"We did it!", say the satisfied students of the RedPitaya project team.

PKP projects are also high-tech projects

Connecting computer science and life science

Project: On-line application for gene data analysis and for conducting bioinformation procedures

The Faculty of Computer and Information Science in Ljubljana and the company Genialis participated in a project for developing an on-line application for gene data analysis and for conducting bioinformation procedures in two fields: analysis of data obtained by biological experiments and modelling proteins, and protein-protein interactions. Domen Blenkuš took part in the PKP project as a student from the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics in Ljubljana. Participation in the project allowed him to use his knowledge in practice, gain experience and receive payment for his work. His performance in the project proved that he was competent, and the company employed him.

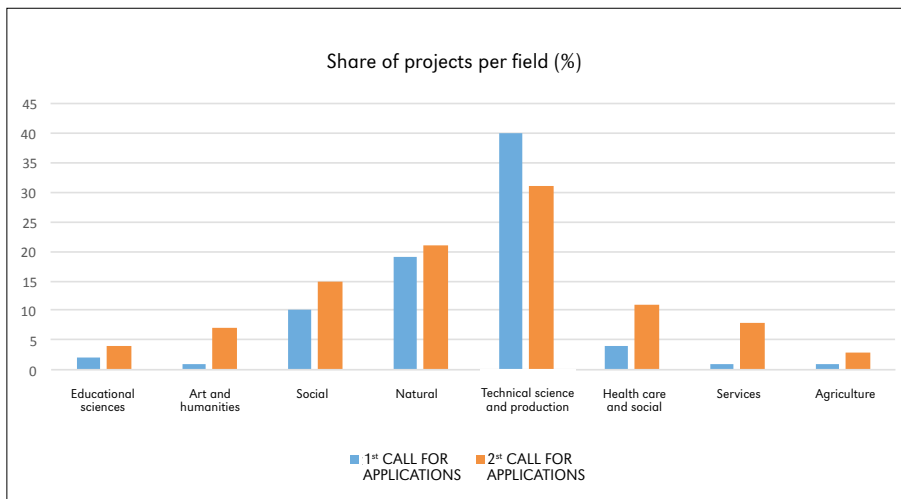
RedPitaya – from a fun musical instrument accessory to a serious measurement instrument for labs

Project: Laboratory measurement system based on the RedPitaya device

Through the laboratory measurement system based on the RedPitaya device, students produced an educational measurement system to support telecommunication studies in cooperation with the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and the company Instrumentation technologies. For the educational process they needed



Field testing by students in the scope of the project "Design and cost-effectiveness of sea water heat pumps" of the Faculty of Maritime Studies and Transport of the University of Ljubljana.



equipment with a value that can amount to tens of thousands of euros per measurement site. The proposed system enables students to perform assignments independently using individually accessible equipment. RedPitaya is a product that can be instantly transformed from a fun musical instrument accessory, a magnetic field gauge and a sound emitter into a serious laboratory instrument.

The project partner, the company Instrumentation technologies, provided access to the key measurement component of the system. After reviewing the goals achieved, it expressed interest in continuing the project. Zumret Topčagić, now employed by the company, says:

"After the project, three students continued to work in the RedPitaya company." Further work focuses on expanding the set of instruments that would operate on the said platform, whereby the usefulness of RedPitaya in the educational process or individual research will increase further.

Logistics challenges

Project in progress: Upgrading the most advanced models

An example of an interdisciplinary project is the project under the auspices of the Faculty of Logistics of the University of Maribor, with the participation of students and

Acquired generic competences

- Interdisciplinary and team work
- Analytical and creative thinking and solving problems
- Corporate and organisational competences
- Communication skills

Acquired occupation-specific competences

- Programming languages: Javascript, Matlab, C++, CSS Programs:
- AutoCAD, MapViewer, GlobalMapper
- Handling research equipment in various areas
- Laboratory skills (validation, calibration, gauge positioning)
- Validations and valuation of analysis results
- Modelling business processes using ARIS tool and BPMN technique

mentors of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science and of the Faculty of Organisational Sciences. The company INEA, the project partner, boasts a team of consultants and specialists in the Preactor tool, which offers high quality services and has launched one of the most comprehensive systems to support scheduling in production companies. The result of the project will be the model presenting the functioning of the tool based on the test data of the selected company.

ROI calculation model will be upgraded with added aspects that have not yet been taken into account, and the marketing approach to informing customers about the benefits of the advanced planning system will be revised. Another partner in the project is the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, which will direct students in drafting material for disseminating project results and therefore ensure that the results can be applied in a wider economic environment.

Projects in the field of natural and technical sciences prevailed at the 1st call for applications.



In the scope of the PKP project, students from three faculties of the University of Maribor upgraded the field robot, which won 3rd place at the International Field Robot Event in Bernburg, Germany.

The effects of projects and the results of the activities conducted have left a visible trail and the participants' experiences are surprising and inspiring. We are faced with the challenge to create new, even stronger connections between education and the private sector and to secure competent human resources for tomorrow. We will try to be even more inclusive and integrating, as a consequence of which the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport will, in addition to the existing integration of education with the private sector, also promote the integration of higher education institutions with stakeholders from the local environment with the assistance of the European Social Fund,

aimed at employing the knowledge to the benefit of the local environment.

"Cooperation where students use an interdisciplinary approach to successfully overcome various business and social challenges is strongly supported at the University of Ljubljana, and we expect to be able to participate in projects that actively connect study experience with practice in the future," says **Maja Makovec Brenčič, PhD, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ljubljana.**

"It is very important that young people gain practical experience that facilitates their transition from the educational process into the labour market and consequently the transfer of knowledge into practice. By acquiring competences, knowledge and skills in the scope of activities complementing the regular learning process, mentors assist the students to directly cooperate with commercial entities, thereby gaining a new insight into the work environment and also developing their own innovation and creative thinking. Thus we promote the transfer of knowledge into the private sector, focusing it into development, thereby improving the adaptability, efficiency and competitiveness of the economy. This process also involves the transfer of knowledge from the private sector into the learning process, contributing to the modernisation thereof. EUR 8.3 million was allocated to both calls for applications, and we expect this amount to increase in the future. The project "A Creative Path to Practical Knowledge" has met the expectations and the set goals, which is why we will continue encouraging such projects. Both young people and commercial entities are eager for such forms of cooperation. In the future, projects will be expanded to cover cooperation with the local environment," says Mirko Stopar, MSc, Acting Director-General of the Directorate of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.



Maja Makovec Brenčič, PhD, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ljubljana.

Multiplier effects of the programme:

Increasing the employability of students thanks to experience and competence.

Actually employed students.

Concrete solutions for the corporate sector.

Updating the study syllabus. A new approach to employing young people in companies.

After the completion of the project, students preserve the connection with companies (company scholarship, student work, diploma/masters thesis).

Planning long-term cooperation between higher education institutions and the corporate sector and knowledge transfer in both directions.

Students are solving problems in companies already during studies



"Will our measuring system be able to measure the cooling system in Mercator?" was a question posed by the students of the Faculty of Electrical Engineering of the University of Ljubljana

Sonja Šmuc, Executive Director, Managers' Association

Anisa Faganelj, manager of the *Golden Thread (Zlata nit)* project and editor of the *Include.All (Vključi.vse)* publication for equal opportunities in management

Engagement Does not Just Happen



Anisa Faganelj

What is the main task of the human resources department in a company? The first things that come to mind are the development of staff and competences, encouragement and engagement. However, this is not all. The role of the human resources department is strongly linked to the goals set by the company. The human resources department can be a partner in innovations and assist in achieving good cooperation among employees.

According to researchers, no less than 60-75% of corporate strategies fail to materialise as planned. Two factors play a major role in inefficient strategy implementation: a lack of horizontal co-ordination and cooperation between units of the company (lack of integration within the organisation) and too narrow a definition of success resulting in too little agility, as was found in a recent study by Donald Sull et al. from the MIT Sloan School of Management, published in the HBR magazine in March 2015.

It was interesting to find that only 59% of the managers participating in

the survey said that they could rely on their colleagues in other departments for execution. The same is true of trust in outsourcing partners (56%). Amazing, isn't it? A lack of internal cooperation and excessive reliance on key performance indicators (KPI), instead of the proactive pursuit of opportunities (within the strategic guidelines), reduces the efficiency of strategy execution in organisations. Instead of taking responsive action and constantly adapting to opportunities and risks, organisations are in the grip of inertia and thus less competitive. One could say that they lack entrepreneurial spirit. The effect? Only 60-75% of strategies become a reality.

The task of HR: support for personalisation and cooperation

Considering the findings, the guidelines given by Bernhard Krushe, a lecturer at the Golden Thread conference in March 2015, should be taken very seriously: the role of HR is to support two key processes in an organisation: personalisation and cooperation. Personalisation is required by customers and employees alike: the emphasis on (my) uniqueness and the expectation of being treated accordingly and acknowledging that I am special is growing. As studies have shown, the ability to cooperate is just as important for precisely this reason. How do you manage two counteracting processes, coupled with the desire for standardisation to improve efficiency? The solution lies in technology – another area of change, as Dr. Krushe noted.

It is these challenges that shape the role of a contemporary HR manager. In addition, awareness that the business efficiency of Slovenian companies is pitifully low. Our income derives from the capital invested to generate it. The value added per employee is 39,000 euros; it should be triple that if we want to generate prosperity. Profit is the same story: Slovenian companies make a return on equity of 0.5%; however, the aim is to earn at least five euro for each 100 euro invested, on average – ROE

should therefore increase tenfold in a couple of years.

The Managers' Association has been regularly and systematically raising subjects concerning leadership, staff development and connections to the HR function. The 2014 Managers' Congress was particularly focused on the topic of engagement, and an e-book on the subject accompanied it. We have been involved in the Golden Thread project measuring relations between organisations and their employees and have co-created it since its inception. It provides answers on how to improve productivity while having better interpersonal relations.

All the above was properly attained due to our dedication to good results, and because we believe that success comes from good work and sound relationships. Professional and ethical management linking into a community of engaged people who are not afraid to reach for the stars and compete in international business markets will create prosperity for society and realise the ambition of the Commitment for a Successful Slovenia 15/2020 to become one of the European countries with the highest standard of living. Is this not a goal worth striving for?



Sonja Šmuc

Leadership through Coaching



Stop being managers, become ... coaches

There is a never-ending search for replies to the dilemmas of managers and management. Some amazing information came from a poll by Gallup (2014) showing that only 13% of employees in 144 countries of the developed world are truly engaged. Managers and their style of leadership and their treatment of employees have a decisive 70% effect on the engagement of employees. A telling piece of information provided by the same renowned polling company flashes a red warning light, in that as many as 82% of managers lack the five key skills needed to handle employees. It would seem that the models and practices of treatment of employees have been stuck in the 19th century and that there has (so far) been no breakthrough thinking to replace the fundamental elements set out by Frederick Taylor, the founder of scientific management. More than two centuries have passed, much research money has been spent (US dollars in particular), much ink spilled and many words typed on computer keyboards, yet the enigma of "good" management has yet to be resolved. Could a part of the answer lie in the transformation of managers into coaches?

Answer: the transformation of managers into coaches

Many believe the answer is right in front of us: stop being managers, become ... coaches! This is confirmed by global business trends (findings of prestigious business schools such as Harvard and the London Business School, conveying the message that coaches are what is now needed rather than a leadership style of ordering and directing) and, to a large extent, a recent survey of Slovenian companies. Their problematic organisational culture is largely the result of an anachronistic style of leadership and the treatment of employees, and this is where coaching skills of managers and their ability to influence their co-workers stand out in terms of efficiency and the ability to influence.

The study showed that managers using more encouraging approaches mostly have a constructive effect on the behaviour of others, while managers using more restrictive approaches usually receive a defensive response. Foremost, the assumption has been largely confirmed that classic managerial approaches to employees are failing and that a shift towards coaching is needed as the core mission of managers is the development of employees and the management of their job performance (this is not rocket science, said Tom Peters, a management legend, in the recent interview for McKinsey Quarterly, and he "had no more patience for managers who did not grasp or apply it").

*"There is but one solution. Become coaches and stop being managers. It requires much more than just a declaration and changed words or titles. Initially, the challenge seems similar to bungee jumping."
(Natan Jamail)*

When asked, most managers will agree that they see themselves in the role of a coach because, as J. Zenger

and J. Foleman say in their interesting study, they find coaching only a "mirror image of management, only the shadow of management on a sunny day." The reality is of course very different because some managers are unable to escape the grip of a leadership style of direct guidance and control. They cannot overcome the need to micro-manage, breathe down the neck and tightly control.

What are the biggest differences between a manager and a coach?

1. A manager gives **advice**, a coach assists in your own ... **revelation**.
2. A manager **guides**, a coach establishes **cooperation**.
3. A manager acts as an **expert**, a coach is an equal partner!
4. **70% of the learning and development of employees comes from the work itself and not from formal training.**
5. The key: listen more and better, ask more than talk, enable development partnerships, build responsibility, focus on positive moves forward ... in brief, **coaching**.

In conclusion

The quest for the holy grail in the treatment of employees is far from over. The idea that a few drops from the "fashionable chalice" called engagement would suffice to eliminate the current organisational headaches is naive and gullible and is certainly no more than ... holy simplicity. The current fashion of being captivated and fascinated by employee engagement is a misstep in the search for a way out of the crisis. We are dealing with the consequences (low level of engagement) and miss the underlying reasons (organisational culture and the related transformation of leadership style – Management by Coaching (MBC)). A single variable, such as the engagement index, is far from enough. The true path is harder, slower and above all more demanding, because it requires careful systemic examination of organisational culture in order to identify, activate and consolidate the constructive behaviour of employees, thus enabling the right kind of engagement and optimising job and business performance. The good news is that a verified and useful methodology that can integrate the behaviour of individuals, managers and organisations on the same platform is available. All that is needed is to use it.

Katja Jeraj, Head of the Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Their Employees programme

The Strategic Role of Human Resources Management

The development of one's career is primarily one's own responsibility. However, as employees are those who give the company its competitive edge and represent its value, the company should also get involved in the development of individuals. The knowledge, skills and competences of employees should match the job requirements and corporate strategy as closely as possible. The more competences are aligned with job requirements and corporate needs, the better the company can utilise the potential of its employees. Differences between the so-called learning organisations and others mostly lie in employee development. Employees have become a source of knowledge for the company, creating the vision and constituting its culture and values.

Through the Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Their Employees programme, the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund has offered comprehensive HR support for companies. Only after the fundamental personnel processes are put in order can the company purposefully engage with its employees and systematically invest in their development. Project activities in companies have revealed the importance for management of the role of the human resources department and its intent to become a strategic partner. Companies that offer personal and career development to their employees unlock a field of employee satisfaction that brings advantages: employees have greater motivation because they have set

personal and professional goals, and better market performance should follow. The programme promotes work related to communication in the company. Experience has shown that poor communication can be a major cause of poor performance. Effective and – even more importantly – open communication can achieve shifts in relations and business conduct for a company.

The evaluation of the Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Their Employees programme conducted by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in 2013 and 2014 has shown that human resources measures taken by companies have both economic and non-economic effects. As many as 74% of the surveyed companies reported a positive effect on job performance, almost 60% said that the programme had a positive effect on competitiveness and only 7% of those surveyed noticed no economic effect. The most notable non-economic effects were increased company loyalty, employee satisfaction and better relations between employees.

Future challenges

Rapid changes in the economic environment should be accompanied by a shift in the thinking of corporate leaders and managers. It all begins with a "motivational" leader who understands the role of the human resources department in the company. Human resources departments that are restricted to administrative and operational tasks are a thing of the past; the focus is increasingly

on their strategic role. An increasing number of people from the so-called generation Y are participating in the labour market, and they stand out for their independence, individualism, openness to new challenges and efficiency. A challenge awaiting Slovenian companies is to open up opportunities to increasingly demanding employees, offer development options and set the right challenges as the only way to utilise their potential. Only an employee with a sense of opportunity to develop their potential can display sound job performance and be linked to the corporate vision.

According to Gallup (www.Gallup.com, 2012), top companies have no less than 67% engaged employees, while Slovenian companies only have 15% on average. This shows how much work lies ahead in Slovenia. We believe that the Fund's programmes, notably the Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Their Employees programme, have made the first step towards companies and towards a shift in thinking about the value of employees to companies.

We would like to conclude by wishing you engaged employees and plenty of success in their development.



The conference Results and Opportunities of the Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Their Employees Programme

Excellence Through Employee Development

Working with people – employees – has turned out to be a step in the right direction in the search for the magical formula for entering the path of success, competitiveness and development.

Experience has shown that changes are taking place in Slovenian companies in employee development: awareness of employee value is changing and new approaches, ideas and innovations are forming. Some companies used to merely nod at suggestions regarding the importance of these challenges, but now, assisted by the Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Their Employees programme, they are taking action.



The presentation has two notable parts: the first concerns the Lifelong Career Guidance programme and its execution and the second a presentation of the experience and value added of the Lifelong Career Guidance programme from selected companies.

The Fund's programme has made two public calls for applications and given 370 Slovenian companies (121 micro, 132 small, 81 medium-sized and 36 large enterprises) the opportunity to develop and upgrade the comprehensive personnel process of employee development (the heads of the human resources departments and all employees). Individual activities have involved more than 18,000 employees. The companies decided which activity to carry out based on their needs and the needs of their employees. Employees were included in various profiling exercises, based on which personal and professional development plans (career plans) were developed. This was followed by inclusion in training related to personal and career development and the

Funding granted through the programme: EUR 5,580,000.00

Why should companies have lifelong career guidance?

- lays the foundations for planned work in the development of all employees
- enhances the development of skills in the company and of individuals
- improves the management culture and strengthens the human resources department
- gives all employees the chance to develop personal and professional development plans

attainment of "soft" skills related to positive communication, stress management, innovation at work, motivation and contemporary leadership. Companies mostly decided to set up basic personnel processes and upgrade them by developing a competence model as the basis for successful and targeted employee development.

The Fund cooperated with Slovenian companies through the programme in two ways: by giving grants through two calls for applications and by organising a series of expert workshops entitled "Excellence through employee development" intended mostly for employees of companies that were not selected for a grant. Twelve workshops discussing current topics such as management, communication, motivation and the introduction of changes in companies were organised in 2014 in Portorož, Ljubljana and Celje, and the seats were taken in few days. Nearly 300 heads and experts from human resources departments participated in workshops, mostly from companies not limited to the domestic market. The Fund's programme included the conference entitled Results and Opportunities of the Lifelong Career Guidance for Companies and Their Employees Programme, where employers, service providers, representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities and representatives of other relevant institutions presented their experiences and new proposals to improve the programme. We also participated in an international conference on the Effect project with a feature entitled

"The Alignment of Knowledge and Skills with the Needs of the Labour Market".

Opinion of a participant of the "Excellence through employee development" workshops:

"It was the first time in a looong time that I felt the "motherland" wished me well, that it was aware of the quality of its citizens and that it offered its best. I felt privileged and proud to have been part of a quality seminar featuring a sophisticated lunch and a friendly attitude of the organisers and lecturers. Such work energy could be achieved every day if only we were able to come together and distribute the money fairly. Thank you for listening to the needs of entrepreneurs and employees, for obtaining funding and allocating it fairly."

It begins with management

A trend has been observed in corporate management of putting good experts from a specific field in executive positions. This mostly causes problems, as management requires a different set of skills. The core of management skills is working with people, dealing with individuals and leading teams. HRM experts have found that management skills have to be attained and formed. Companies decided, as a part of their lifelong career guidance project, to conduct series of workshops on management and on personal and team coaching where managers are trained. How to do it? Bisnode, Zarja Kovis and Terme Snovik are systematic and use



Activities of the Lifelong Career Guidance programme strengthen team spirit in a company. Bisnode employees promote their company in business environments and elsewhere.

planning in the attainment of management skills and the development of employees.

Employees are ambassadors of the company and managers are their motivators

Bisnode is the leading provider of business information in the Slovenian business environment.

Vesna Mrzaič, Regional Human Resources Director, says that the company has always been aware of the importance of its people, who are ambassadors of the company. Trends from the analysis of employee engagement using the Bisnode

Engagement Survey (conducted since 2012) are a good indicator of whether employee development is heading in the right direction. Staff development is planned annually based on current analyses. Managers have to develop new skills as a result of their expansion to southern markets. "We knew at the time of the call for applications related to lifelong career guidance that the competence model of the company would need to be revised and that we would have to design development plans for each employee (Bisnode Development Plan) as well as new training subjects. The concept of the Lifelong Career Guidance programme fully coincided with our plans,

and we therefore applied and won a grant, which helped us carry them all out," explained Mrzaič. A series of workshops for managers that best suited the company's development needs was developed.

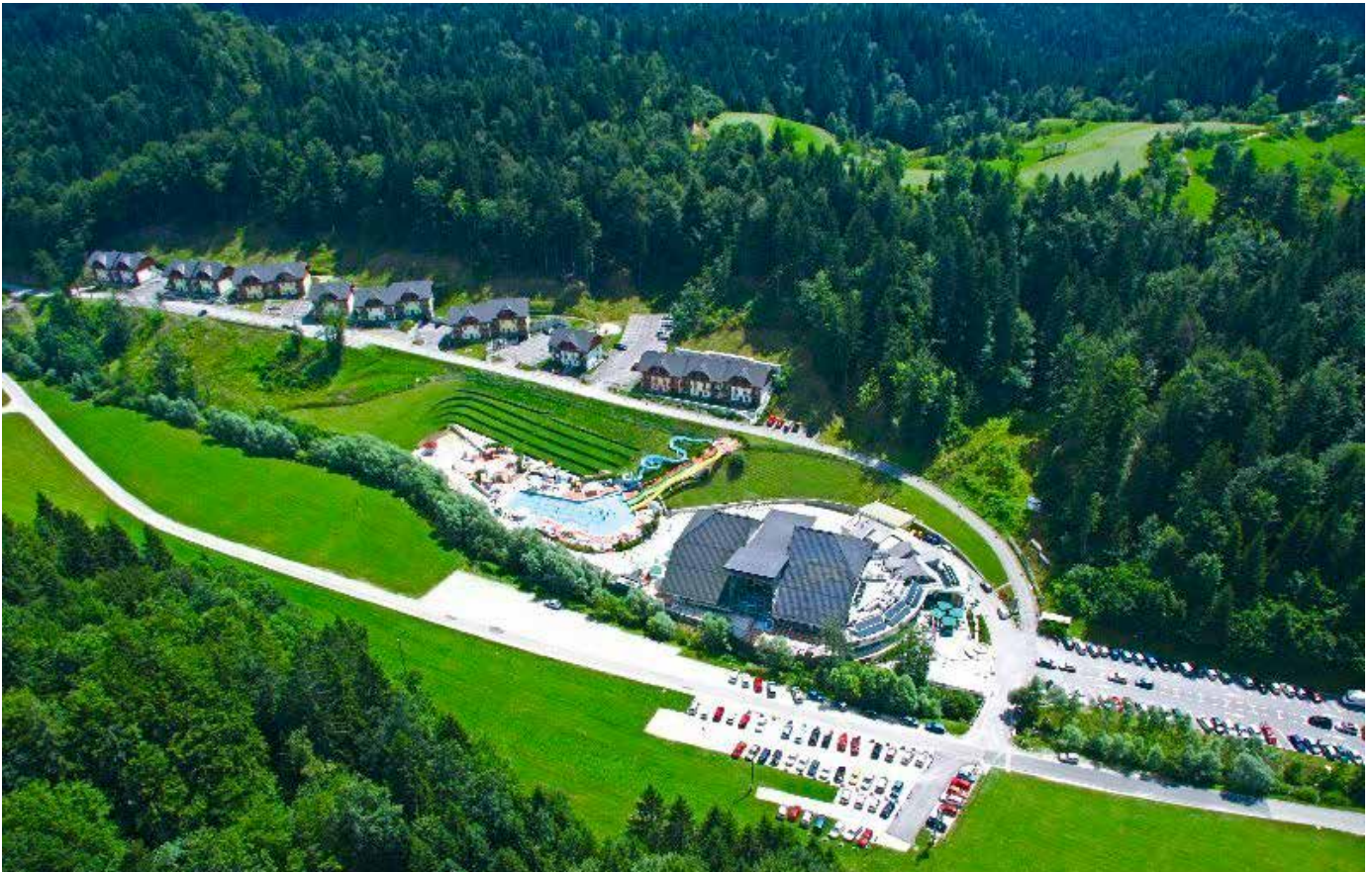
Maja Fesel Kamenik, Managing Director at HRM, d.o.o., a provider participating in the lifelong career guidance of the company, said that the development of training had been comprehensive: "Training has been linked to other personnel processes, such as assessments of the actual competence of each manager by their co-workers. It is a method of anonymous feedback on specific aspects of management. We cooperated with Bisnode in the development of a questionnaire (Bisnode 360° Feedback Evaluation) adapted to the organisational culture, values and strategy of the company. This was followed by an assessment, feedback and the preparation of development plans for each employee (Bisnode Development Plan). An analysis of individual results has provided us with a clear picture of the weakly developed areas and skills, and the plan was adjusted, taking into account the company's strategic plans. It should be noted that the results could not have been as good if the company's human resources department had not taken an active and strategic approach."

Mrs. Mrzaič, the driving force behind the projects, is convinced that the topics have hit the nail on the head:

"It happens all too often that highly successful specialists are promoted to



Employees have designed the company logo.



Terme Snovik is transferring its green operations to its employees.

become managers and suddenly find themselves in a new and unfamiliar role. They are often wondering whether to be friends/colleagues or bosses to their subordinates. To avoid these situations, we discuss the new role with the manager, tell them what is expected and provide support in the development of management skills, most notably emotional intelligence, the ability to communicate, organisational skills, the ability to provide positive or negative feedback and the ability to see the big picture. All topics have so far been very well received."

Tina Ahtik, head of sales by phone, was enthusiastic about the workshop: "I attended a time management workshop. I was delighted with the experience – relaxed atmosphere, expert yet friendly lecturer and open discussion of the challenges we all face. The thing I liked best was receiving some simple and practical advice on how to change/improve certain patterns, behaviours and reactions. I have already introduced some changes in my daily schedule but I am of course aware that real change will take much practice."

"We are 100% for renewable energy in companies and amongst ourselves ..."

Terme Snovik and Zarja Kojis have undertaken to redesign the management of processes and motivation of employees in an inspired way. The two corporate visions seem different at first glance but both are fundamentally oriented towards nature and the use of renewable sources to the benefit of their customers. Zarja Kojis aims to achieve business excellence through energy efficiency and renewable energy and Terme Snovik focuses on friendliness to visitors, the environment and employees. Ivan Hribar, CEO of both companies, wants to lead them to a path of sustainable tourism development. They would like to transfer the vision of natural, green and people friendly business to the field of employee development and management.

"Successful corporate growth and development requires good executives, who must be developed in a different way considering the different nature of each of the two companies. The organisational form of management of Zarja Kojis has been designed on a project basis while at Terme Snovik, where guests come first, it has been developed in a classic manner. Zarja Kojis is a company with many years of tradition while Terme Snovik

is a developing company, where special attention must be paid to the organisation and management of the company because the number of employees has risen from one to more than thirty," said Pavla Tomec who is in charge of human resources development at the two companies. Knowing employees and their abilities, talents, knowledge and skills certainly plays an important role in employee management. The Lifelong Career Guidance project has enabled them to achieve that: "Profiling and testing were used to get to know our employees better or rather said it has given us confirmation of where their hidden potential lies and how to lead them more efficiently in the performance of daily tasks and

4 LAWS OF SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT

- Demand more from yourself than anyone else does
- Demand more from co-workers than they themselves do
- Get to know your co-workers and their strengths
- Protect co-workers from fear

development. The process has confirmed the traits and abilities that were thought to be there but could never be correctly identified," said Mr. Hribar, CEO. They have embarked on the path of shaping executives, notably in those fields where areas for improvement have been noticed, aided by the providers Mastermind Akademija (Zema) and Planinc. Aleksander Šinigoj, PhD, a provider from Mastermind Akademija in both companies, is convinced that the management process is performed in steps. In step one, the manager needs a system of inspiration to "inspire their co-workers and themselves, which will lead to the desired results". Step two is used to transfer inspiration to co-workers. Step three (the most important one) is, in the opinion of Šinigoj, PhD, taking 100% responsibility for the results of one's team, and step four is the manager's honesty and authenticity. The manager thus creates an inspirational environment. This "does not mean that we are always positive, smiling, cheerful and inspired; it means making an effort to take tiny steps on the path to the goal".

Development for all employees

The Lifelong Career Guidance programme and its activities give an opportunity to human resources departments or company executives to develop plans for employee development aligned with corporate vision. The heads of human resources departments and executives often report that these activities have helped them find employee potentials that will be developed and that suit the company's needs and values. Systematic and organised work with employees has been used to uncover the true depths of work with people and the true needs of the company.

New knowledge contributing to the development of employees

The process of employee development at Niro Steel, a Jesenice-based company, is embedded in the corporate development strategy and the

strategy of penetrating the market, which have been undertaken in a comprehensive manner. The company manufactures specific high value products made from stainless sheet metal and intended as elements for installation in the pharmaceutical chemical and food industries in nuclear power plants and on ships. Strong competition from China and India has forced them to focus on products with high value added.



Cooperation and communication training in group coaching.

As Chief Executive Ksenja Brelih Klincov said, they have been working for two decades on upgrades to their knowledge and needs in terms of technology by providing internal and external training. Investments in employees (and their knowledge and various competences) have become more intensive during the global economic crisis. As she said, during the crisis in 2009 and 2010, they tried not to fire people, because employees are a precious asset and they were aware of their responsibility for the livelihood of their families. The crisis prompted the company to initiate training. They decided to cooperate with IZZA, because their lecturers were willing to adapt to their technical needs and additionally decided to provide training on the

subject of soft skills (participation in streamlining work processes and job efficiency, interpersonal communication and the resolution of conflicts).

"When the training was introduced, employees opened up more, presented their problems, proposed improvements and found that their opinion mattered. Proposals and improvements are examined and introduced where possible. It was a big step forward in all areas, technical and in interpersonal cooperation and progress."

They participated in the Lifelong Career Guidance programme because of the company's orientation towards employee development. They first wanted to set up the fundamental personnel process but then redirected all the funds to training related to career guidance and soft skills. Employees obtained more self-confidence, self-respect and respect for others and interpersonal relations have improved.



Technical part of the 5S system implementation – arranged work environment at the company



Employees are led by the philosophy of long-term cooperation.

The initiative to take on a lifelong career guidance project actually came from outside the company – some customers wanted it to introduce the 5S system – arranged work post – where training was used to prepare employees for changes (advantages of the system, user and company). The technical part of the system was supplied through company funds outside the Lifelong Career Guidance project. Another focus on employees followed – group coaching with all employees.

"The experience that we are all the same when we act as a team and that every opinion and proposal matters, that every person contributes to the attainment of common goals and the creation of a better work atmosphere, has been excellent and decisive. The training session was relaxed, dynamic and different. In cooperation with Develor,

individual guidance was later organised for all employees where each identified a personal profile, advantages, any areas for improvement and guidelines on how to adapt to particular parties during discussion and situations and how to place their character in the team and contribute to personal and social progress. As the employer, I have noticed that the work is faster and more open (employees want to give their opinion and propose improvements), employees are more focused on company objectives, are better informed of company's workings, assist and advise each other and change their attitude towards their work and co-workers," said Breljih Klinc.

All employees write the story of development

Vivapen is a family business that grew out of the small shop of Jože Melanšek. They produce tools for the injection of technological products from plastic and automation of technological processes.



The chief executive and the employees write the story of development.

Employees have made personal commitments that are introduced in the daily work schedule:

- "I will offer and ask for assistance."
- "I will offer even more assistance to my colleagues to obtain knowledge as quickly as possible."
- "Educational, we were shown that a lot can be achieved where there is will and interest."

"The company decided nearly ten years ago to focus on what we know: developing technology and products and being innovative," said Petra Melanšek, chief executive. Today, they produce inks, ink cartridges, pens, roller pens and colour markers and are very proud of the ink feeding system developed in-house. "Vivapen is proud of its entire team of 86 people. Nearly 99% of the total revenue is generated on the global market, where the company has more than 70 customers in 35 countries and has become a supplier and development partner of customers such as: Pelikan/Herlitz, Online, Lamy, Staedtler, Sheaffer Pen/Cross, Faber-Castell and others. Ideas and innovations are not just wishes but a way of life, work and thinking for all employees. Simply having a common goal for all employees enables us to go forward successfully and to follow the corporate vision and strategy," said the chief executive. Training has been a constant at the company. Not only formal and expert training but also training in soft skills, notably team development, on which truly systematic work only began after inclusion in the Lifelong Career Guidance project.

They are led by the philosophy of long-term cooperation and the thought that their common employer is satisfied customers. "Business is a team sport. Efforts are made to develop long-term cooperation in all areas, be it with co-workers, customers, suppliers or partners. It is said that a chain is as strong as its weakest link, and it is therefore important to assist each other and cooperate. The company has multiple departments, and the work is carried out from the inception of ideas to final products, and it would therefore be extremely difficult to create an efficient process without cooperation between the departments and employees. The workshops have certainly brought progress by improving communication and raising awareness of the importance of a job well done and of taking of decisions and responsibility. Meetings and project work are now more systematic, (macro and micro) planning of the entire production has been set up and the overview of the work and skills of employees has been improved. However, the route is far from finished and even after the grant from the call for applications was spent, training activities have continued because it is an investment in the future," said the chief executive.

Specific goals count in training. Rudi Arčan, head of production, set a goal after the training, together with the department heads, to prepare products for customers in the first half of the week (Monday and Tuesday) and not in the



The fruit of joint work at the workshops – it will be repeated in the work process.

second half, because this provides much better effects.

After the workshops, employees developed the following guidelines:

What you do not know, we will teach you.

If you cannot, we will help you. If you will not, we do not need you

The Lifelong Career Guidance project involved all employees and, as Suzana Krasniči, in charge of project execution at the company, found, most of them took training well:

"All the training sessions carried out within the lifelong career guidance project have already introduced changes in attitudes and relations between co-workers and visible results in the taking of responsibility; employees try to perform their work in line with what is expected of them and in accordance with the contract they have made with the company. The company has decided to continue to provide training outside the Lifelong Career Guidance project, as the results were positive."

A look ahead

The good response to the programme has satisfied its users, providers and designers. As it turned out, we have "stumbled on" the issue of the development of the hidden potential of employees. New challenges have arisen and the following steps will be taken:

applying the acquired knowledge to achieve changes in companies, guiding employees towards engagement in practice and how to persist in changed thinking, orienting towards cooperation (between employees, in management and between experts and government institutions). Such cooperation can develop a vision for the future.



Branko Žunec, Chief Executive of BMC International

Replace Leading by Example with Leading to Example



The current business situation forces companies to try to achieve the maximum possible employee motivation and engagement in the work they perform.

How can you achieve complete engagement in employees and keep motivation high? The experience of excellent companies shows that it can be done mostly through constant and development-oriented training. Training provided by external providers and managers, who increasingly play the role of coaches and motivators in companies.

I focused below on **three excellent management principles** that increase the engagement of employees and thus lead to excellent results.

Principle no. 1:

We all want to feel useful.

Each person has their own value and dignity. There is so much talk of money and wealth in contemporary society that

people have begun to think that their value is proportionate to the income they make. This is not true.

Why do some constantly succeed even if they make mistakes as they go along? Because they are aware that their value – regardless of what happens in their life – is not diminished. It remains the same, and it depends on them whether they will increase it further. This is why many successful people and groups (business ones as well as those from many other fields) claim that the biggest mistakes and failures have been the best lessons, enabling them to grow and succeed (even more).

Excellent managers know that a co-worker who has made an (unintentional) mistake needs an opportunity to regain a sense of self-worth (instead of being reprimanded, punished or fired). Excellent managers thus take mistakes and turn them into stronger employee engagement.

Excellent managers are aware that an effective commendation is immediate, brief and, above all, honest. It ends something like this: "I believe there will be more opportunities for me to commend you. How many depends on you alone."

Principle no. 2:

We all want to progress in life.

Such was the case when we took our first steps, said our first words and went to school for the first time. People need progress in their lives. Be it personal or professional.

The feeling of making progress enhances the feeling of one's own value. Excellent managers are aware of this and therefore seek constant progress rather than perfection. Excellent managers set demanding goals and plans – so that it takes extra effort from employees, resulting in progress in work and life.

Excellent managers plan time for the development of employees and include it in meetings, personal discussions and development interviews, which are conducted several times a year if necessary.

Excellent managers know that their efforts and **care for the constant progress of employees** are their biggest mission and a confirmation of their value.

Principle no. 3:

Excellent management is leading to example.

Leading by example is one of the most popular concepts of all – but therein lies one of the biggest traps for managers. You can only set an excellent example if you are excellent as an employee, not as a manager. You are not setting a management example for your employees, are you? You are setting an example of how to perform an excellent job, correct? If this is true, how then can an excellent manager truly lead by example?

What excellent managers do is have a **clear picture of the working of the entire team and each member of it at the level of an example.**

Excellent managers first look where employees should be taken to set a good example and then develop a strategy of getting them there.

Then they persist until they get their employees to the desired point. Employee mistakes do not stop them but encourage them to prove that they are right. Success does not blind them but gives them the drive to take on new challenges and goals to help employees constantly grow, develop and enhance their personal value.

It is recommended for everyone to include the following training on a **shift in thinking** in any future programme for training new managers:

I used to set an excellent example as a co-worker, but now my mission as a leader is to lead employees to be such an example that they themselves will first feel proud, followed by me and finally by the company, which will reap specific benefits from it.

Andrej Božič, Steklarna Hrastnik and BB Consulting

Nothing Happens by Itself



All companies, including successful ones, must change constantly. Each change begins with a decision to undertake one and the ambition of what it will achieve. Persistence, courage and notably respect for all stakeholders come next. It is important that the change and its advantages are clearly presented to all stakeholders – employees, owners, local community, customers and suppliers. The executive team of Steklarna Hrastnik has jointly decided to adopt a new, daring and ambitious vision of long-term growth based on respect and innovations, and readiness to persist when faced with challenges and notably celebrate all successes along the way.

It is important to know the company's activity well and apply the tool kit of knowledge and skills by which the management combs through and seeks out the information necessary to develop a new business model. According to the BB model of corporate transformation, the stage is called "sobering up" because the actual situation is examined and an acknowledgement is made of where mistakes are made and losses generated and what is done well. Only once the company is ready to face reality can it set new and ambitious goals and develop a new mission and vision.

The management believing that people are the biggest asset and then living it every step of the way plays the crucial

role. Otherwise, it will operate according to the old principle of management that assumes that everyone responds in the same way and that pressuring employees to perform will generate the same response from everyone. This style of management has no chance of long-term survival, because it offers no opportunity for creativity and innovation, which will be needed if the company is to retain its long-term viability. People are not robots, and each has a different response to pressure and receives challenges differently. Understanding this is

crucial for management and the engagement of people in the joint realisation of a company's vision and mission.

Danah Zohar (who developed the concept of spiritual intelligence and wrote the book *Duhovni kapital* (Spiritual Capital)) is convinced that each organisation needs at least 75% of employees to identify with the mission set out by the management in order to realise it in the long term. When the management believes that people are the biggest asset and driver of development, **respect for each individual in the company** develops. This means that the management and employees build mutual trust and seek out common values through dialogue. It also means that the introduction of business changes and business growth does not seek **short cuts, short-term solutions in the form of constant cost cutting and cheaper labour but long-term solutions considering the interests of the people.**

This means that plenty of time, energy and investments must be dedicated to human potential, investments in training, constant dialogue on values and building trust, both within and outside the company. Investments must be made in people if we want values, respect, vision, trust, self-confidence and boldness expressed as enhanced creativity, ambition, innovation, engagement, dedication and finally results. In the case of Steklarna Hrastnik, years and millions invested in people have yielded results in the form of profit growth from **five million euros in loss in 2009 to 4.4 million euros in profit in 2014**

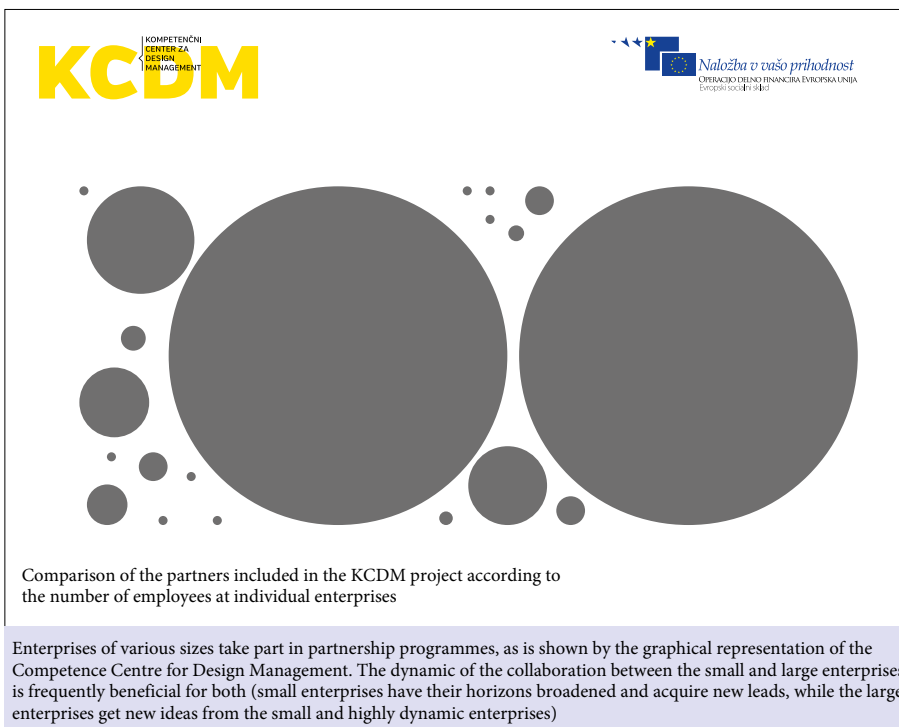
I can confirm, based on more than 30 years of experience, a number of transformations undertaken and my own BB model of company transformation: that nothing happens by itself – change is driven by people. People who feel respected trust their managers, believe in the corporate mission and live the shared values of the company.



Employees make constant small useful proposals for improvement; here awards are presented to the most active ones.

Aleš Vidmar

European Funds Connecting Slovenian Companies



- lasting results (training programmes, qualified mentors, experience);
- result monitoring.

Various industries were provided with support: design management, sustainable construction, waste management, paper production, wood processing industry, logistics, security, trade, glassmaking industry, computer industry, telecommunications, tool-making, accounting and robotics.

Only companies and social partners participated in this measure as partners. No industries, topics, prices or provider selections were determined in advance. The companies were free to decide on the use of the funds. We witnessed an experiment: initiatives came from enterprises, project offices and individuals who thus gained important experience in human resources development; they then searched for appropriate content and finally learned the results.

"There is certainly no lack of challenges for the wood processing industry. Over the course of the last decade, the industry had to adapt to an environment of small production series; it is facing stiff competition from the east and is fighting to break through to new markets. Partner companies have used the funds received within the scope of the project to implement useful training and have thus developed priority employee competences that were deemed necessary. They favoured training that yielded immediate results: language training and the development of sales skills and technological expertise as well as training in the area of lean organisation. When assessing the effects, I find as

At the start of the 21st century, Slovenia was marked by the accession to the EU, adoption of the euro, economic growth and finally the crisis that put into question the country's economic model; this is still testing the vitality of Slovenian industries and enterprises. Competing with low prices, products with low value added and countries that can more easily ensure their own competitiveness through economies of scale, low labour costs and adjustment of the value of the national currency is no longer possible for us. The majority of western competitors have an economic advantage that must be overcome by Slovenia through higher efficiency, innovation, productivity and improved sales. All of these performance indicators are tied to people, work organisation and the management of people, knowledge and competences.

In the 2010–2015 period, there were **19 industry competence centres** for the development of human resources

operating in Slovenia. They responded to the global challenges of the 21st century by developing the competences of employees at more than 300 companies. They operated for 30 months on average and received EUR 400,000.00 in co-financing. They trained more than 13,500 people and recorded nearly 40,000 enrolments; enrolments could exceed 45,000 by the end of the implementation of the 2nd generation projects (31 August 2015).

The **main objectives of the competence centre** (hereinafter: CoC) projects:

- strategic HR development, increased level of employee and manager qualifications;
- the collaboration of enterprises, circulation of knowledge and synergies;
- the definition and implementation of user training;
- excellent experience for the participants, training becoming the norm;

the project manager that the shift in employee awareness of the need for permanent training to be especially important. If at the start of the project many of the companies involved viewed training as an additional and unnecessary activity, this aversion gradually began to disappear and the number of sceptics began to decline. The majority of participants now express their satisfaction with the training. The mentioned shift can be assessed as an important positive impact on the raising of the organisational culture at the KOCles (competence centre for the wood processing industry) partner companies."
Marko Mokorel, head of the KOCles project office.

"How are competitors able to collaborate with one another?"

As part of an international, export-oriented economy, Slovenian companies have buyers and competitors thousands of miles away (Germany, China, South Korea, Poland, Turkey, etc). For a long time now, competition has not been taking place only between Slovenian companies. Once we accept this fact, even old "arch enemies" can come together and speak openly about the opportunities and threats that the others have perhaps missed or failed to take advantage of. Inter-industry ties are at the core of the project, as it gives a new impetus to many practices and provides motivation to many, especially small-size enterprises, which gain experience, leads, new knowledge, etc. What is surprising is that larger companies also learn from the small ones (agility, multitasking and adaptability) Trust thus develops within an industry and the training improves the qualifications and competitiveness of the industry.

"We are highly satisfied with the implementation of the Competence Centre for Computer Science and IT Activities (hereinafter: KOC RIS) project. Under strained economic conditions, the project has allowed us to retain a high level of investment into the education and training of our employees. The most important aspect of the project that we would like to highlight is the establishment of ties within the industry as part of the project. Even though companies have known one another for the most part, the project served to accelerate mutual exchange of knowledge and experience, which is certain to positively affect the competitiveness of the entire industry in Slovenia."

Gregor Rebolj, Klika

"The project sparked a wave at the project partner companies that

accelerated the development of knowledge and competences. Enterprises were able to recognise the profiles that are crucial for their business; they carried out benchmarking of the required and existing knowledge and approached the development of employee competences in a more systematic manner. Additional funds have enabled access to the highest quality sources of new knowledge. The effects have convinced the management that it is necessary to budget for such a volume of training funds also in the future."
Živa Gorup Reichmann, project manager, Comtrade

Through the assistance of the European Social Fund and the ministry responsible for labour, companies operating within an individual industry have been established. They got the opportunity to determine the key positions of employment and the desired competences as well as to train employees depending on the requirements and the highlighted deficits. These are displayed by the competence model, which serves as the basis for the formulation of a training plan. The project office is tasked with the selection of training courses as well as bringing together and encouraging employers to send their employees to training courses.

Under the two calls for applications, we offered EUR 7,750,000.00 worth of funds. The interest was far greater than the funds available: out of the 68 applications for the first call for applications, 7 were selected. 52 partnerships applied under the second call for applications in 2012, whereby these involved 737 employers and more than 49,500 employees or as much as 6% of the active working population in Slovenia. The limited funds meant that less than a quarter of these were selected.

Following the initial period, where the main aim was to build trust, the training and other activities are gradually increasing. In general, every COC (competence centre) has a few companies that tackle training immediately and on a grand scale, thus achieving more. Towards the end of the project, there is a shift in thinking and thus a high level of willingness and preparedness on the part of the vast majority of the participants to continue the collaboration. During the second call for applications, the Fund bolstered the support and organised quarterly meetings addressing both administrative-financial and substantive issues.



The aim of the training is to raise the quality of work AND achieve companies' business objectives AS WELL AS employee satisfaction, especially if employees are responsible for product quality, such as the employee from Steklarna Hrastnik featured in the photograph.

Training = investment

Training courses are all too frequently seen as an expense, especially in times of crises and restructuring. KoC (competence centre) projects represent an important investment and incentive for employers to see training as a strategic tool. Steklarna Hrastnik has shown that training can be measured in the same manner as an investment that yields returns. The transfer of good practices was made possible by the Fund by organising the transfer of experience and knowledge of the company's General Manager, Andrej Božič, and a workshop provided by Danijela Brečko that dealt with the topic of measurement of the effects of training.

Steklarna Hrastnik, Competence Centre for HR Development in the Glass Industry: "Every euro invested has yielded a tenfold return."

We introduced a system of employee promotion (increase in wages and salaries) that is based on competences. The result has been a strongly increased interest in employee education (education has become a value for the employees). We have significantly shortened onboarding procedures, created training programmes for all positions of employment, trained mentors and introduced mentorship bonuses.

Example: Training of mechanical engineers, locksmiths, replacement teams
Investment: 132 persons with the total duration of training of 4,698 hours
Result:

- Increase in Vitrum programme production performance from 73% to 82%, and from 65% to 73% of the Special programme
- Increase in the performance of replacements from 48.85% in 2011 to 69.19% in 2013
- Reduction in the rate of technical stoppages from 2.67% in 2011 to 0.85% in 2013

Reduction in overtime work from 30,148 hours in 2011 to 16,131 hours in 2013
 Reduction in decorative element replacement times from 4 hours to 2 hours and 20 minutes
 Increase in production from 41,007 tons in 2010 to 44,889 tons in 2013

The average attendance fee for the second generation training courses was EUR 140. This amount includes the cost of project implementation (engagement of industry experts; a total of 24 positions of employment, 12 competence models produced, information and dissemination activities and costs of services and equipment).

The private sector possesses the knowledge and companies are prepared to share it!

Participants and lecturers from partner companies took part in the internal training courses. These were provided in the form of practical workshops in the field, opinion exchanges, internal conferences, presentations of the innovations in the industry and participation at international conferences. The benefits of internal training are reflected mainly in the bolstering of knowledge, cost savings, awareness of the need for the transfer and preservation of knowledge within the industry, networking and the establishment of ties between the companies in the industry as well as the strengthening of loyalty to the company or the recognition of employees who "can". The share of internal training courses over the course of the second generation of courses implemented reached a high 30%.

The Competence Centre for HR Development in the Engineering Profession for the Field of Sustainable Construction, which is managed by SGS Slovenia and DRI, have to date carried out 8 internal training courses with 432 participants. These served to report to the general public on the international excursions to construction sites and institutes as well as to report on conferences and training courses. They have contributed to the introduction of modern technologies in the broader environment (BIM – Building Information Modelling), which enables integrated planning of construction over the entire lifecycle as well as time and money savings. They have established a society for BIM

KOCPI

Kompetenčni center za razvoj kadrov v papirni industriji

Naložba v vašo prihodnost
OPERACIJO DELNO FINANCIRA EVROPSKA UNIJA
Evropski socialni sklad

Izobraževanje in sodelovanje za uspešno papirno industrijo

- Vzdrževanje in servis proizvodnih linij, strojev in naprav
- Papirnica
- Proizvajalec embalaze iz papirja, kartona, lesenke in valovitega kartona
- Proizvajalec papirnih izdelkov za gospodinjstvo
- Raziskave in razvoj

- Proizvajalec vrečk iz papirja
- Proizvajalec okrogle navite embalaze
- Proizvajalec papirne kofekcije
- Ročno izdelava papirja in papirnih izdelkov
- Svetovanje

Na zemljevidu so označena podjetja in partnerji Kompetenčnega centra za razvoj kadrov v papirni industriji.

Povezujemo!

The paper industry, employing around 4,000 people and attaining excellent performance results, was interconnected by the competence centre for the paper industry (hereinafter: KoCpi)

technology in the Republic of Slovenia. It is also thanks to the CoC's efforts that the BIM technology will be used for the planning of the Karavanke tunnel (tube 2).

Papermaking Academy and Its Lecturers
 The KOCPI (competence centre for the paper industry) unites 19

companies operating in the industry, the Pulp and Paper Institute (Inštitut za celulozo in papir) and the industry's association at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia. The COC project also provides specifically prepared training for several companies: papermaker, packaging-maker and hydraulics technician school (90 participants undergoing 76–183 pedagogical hours of training). The idea of a "Papermaking Academy" came about based on the experience and objectives. The academy would serve as the knowledge hub by connecting expertise from companies and institutions, thus ensuring a permanent and comprehensive offer of training programmes for the industry with a shortage of qualified human resources. The training has built the foundation for continued collaboration and has identified the holders of knowledge at companies and institutions, who were then included in the lecturer network. 14 future mentors from Slovenian paper mills attended the training at ABZ Steyrermühl:

"We learned that professional content is not the only important aspect of a lecture, but also the way we convey such content to the participants so that they can understand it as easily as possible." Dr. David Ravnjak, Papirnica Vevče

"Before this education course, I was somewhat sceptical about my decision to become a lecturer and mentor, but I am no longer in doubt." Janez Per, Količevo Karton.

An internal training course was implemented in Ormož with the EKO-PROFILI Competence Centre that took the form of a public conference



**RAVNANJE Z ODPADKI
V NAŠEM VSAKDANU –
iz prakse v prakso.**



entitled Waste Management In Our Daily Lives – From Practice Into Practice. Field experts from seven companies participated in the conference and highlighted the current issues in the industry. The Snaga Maribor company was the best at taking advantage of the project, as they carried out internal training to raise the level of qualifications of employees with a lower educational structure, increase loyalty to the company and environmental awareness and improve the quality of services. Our message to employees was that they are "the ambassadors of a clean environment".

Working with leaders pays off

Training provides for the strengthening of interpersonal relationships and loyalty to the company as well as improvement in the quality of services. Sooner rather than later, it is the managers' turn. And the sooner the better, because when the manager gets it, this leads to personal changes, changes in communication and relations as well as to important changes in companies, all of which can yield unforeseen positive results.

Company-level changes start at the top

"Based on a recommendation, the Seltron company somewhat apprehensively joined the Competence

Manager or trainer

The Competence Centre for HR Development in Trade has set up a network of 28 internal trainers for the area of trade consulting and buyer relations. Each trainer trained for up to 30 days within the scope of the "Manager as Trainer" programme. Coaching is integrated into the existing job descriptions, and consequently the manager's work tasks also involve the provision of internal workshops and training courses, which takes up 20% of the manager's work time. The essential knowledge and skills that are strengthened within the scope of the competence centre are comprised in the Tušica Standard. The standard is verified using the mystery buyer method, which yields feedback on the quality of the sales service. "At the internal workshop entitled Let's Enjoy Sales, participants are highly active, motivated and gain a lot of additional knowledge and experience that they are now already using in their work. They have accepted the workshops being conducted by me as their manager well – everyone was relaxed during the workshop, and the atmosphere was characterised by openness and honesty.

Centre for HR Development project. We were aware of the additional burden this would represent but felt the need to increase our level of competence mainly in the areas that are crucial for high operating performance but which do not represent our core expertise. The key challenge was how to instil in employees the internal desire to enhance their missing competences and meet the project requirements, and to round it off in commercial terms to create a greater impetus for the attainment of the company's objectives.

Over the course of a series of training courses, we also attended the Fund's workshop, where the General Manager of Steklarna Hrastnik glassworks, Mr. Božič, presented his experience and the results of the management of the glassworks. After the event, we carried out a set of workshops dealing with trust building, strengthening of relations and communication – all with the aim of involving all employees in the goings-on at the company, whereby the emphasis was on the managers. After the completion of the workshops, we formulated a five-year strategic plan that the key stakeholders and all employees helped create. These activities served to additionally strengthen the desire to supplement the competences of the employees, as they were able to see clearly what was expected of them in the future.



As the department manager, I have established closer ties with the employees and strengthened our interpersonal relationships." **Monika Kocet**, department manager and internal trainer in retail sales. Tušica is a quality standard. As a true trainer, she constantly roots for the employees, guides them and encourages them to always be the best they can be.



We train so that we can more easily satisfy the needs of the current generation without endangering the needs of the generations that will follow.

Armed with this new knowledge, we entered the second round of the project, where most of the education was carried out based on the initiatives set forth by the employees and with concrete undertakings on how the knowledge gained would be used in their work. Another breakthrough was made as the training participants began sharing their newly acquired knowledge with their co-workers in terms of concrete cases from their daily work.

Based on the initiative of our marketing associates, we attended a workshop of the German company BDT, which carried out a workshop within the scope of the COC dealing with a sustainable future in the area of brand building. The new findings have made such an impression on us that we are currently providing additional workshops for all of the essential personnel in the area of suitable Seltron brand positioning. The project is a strategic one and represents the pinnacle of the building of additional competences, which were made possible by the COC and which represent a pre-condition for our further growth mainly on foreign markets." **Marijan Hertiš, Seltron**

Even small-sized and extremely busy enterprises can take part in training

The inclusion of employees from smaller companies in training courses can be difficult as it can be more challenging to substitute for individuals at such companies, because there is no HR department, training is not an established practice, etc. Following the teething problems when "everyone was in the field, abroad, at the construction site, even in bankruptcy proceedings, etc.", the Competence Centre for Sustainable Construction and Environmental Technologies

- For a Sustainable Future, which is lead by the Gnezdo and Holicenter Angelika companies and which unites SMEs, has finally made it. Through the dedicated work of the project office and with the help of committed partners, they have managed to achieve high performance numbers on one of the smaller populations (no large companies in the partnership) and are systematically train employees in the areas of sustainable development, new developments and novelties in the profession, management, organisational and communication as well as sales skills. They adapt to the strenuous working hours and work abroad in different ways, including by providing training abroad, carrying out internal training courses, hosting foreign

master craftsmen who taught workers on the job, etc. The partners have found synergies and methods for improving products and services. They also conducted a public contest: "My Home - Our Future" and will be taking the participating students on a professional excursion as a reward.

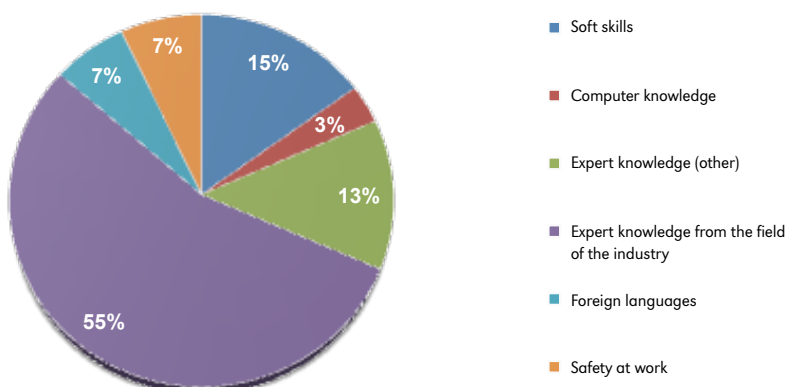
"The training objective can only be attained or exceeded if the management sees the potential of such training and provided the project office supports a soft but engaged method. Our strategy was to first set up and maintain a personal relationship with the partners' representatives (trust, encouragement, and sincere attitude) and make the management aware of the importance of training, the possibilities offered by synergies, etc. By including managers into high quality training courses in a considerate manner, we then

extended the building of awareness to other employ-ees. We continuously provided proactive support to the partners, whereby the basis was the understanding of their business/work processes, visions, strategies, challenges, etc." **Marjan Velej, MSc, project manager, CoC for a Sustainable Future.**

There is no shortage of examples, but we should highlight one more that is the result of several attempts at attracting micro and small-sized enterprises to training courses. The solution was to offer training that is tailored-made for a particular company. They carried out a few lectures at the school and the practical part at the company where employees could learn how to better organise their work in accordance with all of the standards and opportunities offered by modern technology and where a mobile phone is already enough.

"We have designed the **Great Knowledge for Small Warehouses** programme specifically for our competence centre in cooperation with the Maribor Vocational College of Traffic and Transport. We implemented the programme for the first time in autumn of 2014; i.e. for 10 persons from 4 companies. The programme was highly successful and garnered a lot of attention, which is why we decided to implement it within the scope of another competence centre (KOC EKO - profili) which implemented it at the beginning of 2015. The school will include this programme as one of its regular educational programmes and offer it commercially. Many companies, especially SMEs, have for many years not been participating in education and training courses that would enable them to develop the competences of their employees. We are happy to have been able to encourage them to do so within the scope of the COC." **Mia Miše, MSc, Farmadent, COC for Wholesale Trade.**

Participation rate by type of training in projects
(data from the second call for applications in the 2012-2015 period)





Even though we use the slogan "THE RIGHT CHEMISTRY BEGINS WITH PEOPLE", animals were used to present and promote the profession.

Training courses for the 21st century were...

Companies are aware that success in an individual industry is tied to the level of employee qualifications in terms of expertise from a given industry. They devoted most of the training (55%) to this expertise. The fact that a large share was devoted to the so-called soft skills (15%) is tied to such competences being required in almost all professions (leadership, communication, negotiations, interpersonal relationships, sales skills). Perhaps this can serve as a message that these competences should be developed as much as possible within the scope of the educational system.

The low share (3%) of computer knowledge is tied to the fact that expert knowledge frequently includes ICT (information and communication technology). As regards the general use of ICT, the most important software is Excel.

Which competences for the 21st century were developed by Slovenian companies?

- industry-specific (these were the predominant competences); leadership, communication, organisational and cooperation skills;
- sales-marketing and negotiation competences;
- design and user-orientation;
- organisational competences and lean operations;
- knowledge of foreign languages;
- ICT;
- ecology, environmental protection and sustainable practices.

Design as a necessity and opportunity

The Competence Centre for Design Management has brought together diverse companies and addressed one of the areas that is relevant for each industry. They promoted innovation, user-orientation and ambition of the Slovenian companies to be become industry leaders through the development of design management as the key driver of competitiveness. They organised two international conferences within the scope of the project and provided for the implementation of the Grow programme, which is generally available only to multinational companies, whereas this time it was provided for the members of three competence centres.

"The Grow programme has provided the SIP company with a much clearer picture of the importance of design and which segments it includes in order for us to see the overall picture (the right product with all of the parameters). The essential advantage of the programme is definitely that it provides the basics and examples that have been shown to work at large and successful companies. Then, each individual does an "assignment" tied to the company where they work. Our clients have assessed our service as being 10% better than before." Sebastjan Bogataj, SIP

KOČKE
Kompetenčni center za
kadre kemijske industrije

Moving forward

There is not enough space here for us to share all of the stories. But they were certainly worth it. We hope that it will be possible to record them and highlight them in greater detail. In the hope that the realisation of the funds of the ESS, which are approaching 90% of the total amount of the two calls for applications, turns out to be a long-term investment and that the companies continue to astound us with their operating results, we plan on continuing our efforts. Just as is the case here, we are faced with space constraints and do not have enough time for project implementation.

The story of the two calls for applications is coming to close in 2015, and we are searching for a suitable sequel. We hope that the positive achievements will be taken into account and integrated into the broader support environment, and that the number of the companies involved and the positive experiences gained will increase further.

They are still in business!

The Competence Centre for HR Development in Chemistry – KOČKE (hereinafter: CoCCHE) held 407 educational events for 1143 employees in the industry, whereby the attendance count was 3557. Based on the trust built, it is still working to provide employment projects for companies, promote professions among young people and implement training courses.



Tomorrow's design leaders

Danijela Brečko, PhD, Sofos, Inštitut za izobraževalni management (Educational Management Institute)

Development of Competences for the 21st Century: Let Us Approach the Matter Strategically



Both small and large enterprises depend on the speed of attainment of knowledge and development of competences when it comes to the realisation of their strategic objectives. The first step in the planning of a company's growth is the design of a long-term vision and the resulting strategic objectives. Based on such strategic objectives, we draft an HR development plan and determine the competences required to attain the said objectives.

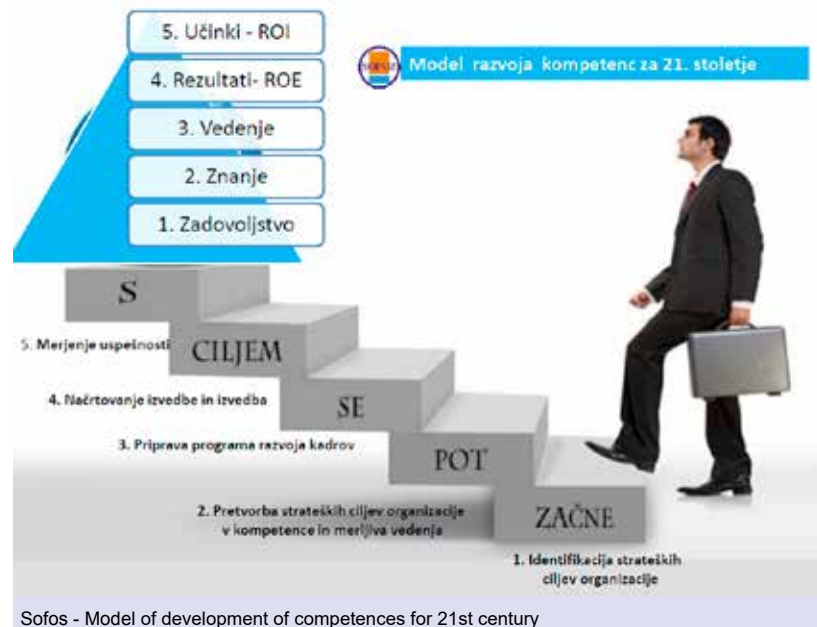
The most effective tool for the development of human resources or their competences is education and training. The key step towards success is determined by a carefully considered analysis of educational needs, which starts with the identification of the key tasks and strategic objectives of the organisation. Could you list them in one minute? I doubt it. All too often, not even the key decision-makers at the organisation know what these objectives are. Even though these must be written down somewhere, this does not mean that you will be able to extract the essential priorities from them; strategic priorities namely change on a daily basis. The only successful way of identifying priority strategic needs is to have a research interview with the decision-makers. Once the established strategic objectives are converted into competences or measurable behaviours, we prepare the development programme (educational programme) with clear-cut and measurable objectives and competences. The latter are essential for the subsequent monitoring of the efficiency of HR development, which is why special attention must be devoted to the programming. It is much cheaper for companies (especially start-ups), which do not have experience with these matters, to hire a consultant than risk developing their personnel in the wrong direction. This is followed by operational implementation planning (agreement with the programme providers, logistics, time, etc.), which is completed with the measurement of the effects of education. The measurement of the effects of education begins already in the implementation phase; with the classic measurement of the participants' satisfaction with the education, which does not say much

about the actual effects of education. A good evaluation of education includes four to five levels of effect monitoring. At the second level, we monitor the knowledge acquired and its transfer into practice. At the third level, we verify the changes in behaviour, which is the end goal of any learning. At the fourth level, we verify whether our expectations have come true and whether the results can be observed in the form of the attainment of the programme objectives. This is referred to as RoE – Return on Expectations. Only the most daring monitor the effectiveness of HR development at the fifth level by measuring the ROI – Return on Investment. This is where they compare the cost of the investment in HR development with the benefits that are expressed in monetary terms. The best can achieve returns of more than 500%.

Slovenia is only now waking up to the monitoring of the effectiveness of education, and the first examples of good practice are springing up. This is the case with the largest Slovenian retailer, Tuš, where they are already recording concrete results at the fourth level (increase in the sales basket value by 2%), and at the

successful foreign capital company, Letrika from Nova Gorica, where they measure the soft factors of management such as ethical behaviour (they report that the number of ethical decisions has increased visibly after only 6 months of the implementation of the programme). Numerous smaller companies have also started on this path and are increasingly aware of how important it is for the companies to formulate both the vision and strategic objectives in conjunction with their personnel. This namely completes the circle by connecting strategic objectives with HR development and thus garners improved effects and returns.

"By continuously focusing on strategic objectives, you will develop the competences you require for your company to grow."
"We measure the results of education, because we get what we measure."



Assist Prof. Jana Žnidaršič, PhD, Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana

Preservation and Development of the Competences of the Elderly – Expense or Investment?



The ageing of the population is one of the most pressing issues in the EU, as it could seriously threaten the competitiveness (economic growth) of the European economy as well as the social and healthcare systems of the EU Member States' in the future. The response of the EU to the said issue is the so-called "active ageing" concept, whereby states use legislation and companies employ suitable instruments to encourage older employees aged 55 to 64 (and older) to remain in the active working population for as long as possible. Despite Slovenia lagging behind the more developed EU members (especially the Scandinavian and Baltic countries) in terms of so-called **age management**, awareness of the problem has been increasing as of late. It is becoming increasingly clear that the key role in extending the active working life of the population will – in addition to the measures at the state level and the shift in the citizen's mode of thought – be played by employers, i.e. companies.

They will ensure this by adapting to older workers, so that the latter are able and willing to work longer.

The key pre-condition for a longer active working life is the individual capacity for work that – alongside a suitable working environment – determines employability and enables individuals to be employed for a longer period of their life. The essential factors in this regard (in addition to the maintenance of good health) are continuous education and personal

development, i.e. both at work and during one's free time. This is where we quickly run into frequent stereotypical convictions on the part of the management, i.e. that it is not profitable to invest in the education of older employees as there is no return on investment either because the employee retires or because of their diminished work performance resulting from their diminished working capacity.

The prevalent opinion among employers is that the elderly are forgetful, find it difficult to learn new skills, regress intellectually with old age, do not welcome new ideas, are afraid of new technologies and finally are not enthusiastic about learning new things. Scientific research has shown that the differences between individuals within the same age group are frequently greater than between individual age groups. Such research thus negates all of the above stereotypes.

Facts show that: (1) age does not determine level of curiosity and willingness to learn; (2) many – irrespective of their age – enjoy the introduction of new technologies (the number of Internet users is increasing most among those older than 50); (3) long-term memory improves with age (so-called contextual intelligence, which is based on life experience, is stable or even increases slightly); (4) intellectual capacity remains unchanged up to the age of 70 or more (age positively affects the capacity for critical thinking and judgement, decision-making, problem-solving and an increase in general knowledge); (5) older people increasingly take up important, knowledge-based positions of employment; (6) an increasing number of older employees wish to extend their working life for numerous personal and financial reasons; and (7) older people are (2.4-times) more loyal and do not change jobs as frequently as younger employees. Older employees can offer competitive advantages thanks to their numerous specific competences.

Competences (and advantages of the older employees):

- accumulation of life and professional experience;
- developed social networks;
- possession of "soft" skills – social capital (consideration for the feelings and points of view of others, patience, reasonableness, capacity of (self) control, emotional maturity, prudence, wisdom;
- familiarity with the work system;
- knowledge of their own ability and limitations;
- they enjoy credibility with the customers (customers trust them);
- experience in problem-solving and handling of associates and customers;
- better verbal and communication skills;
- ability to transfer knowledge and skills for work;
- steadfastness, perseverance and reliability, developed work values, precision at work;
- greater sense of belonging and loyalty to the employer, developed sense of ethics;
- fewer injuries at work, lower rate of absence from work and low employee turnover;
- higher level of satisfaction with the work and dedication to work assignments as well as good work habits;
- frequently higher level of motivation to attain results than can be observed in the younger employees;
- developed sense of responsibility and awareness of the duty to do the work;
- past references and achievements (extensive);
- emotional stability.

We can conclude with the finding that, considering the trend of the lengthening of the period of employment of the elderly, the usefulness of maintaining their competences and investing in their education is becoming increasingly less controversial. The period of the "return" on investment in education is becoming shorter for all employees, so it is reasonable to focus on specific competences and to invest in the education of employees (even older ones)

Nives Šircelj Fortunat, Helena Knez

Attaining Business Success With Qualified Employees

Every employee counts, for it is the employees that make a company successful. Even those in lower-ranking positions feel valued by the company, if the management is able to recognise the potential hiding in each and every one of them. Each can help boost the company's competitiveness on the market if they are provided additional education and training to gain new knowledge required to raise business performance levels.

The times in which we live require continuous adaptation, learning and the search for new market opportunities. Employees who do the right things in the right way contribute to the business excellence of the company. Knowledge needs to be enhanced repeatedly, as it quickly becomes obsolete. This is why we are highly satisfied with the results we achieved by co-financing training through the programme entitled "2011 Employee Education and Training" (hereinafter: UIZ 2011), which was co-financed by the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. As part of the programme, we published 5 calls for applications and received 6,311 applications from employers, which confirms that Slovenian companies are aware of the importance of investing in the qualifications of their employees. The fund approved 1,683 applications and provided training to 15,792 employees by the end of 2014.

We found from the training contents and the interviews with the employers that large and medium-sized enterprises have their HR functions arranged better. However, micro and small-sized enterprises still require a lot of incentives and consulting in the systemisation and formulation of plans, strategies and contents of the training, which are crucial for the development of companies. Despite employers not showing much enthusiasm in the beginning about devoting special attention to enhancing the competences of older and disadvantaged groups, the option of obtaining co-financing for the training of older and disadvantaged groups within

the scope of the last three calls for applications has led them to the realisation that investment in this segment of employees has already yielded returns. We can clearly see the increase in intergenerational cooperation, motivation and productivity as well as awareness that the business excellence of a commercial or non-commercial company depends on the development of every employee (and not only of some employees).

The usefulness of training is undeniable

ARCONT IP, Gornja Radgona,
Katja Kurbus, HR consultant



"Our company is involved in the manufacture of doors and windows. We employ 650 people, more than 40% of whom are disabled or youth categorised as persons with special needs. The work at the company does not only represent a source of income for survival but also their standing in society. Employees are highly aware of this and are willing to attend additional training in order to be part of our team. Being an employer, we know that highly qualified employees are the highest value asset of a company in today's highly competitive business environment.

In line with our strategic objectives, we have placed greater emphasis on the training of our management and sales staff. The funds obtained under the UIZ 2011 (Employee Training and Education) call for tenders have enabled us to also include those groups in the training that otherwise rarely get such opportunities. We were happy to find at the end of the programme that the training of mainly older employees, including the disabled and women with the lowest level of education, was accepted positively by the trainees. It elevated the atmosphere at the company and boosted employee loyalty. The participants mastered skills that will enable efficient collaboration with their associates and customers alike. They will employ them both in their professional and private lives."



The chain of trust: Together we can do the impossible. Director Boris Sovič (first from the right) is among the workshop participants, aware that he is also only part of the chain.

"The funds give us the opportunity to educate personnel in the areas where it is more difficult to justify the investment in the short-term, while the building of such competences contributes importantly to the company's business performance in the long-term."

Statements by some of the participants:

- Over the course of a few months, key knowledge and an important message were conveyed, and I hope that they will change my life and my attitude towards myself and others. I would like to thank the lecturers for conveying the knowledge!
- These lectures have given me a lot of experience that will improve my communication with my co-workers.
- The education course was great. I believe we should do this every year.

Inclusion in training courses has brought about a decrease in sick leave absences

GORENJE I. P. C., Velenje, Tatjana Draksler, HR Manager

"We are aware at the company that it is only qualified and satisfied employees who are successful in their work, which is why concern for training is one of our permanent tasks. The company employs 806 people, 50% of whom have the status of a disabled person. Our successful application in the UIZ 2011 programme was highly beneficial for both the company and the employees. Such projects enable us to tackle on an even larger scale the activities geared towards training and the enhancement of professional competences. Our application involved training in the area of soft skills and computer training, and we included older employees, the disabled and women without an education. Our goal is to influence employee motivation and commitment as well as their communication in the workplace. We monitored the results by measuring the satisfaction and commitment of employees, the share of sick leave absences, feedback from direct superiors



and qualification matrices. Suitable communication and individualised treatment are key when working with people, especially older employees and the disabled. Considering the excellent experience and positive results we have recorded since getting involved in the UIZ 2011 programme, we would like to be involved in such programmes in the future as well."

"We have experienced true intergenerational socialising and an improved atmosphere in the workplace. Even sick leave absences have decreased."

Metka Šprahman, President of the Executive Committee of the SKEI Union of Gorenje I. P. C.:

"We are happy that employees from production have also been given the opportunity to be included in training. Within the scope of said training, we met with employees from various fields. The workshop entitled "Improvement of the Well-Being of Employees" was a veritable surprise. Using concrete cases, we tried to resolve problems in communication and contribute to improved mutual understanding. We wish to have more such training courses."

Boosting motivation and creating new products through the acquisition of new knowledge

NIKO Železniki, Vanja Habjan, HR and Legal Department

"The company has been manufacturing metal products used in offices and the furniture and construction industries for nearly 70 years. For the last two years, we have been searching for new market opportunities and have therefore expanded

our core activity to also include the automotive industry. We have improved the level of knowledge mainly of employees with primary school education, older employees and the disabled. If the global crisis were to force us to cut the production



volume in areas with well-established products, these positions of employment would without the training that was provided for them be the first to face the threat of being cut, while the training has allowed us to expand production and preserve jobs. Continuous learning on the part of employees (even older ones) is easier to achieve at our company, because we feel we are part of the company and are aware that the company cannot continue to exist without progress in terms of our knowledge. We have proven this by achieving excellent operating results despite the crisis.

Had the company not received funds for training, said education would have been much curtailed in scope and would have included much fewer employees. We can say that our production would certainly not have experienced the boom it did without the life-long theoretical learning and practical training in the workplace.

The workers who are qualified to perform a greater number of work tasks are motivated through rewards for such work.



Training at GORENJE I. P. C.

A worker aged 56 years of age who is a few years from being retired asked me if he had to attend the education course. I replied that a practical workshop is sure to benefit both him and the company and that he should therefore certainly attend. Well, after the course, he told me that he did not realise that he could still learn something useful about his work. He is a conscientious and hardworking employee."

In Europe, you are either fast or extinct

ISKRA RELEJI, Makole, Boštjan Plaznik, Managing Director

"The company is the only large employer in the Makole Municipality in the Drava River valley (Dravinjska dolina). We employ 75 workers with a low education structure, and most of them are older women. We are involved in the manufacture of relays, electromagnets, LED lights and various tools. We have our own research and development group.

Employee training is essential for technologically demanding production, as change is the only constant in our practice, which we can only master through knowledge.

The fundamental knowledge is that of technology, however we must not neglect other fields. We devoted special attention



to training for the management of employees, assurance of a high level of motivation and management of processes. As an export-oriented company, we are exposed to stiff competition, which requires that we introduce lean production in all areas of the company's operations. Using the co-financing received under the UIZ 2011 project, we enabled our employees to gain knowledge in the area of document flow optimisation, which in turn increased the quality in production. **We learned to independently complete and arrange all technical documentation. The work process is therefore highly stable, there are no delays and the work is performed at lower cost."**

All employees jointly build our

company's vision for the future. The expectations of the results of the completed training are high, as are the set objectives. We will certainly pursue them.

Recently, a general manager of an important foreign company said to me: "You know, in Europe, you are either fast or extinct." Thanks to our employees, we certainly fall among the fast."

Enthusiastic about computer courses – all employees are included

ETI, Izlake, Jani Braune, HR, Legal and General Affairs Department Director



"We are one of the leading global manufacturers providing solutions for residential and commercial installations, electricity distribution for low-voltage and medium-voltage installations as well as electronic and semi-conductors.

As computer literacy in less demanding positions of employment is low, we decided to organise training in general computer literacy within the scope of the UIZ 2011 programme. Owing to the development of the areas of work, such multi-tasking capabilities are certain to be reflected even in cases where the work is automated and supported by IT. There are namely fewer and fewer simple jobs.

The effects of training are measured in annual interviews. We have prepared an information system that the managers

use to enter data and assess the effects of the training of their associates. Employees undergoing training also have access to the status of training and its effects.

We are still faced with certain challenges in terms of the acquisition of new knowledge and competences in the **area of leadership skills, which is mainly true for production as well as the transfer of knowledge and mentorship** (ageing of the work force has been observed in recent years). We want the qualified older employees to transfer their knowledge to the younger generation even more effectively as well as to prevent the disappearance of knowledge and experience upon retirement."

"I was lucky to have been selected for the course despite being 53 years old. I have not had the opportunity up until now to become acquainted with computer work (the correct use of various innovations and the Word and Excel programs).

After the course, I found that I had only then become truly computer literate. I am faster and more efficient. I know that mistakes can be remedied or erased. I learned that you can do much with a single click of the mouse provided you are familiar with computer basics. When it comes to spreadsheets, I was completely out of my depth. I learned the basics, which is very useful for me in warehousing operations." **Zdenka Lamovšek, training participant.**

Does age define our work effectiveness?

MLADINSKA KNJIGA Group, Ljubljana, Katja Klobučar, HR Manager, and Irena Šetrajčič Dragoš, HR officer

The Group comprises 8 companies and 1,016 employees, 804 of whom work in Slovenia. The company's principal activity is publishing and trade. "Staff managing the work processes and sales personnel who are in direct contact with buyers are of key importance for operations.



Zdenka Lamovšek, training participant.



Employees of Mladinska knjiga during training

90% of the workers have been working for the company for the major part of their careers, which also affects the age structure. Disadvantaged workers and the disabled make up nearly 40% of the entire workforce in sales. It is due to the specific employee structure that we are only able to achieve the planned sales results in the competitive business environment through continuous education. The sale of our products requires a high level of creativity and rapid adaptability to the new sales conditions.

Because direct sale to buyers is highly demanding, this results in fatigue and employees being overwhelmed, which represents a routine threat and this in turn is quickly reflected in the quality of sales. That is why disadvantaged categories require even more training to maintain their motivation for sales. **Based on the 4th and 5th calls for applications under the UIZ 2011, we trained 170 employees, with individuals receiving no less than 12 hours of training.**

We paid special attention to increasing sales competences, the development of emotional intelligence, goal-orientedness, buyers, self-reliance, building of relations and management of emotions and stress. The end result was a higher level of motivation and higher productivity.

One of the problems is also the balancing of intergenerational differences, as the sales work process managers are younger, and only a quarter of them are represented among the disadvantaged associates. The balancing of intergenerational differences is thus a daily challenge, and the management methods are adapted to facilitate this. The training has allowed us to raise the general level of motivation and at the same time lower the levels of stress which, this resulting in better sales results."

How to improve employee flexibility?

ELVEZ, Višnja gora, Simona Petrič, Managing Director

"The majority of the company's exports

go to the automotive industry. The main activity is the production of cable harnesses and accessories and the processing of plastics. Employees are expected to possess a high level of professional qualifications owing to the stringent quality assurance criteria. We therefore wanted to raise the level of competences and adaptability of the employees, i.e. mainly of the expert associates in the areas of quality assurance, technology, maintenance, warehousing, sales and accounting. Our application for the UIZ 2011 programme involved contents tied to project work, supply chain organisation optimisation and the overhaul of the remuneration system.

Based on the knowledge acquired, the transfer of information was rationalised and optimised, the technological and work processes were simplified and shortened and the flexibility of all employees increased. Production workers were also included in the soft skills training. Training took the form of workshops that instilled skills in the areas of communication, collaboration, responsibility and potential (at work and in the working environment).



The survey on employee satisfaction with the training, especially of production workers, found that employees learned that they can affect not only the company's operations but also their own personal development through their work and their method of communication with co-workers.

The effects of training were seen in 2013, as the company attained growth of 20% with respect to the results in 2012, net profit increased and a new metallisation technology was introduced. In 2013, the number of employees increased by 25%. The growth trend continued in 2014 and the plans envisage the same for 2015."

We have formulated measures in cooperation with our employees, and we are now implementing said measures

KOPITARNA SEVNICA, Marjan Kurnik, Managing Director

The main production programme is that of footwear (light occupational and leisure time footwear) and shoemaker's lasts that we sell across Europe. In recent years, exports accounted for approximately 65% of total revenues (approx. EUR 8 million). The Group employs 170 people, 130 of whom are located in Slovenia.

"The Kopitarna Sevnica, d. d. company applied for the 4th call for applications within the scope of the UIZ 2011 programme in order to improve the quality of operations and work processes. We devoted a lot of attention to the training of employees in these two areas. We allocated a portion of the funds received to the areas of organisational culture and communication improvement. The training saw the participation of 35 employees who were older than 50 years of age. Following the successful



completion of training, we carried out a survey for organisational climate measurement where employees expressed great satisfaction with having had the opportunity to undergo additional education. Within the scope of workshops, we resolved practical problems based on the acquired existing theoretical foundations and new knowledge. More than 94% of the participants passed the test aimed at testing the knowledge acquired."

The company is proud of how the employees themselves designed 25 activities and measures within the scope of the training. Based on the discussion, these measures and activities have demonstrated their function of improvement of the company's operations. They are now realising these measures.

According to the statements of the company's management, it is now easier for each individual to perform their work and communicate with their associates thanks to the new knowledge and findings. However, the crucial aspect is that employees are now more efficient when implementing the processes at the company. This is consequently reflected in the gradual but continuous improvement of operating results in 2014.

Intergenerational cooperation and the transfer of knowledge

PREMOGOVNIK VELENJE,
Natalija Lah, HR Development
Project Manager

"The company places special emphasis

on the establishment of ties between the different generations and the transfer of knowledge, as suitable knowledge is a means of prevention and a condition for safe work.

We know which knowledge and professional competences need to be urgently transferred to the younger generation in order to ensure safe and uninterrupted work. Such knowledge cannot simply be acquired on the market, which is why we continuously educate our own professional staff.

"Our biggest competitor is nature. Owing to the lack of awareness and expertise, mistakes at work can unfortunately be fatal, which places on us an even greater responsibility towards people as well as the local and wider social environments. The transfer of essential strategic knowledge is therefore carefully planned."

"The organisation of work in groups and group learning are two tools for the

"2011 Employee Training and Education Programme"

Value of the programme:	EUR 9,845,775.73
No. of public calls for applications from 2011 to 2015:	5
Funds disbursed:	EUR 8,461,950.75
No. of participants:	15,792
No. of female participants:	6,286
No. of all participants:	26,225

Data for the period up to 31 December 2014.

transfer of knowledge that we do not leave to chance. The practice in the transfer of knowledge in the workplace is attentively maintained and upgraded with new andragogical findings. The ageing population trend can also be observed at our company. The recognised mentor or instructor roles allow us to recognise the potential in older associates. We appreciate their attitude towards work, their loyalty and their collective responsibility or dedication to the achievement of strategic objectives.

Our experience shows that it is only the ties between the different generations in the working environment that ensure the company's long-term success. By appropriately managing generationally mixed groups, we wish to overcome stereotypes and create conditions conducive for the right kind of dialogue between the older and younger generations."



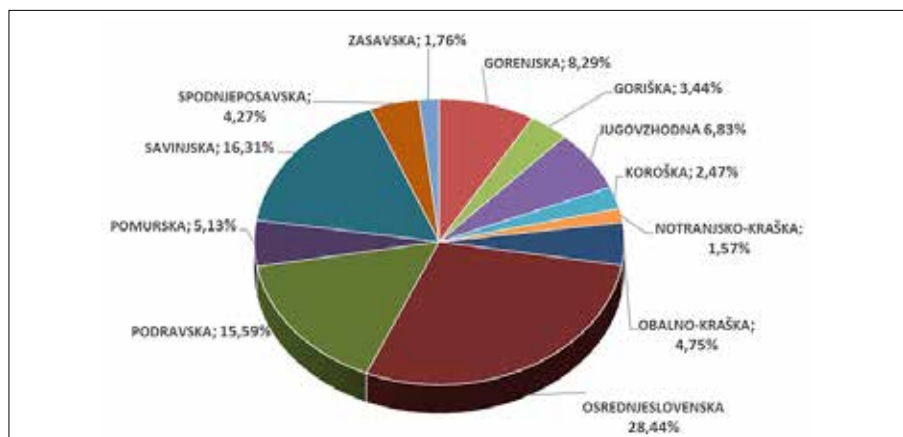
Group learning in a real environment under the leadership of an experienced mentor. Photo: Miran Beškovič, Premogovnik Velenje mine

Why choose the 2011 Employee Training and Education (UIZ 2011) Programme?

Because it (in)directly promotes:

- an increase in the educational level and qualifications of the employees;
- an increase in employee competences and thereby improvement of their adaptability and mobility on the labour market;
- an increase in the adaptability of companies through investment in the knowledge of their employees;
- employee development,
- higher level of qualifications, improved employability and multitasking ability of the employees;
- strengthening of the competitiveness of companies and organisations, improvement of the organisational culture, increase in a company's turnover, decrease in the amount of warranty returns/complaints;
- decrease in the number of sick leave absences;
- improvement of employee motivation;
- improvement of the management of employees;
- work optimisation and work process optimisation;
- employees' awareness of their own abilities and limitations;
- a higher level of acceptance of that which is different and empowerment of employees;
- development of the sense of self-worth and improvement of the self-image of employees.

Distribution of funds for the "2011 Employee Training and Education Programme" by region:



Employees underwent the following training courses:



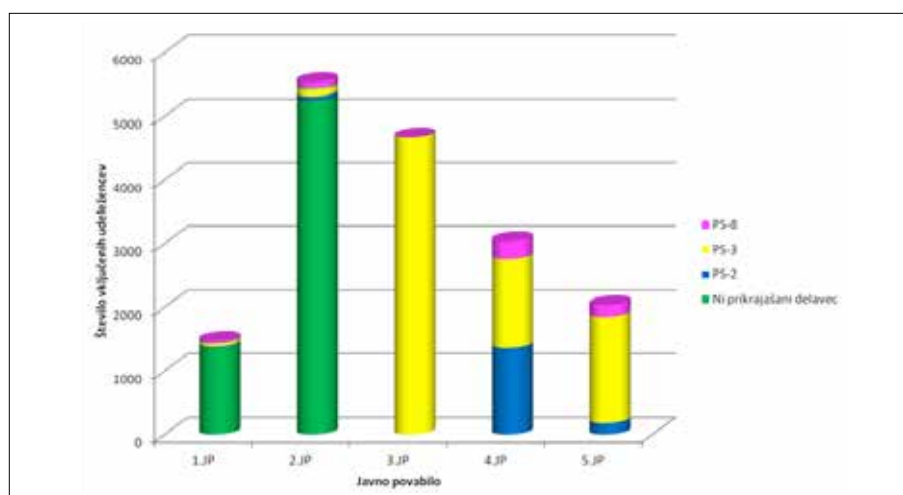
At whom is the UIZ 2011 programme aimed?

The first two calls for applications extended to employers were aimed at all employees, while the target group of employees over the last three years has been narrowed down to employees who are 50 years of age or older, women with primary school as their highest level of education achieved and the disabled.

"2011 Employee Training and Education Programme"

The programme worth EUR 9,845,775.73 has enabled Slovenian companies to make additional investments in the education and training of 15,792 employees (6,286 of whom were women). The funds distributed came in at nearly EUR 8.5 million, which is nearly 93% of the funds available for providers (contractors). The biggest share of the funds was absorbed by companies from the Osrednjeslovenska region (central Slovenia region), Savinjska region and the Podravska region. We realised 26,225 participations by the end of 2014. The first two calls for applications enabled employers to include all employees, while the target group of employees over the last three calls for tenders has been narrowed down to employees who are 50

Participants by individual UIZ 2011 public calls for applications



years of age or older, women with primary school as their highest level of education achieved and the disabled. Education course participants and management teams of companies have mostly only had praise for the programme. They assessed it highly positively as an investment in employee training that yields returns in the form of improved operating results and higher employee motivation. In the future, we will continue to strive for the programme to be successful and effective

for employers who require state incentives in times of changed economic conditions.

LEGEND:
 PS 2 has not completed secondary school or vocational training (ISCED 3 – definition provided in the "Instructions to Applicants"); or
 PS 3 is older than 50 years of age; or
 PS 8 "disabled person" (means any person: whose disability is recognised by state legislation; or with a recognised limitation arising from physical, mental or psychological impairment).

Bojan Ivajnsič

New Knowledge Through Self-Initiative

NEVER SAY "I CAN'T". THERE'S ALWAYS MORE THAT ONE CAN DO FOR ONESELF.

The generation that is now the active middle age population was once advised with good intentions by their parents: "Learn so you will not have to work." Today's reality is something completely different: one learns so as to be able to work. Even though informal and ad hoc learning have been especially promoted in recent years, formal education still carries the biggest weight when determining an individual's qualifications. Upon completion of formal education, an official valid document is issued that confirms qualifications in a given field at the national level and enables an advantageous position upon entry into the labour market and in the workplace, because formally acquired education determines the starting salary upon employment.

While undergoing education, an individual is shaped, they master new specific knowledge and competences and they expand their horizons (organisation and planning, memorising subject matter, various practical skills, etc.). This in turn provides them with the flexibility for various work tasks. It is usually the young who occupy secondary school desks, but an increasing number of brave older individuals now enrol in the adult education process. Aided by a variety of work experience, they master new knowledge faster and more efficiently. Employers are aware that educated older people can represent an additional advantage over the ever harsher competition.

As part of the Reduction of the Educational Deficit of Adults (hereinafter: ZIP) programme, we used funds from the European Social Fund and assistance from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport to facilitate access to formal education for 5,783 individuals: they acquired a new profession, knowledge and skills, improved their position on the labour market and got involved in new social networks and the society. Interest in such education among adults is strong. During the implementation of the programme for the co-financing of tuition fees for adults, it was found that the programme had exceeded expectations, as additional funds were earmarked (total funds came in at EUR 8,164,718.07). Despite the large number of individuals who received grants for education, some



investors (1,900) did not receive the incentive because the funds were used up. More than half of those included in the programme (56%) acquired a higher level of education and 44% of the investors successfully completed retraining. The Fund's implementation survey found that the newly acquired education enabled individuals to retain their jobs; some received promotions or found employment elsewhere. The programme co-financed as many as 118 different programmes for formal secondary school education, most of which were provided in the Osrednjeslovenska (central Slovenia), Podravska, Gorenjska, Savinjska and Jugovzhodna (south-eastern) regions.

The courage to start on a new path does indeed count and pays off, as the education participants would say:

"The second profession enabled me to find new employment."

"I became more competitive on the labour market."

"The newly acquired education allowed me to get promoted at the company."

"After completing the master craftsman exam, I established a company."

"I became more confident and improved my foreign language knowledge."

"After completing education, I received a better employment position and a raise."

"I remedied the wrong decision I made in my youth."



With the help of the ZIP programme, 46 year old Cvetka Vuk wrote a new chapter on her career path. The decision to undertake a new career path began to evolve already during her time at the Mura textile company, where Cvetka had worked as a textile technician. Because she did not see a long-term future with that company and because the calling of textile technician was not her own wish but rather that of her parents, she decided to take an important step in her life: she enrolled in the Healthcare educational programme in Rakičan and followed her original calling. Then, things started rolling: she completed her traineeship at the Ljutomer Retirement Home and the mandatory state certification examination. Throughout this time, she searched actively for other employment options in the nearby surroundings as well as further away from her home. After sending a job application to a retirement home in Vienna, she was soon summoned to an interview and was hired thanks in part to her knowledge of the German language.

"Education had an incredibly positive effect on me, and the motivation for study was bestowed on me by my son, who was completing his secondary school education at the time", says Cvetka Vuk.

43 year old Irena Matasovič hails from south-eastern Slovenia, and she completed her education in pre-school education in the 2011/2012 academic year. She found new employment as an assistant childcare worker in a kindergarten. Irena says that adults who engage in education do not only receive new education but that another important aspect is personal development and a positive self-image, which were so overarching in her case that she is now studying part-time at the Faculty of Education in Maribor.

Mateja Brunšek is 42 years old and comes from the Savinjska region.

Her job after completing primary school brought her no satisfaction, as she found that life brings many challenges to a person that they can only overcome if they possess suitable knowledge. This led her to fulfil her dream of working in healthcare services. The funds she received from the Fund were a welcome incentive for her to stay the course in realising her goals. After completing the nursing assistant education programme, she did her mandatory practical training at an adult care home in Velenje. Her vocational journey then led her to the Haematology Department at the University Medical Centre Ljubljana, where she has been working for one year now. Despite the work being demanding, she is highly satisfied, which confirms that her choice of profession was the right one, and she is now continuing her education to become a medical technician. As she says, her biggest incentive in her education and work is success but also the money, as this lessens her financial concerns.

When preparing the draft public call for applications, the Fund invited various educational institutions and designed the ZIP programme based on the comments and proposals. Educational institutions also assumed the role of information providers and consultants during the application process of individuals for the public call for applications.

One of the well-organised institutions was the Public University of Murska Sobota, where the Murska Sobota Consulting Centre managed by Alojz Sraka operates. It is part of a network of 14 consulting centres and operates according to the ISIO model (Information and Consulting in Adult Education), which is managed by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (hereinafter: ACS). Their fundamental task is to provide free and confidential information as well as consulting for the purpose of adult

learning and education

- prior to, during and after education.

They are visited by adults who wish to supplement their education either because they themselves desire to do so or because they were advised to do so by their employers.

In the Pomurska region, they have been observing a decrease in the demand for education and retraining in recent years. This also applies to so-called professions in demand. They see the reasons for this as being the economic crisis and the fact that less educated employees and the unemployed are unable to finance their education by themselves, while the Employment Service of Slovenia has not been implementing programmes for the acquisition of education over the last two years. Another reason for fewer enrolments is undoubtedly also the expiry of the ZIP programme and the lower number of participants being sent for training courses by companies.

Participation of adults in informal programmes is also decreasing, which is especially true of those who pay for their own education. They are noticing a trend and demand for shorter programmes that provide participants with evidence of training or competences, thereby increasing their competitiveness on the labour market. Considering the vicinity of the border, there is extensive demand for knowledge of the German language and less for competences in digital literacy. In any case, one of the key questions in the consultation interview is the possibility of financing as well as the possibilities for employment.

The Consulting Centre finds that all of the public calls for applications of the Slovenian Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund are highly beneficial. Cooperation with the Fund, the partner network and the media in the region as well as assistance in the preparation of documentation for applying for the ZIP public call for applications have helped approximately 500 adults in the Pomurska region to acquire higher education.

It is important and urgent for individuals to acquire knowledge and competences if they wish to become a part of the society of knowledge and fast-track their careers. The Fund wishes to promote this awareness through its programmes in all stakeholders in the society (companies, employees, educational institutions and the unemployed).

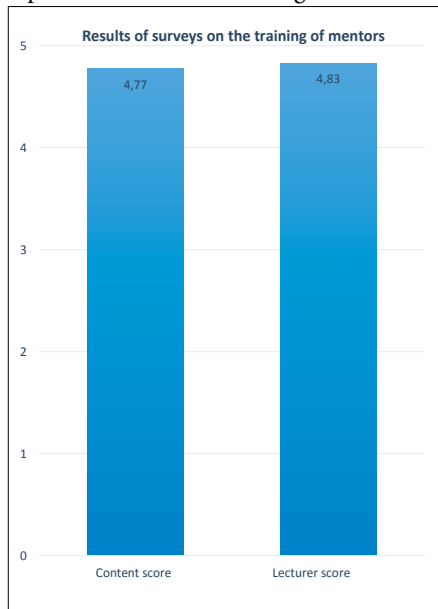
Nataša Florjančič

You Have Become Even Better Mentors

Specific and current knowledge within an individual company represents a "gold mine" for development and the improvement of various processes within the company. In addition to the acquisition of knowledge through education, mentorship effectively transfers "secrets" or specific knowledge between employees – in general, the transfer takes place from the experienced older generation to the less experienced younger generation. Time is money they say, and it certainly holds true for mentorship. Mentors onboard the new employees much faster and teach them the required knowledge, which is why the young do not need to start at the bottom and 'reinvent the wheel'.

The transfer of knowledge is a complex process. A good knowledge transfer process within an organisation or company requires an organised and systematic approach, qualified mentors who know how to keep people involved and are good role models and finally a dedicated and interested mentee. By transferring knowledge internally, a company preserves, captures, improves and uses all of the available knowledge in order to achieve progress in terms of competitiveness and growth.

Through the Youth Mentorship programme, we reward knowledge and experience that comes with age and cannot



10th group of mentors, Ljubljana 10, 23 and 25 April 2014.

be acquired at school or at the faculty. Mentorship does not only involve the transfer of knowledge but also represents the skill of delivery. A good mentor is characterised by pedagogical and andragogical skills: they are familiar with the role of mentor, the basic characteristics of the mentoring relationship and the basics of learning and teaching, are skilled at communication and are able to evaluate the work of the mentee and provide them with suitable feedback.

Youth Mentorship promotes the development of mentoring competences at a company. Mentors included in this programme have completed the pedagogical-andragogical training and have thus made the first step towards planned and systematic mentorship.

Within the scope of the programme, 27 three-day workshops for mentors were implemented, whereby 371 mentors were trained. The training was provided by professional and experienced trainers who "put their hearts and souls into it", as they themselves would say: Miran Morano, Nataša Čebulj, Blanka Tacer, MSc, Janja Rebolj and Klara Ramovš.

The impressions of the mentors trained:

"Today, I learned to see delivery of

knowledge and experience to the mentee in a different light."

"It is very interesting to have someone open your eyes to a different method of approaching a younger, inexperienced worker ..."

"The lecture will come in handy with our work, our job, and not only for me as the mentor but also in my decisions, in my responses, in communication and in reaching agreements in our business environment."

"I came with a certain aversion towards the whole affair that was due to me having to be there, but I leave enthusiastic. Thank you. It will certainly benefit me in all aspects of my life, not only in my mentor role."

"Very pleasant and witty explanation of relations between the mentor and mentee."

"Suitably broadly presented topic." "Alongside facilitating mentorship work, it also enables personal development."

The programme enabled 464 young people to land a job. This was the first job for most of them and the support of the mentor was invaluable. Mentors communicated unwritten rules of the game to young participants in a six to twelve month period, which made it

possible for them to more easily integrate into the organisation, and this also made it easier for them to establish contacts and perform their work.

Each company writes its own mentorship story

Knowledge should be shared

"Neat and refined" is the motto of chef Janez Bratovž, who honed his skills in Slovenia and around the world and found a home for his restaurant JB on the ground floor of the building designed by architect Jože Plečnik at the start of Miklošičeva street in Ljubljana. It is one of the top 100 restaurants in the world and a refuge for those with refined tastes.

Janez Bratovž trained Florjan Žnidaršič for the profession of cook and is happy to find that Florjan is a "hardworking and knowledge-thirsty young man, an ambitious young colleague with whom I am happy to share my knowledge."

Florjan remembers his early days of learning this precise art as follows:

"My mentor was very demanding, which was not to my liking at first. Without knowing it, I was growing up and progressing both professionally and in terms of self-confidence as part of my training for the position, and I finally realised that the demands of my mentor were warranted indeed. Order, cleanliness and discipline are very important in the

kitchen."

At JB, they say that the training of a mentee for the position requires a lot of effort, work hours and energy, which is why the Youth Mentorship programme is an additional motivation for the company as well as a financial aid.

The motto of JB restaurant is that knowledge should be shared. This creates healthy competition and also represents motivation for young people to acquire knowledge and strive for the highest of goals, which in turn is the foundation for progress and a better standard for the entire society.

We searched for young staff with self-initiative

At the LOTRIČ family-run company, they have been spreading good metrology practices for 24 years, as they are the leading company in Slovenia in the field of metrology and offer a comprehensive and broad spectrum of metrology services.

As the volume of metrological procedures is increasing, they made the decision to hire new people and thus got involved in the Youth Mentorship programme. We searched for young experts exhibiting a lot of self-initiative, commitment to the work and innovation geared towards practical solutions. In order for the Mentorship programme

to be truly successful, they involved the company's managing director, an expert associate in the field of marketing and the head of the Mass Department, all of whom acquired a certificate on pedagogical-andragogical training before the start of the programme. The subsidiary LOTRIČ Certificiranje also took part in the Youth Mentorship programme and provided two mentors, the head of the metals team and a laboratory technician. Over the course of the project, the parent company LOTRIČ Meroslovje employed three young employment seekers, while the subsidiary LOTRIČ Certificiranje hired another two.

The mentees started at the bottom. Two learned the ropes in the labs, calibration, certification in various metrology fields, opening and processing of work orders, preparation and issuing of certificates and field work. One mentee learned about the work in logistics and accounting and is today independently posting invoices in the books of account and performing other tasks as well. The two mentees in the subsidiary's chemical lab for metals, mechanical tests and microscopy learned to calculate measurement uncertainty for various procedures, analyse waste water, metals, oils and lubricants, performed sampling in the field and carried out mechanical and metallographic experiments.



Janez Bratovž is happy to share his knowledge and raise new chefs.



Mentors and mentees at Lotrič meroslovje

In addition to expert work, the new employees also developed soft skills that today contribute to their work performance. Their communication, feel for team work, understanding of instructions and problem-solving abilities have improved as well.

Mentors approached the new hires in a professional, organised and systematic manner: they delegated tasks to the mentees, set objectives jointly, communicated with them clearly and precisely, evaluated their work and provided them with constructive feedback and opinions. Within the scope of mentorship, mentees exhibited a high level of motivation for work and all received employment contracts for an indefinite period.

Mentorship brings incentives for both the company and young people

At the Port of Koper, they encourage the transfer of knowledge and have a developed internal education system

enables the acquisition and transfer of knowledge among co-workers, which is why mentors were happy to take on the role of mentors within the scope of the Youth Mentorship programme.

The Port takes a planning approach to the development of its own lecturers, instructors and mentors who undergo pedagogical and andragogical training, and the company also monitors their teaching through the evaluation of the participants. They are additionally incentivised or rewarded for their work. By taking part in the Youth Mentorship programme, the Port of Koper has provided employment to three young people who will have the opportunity of employment for an indefinite period after completing the onboarding period. Within the scope of the project, the young participants upgraded the knowledge they received in school with practical experience – they learned about the Port and the work in the Port. They also brought new knowledge as well as a youthful impetus to the company.

Mentee Nejc, who took the position of transport organiser, is thrilled about his work: "Employment at the container terminal has exceeded my expectations. I like the work environment (associates, traffic regime). I am in charge of organising the frigo container services. I work in an office most of the time where I accept orders, make accounts of the work performed, enter frigo container movements in the internal port system and organise field work." The mentors trained Andrej and Kristjan for the dispatcher position. Their work is full of challenges, which they describe as follows: "As newly employed dispatchers at the container terminal, we have encountered many new challenges and knowledge. The work of a dispatcher takes place in an office and using a computer and CB radio station.



Mentorship at the Port of Koper

The essence of the dispatcher's work is the organisation of a given labour force as best as possible and as fast as possible. All dispatchers communicate and cooperate with one another constantly, exchanging information on the work at the terminal."

This was not the first time that mentors Aljoša, Marjan and Robert carried out the role of mentor, but this was the first time they implemented the planned mentorship process as part of the project. They compiled a mentorship work programme and noted the tasks/skills that would have to be presented to the mentee. Over the course of andragogical training, they learned how important continuous feedback and assessment of the attainment of objectives and mastering of skills truly are for the mentee. Mentors say that this was exactly what they missed most during their own onboarding for the work.

The people from the Port of Koper are highly satisfied with the Youth Mentorship programme, because co-financing is an incentive for both sides: the company offers young people the possibility of employment and for them to use the acquired knowledge in practice, while young people bring fresh ideas and youthful impetus to the company.

The mentorship programme is a success story in our case

Ekvilib Inštitut is an independent non-profit organisation operating in the field of corporate social responsibility as well as human rights and development cooperation.

Director and mentor Aleš Kranjc Kušlan helped train Lucija Gostinčar, expert associate in the field of social responsibility. Their mentoring relationship began in the usual way. Lucija appeared at the organisation's doorstep one day, saying that she had come to present herself in person because she found merely sending an application insufficient and because she believed in personal contact.

Mentor Aleš was very impressed by her on account of all of the talents she is developing: "She is able to organise and carry out a webinar in English, paint a picture, record a video, work constructively in consultations with clients in the area of social responsibility, enthusiastically lead EU MPs through fun assignments, produce a washing machine out of cardboard, etc."

Lucija's experience is also positive: "There was this kind of fear present in the beginning, namely that I did not possess sufficient knowledge and experience in order to perform the assignments successfully. During the

training, it turned out that such fears were unwarranted, as I have, thanks to my mentor's understanding and learning the basics, found that the required competences could be learned. The company did not expect me to have already completely mastered all of the knowledge. In the beginning, I observed and followed my mentor, thus learning how to perform certain tasks. I was later entrusted with concrete independent assignments but communicated with my mentor at all times via e-mail, telephone and regular meetings. The understanding on the part of my mentor and other associates was key for me to have had and still have motivation and optimism as well as self-initiative and the ability to speak my mind. Finally I am happy about what I do."

The director believes that mentorship brings positive results for the company: we have not yet made a financial analysis of the mentorship, but we stand by the position that the positive results are not only reflected in financial terms but also in other areas (team dynamics, creation of new ideas and good atmosphere in the workplace). I can already say that the mentorship programme is certainly a success story in our case. It is important for us that each employee identifies with our values. If we are able to achieve this, all else takes a natural course of cooperation between employees."



Mentorship is a two-way road, Ekvilib Inštitut

Truths and Misconceptions About Mentorship

"Jože is a respected supervisor in the production department of a furniture company. A month ago, he became a mentor to young Boštjan, who is being trained for the work of production technician, tasked with the monthly planning of chair manufacture and the production of reports. Over the course of the previous month, they had three mentorship meetings, and Boštjan noted down everything the mentor told him. During a tour of the production hall, he asked numerous questions and showed an interest in the ins and outs of production. Jože had a good feeling about the mentee. Last week, he asked him to prepare a proposed chair manufacture plan including the KPFs, whereby the deadline was this morning, and they would be showing it to the managing director in the afternoon. Today, at the meeting, Boštjan did not have the plan prepared and showed his mentor only empty spreadsheets, which he had produced in his own way. Jože was very disappointed and could not believe that he had misjudged Boštjan so much. That's today's young people for you; they're just too lazy for anything."

Do you perhaps feel you have heard this story before? Do you agree with Jože? We should first take a look at the story from the point of view of the **truths and misconceptions** about mentorship. In the end, we will look at the story from a different point of view.

"Truths and misconceptions" about mentorship

- **I told him three times already, but he still does not know how to do it.**

Misconception. You can tell him 10 times, and he will still not know how to do it. First, think about how many things you remember when someone tells them to you. People receive information in a variety of ways. Some understand best if they hear something, others if they can see it and others still if they are able to experiment with it. So your mentee may be inclined to receive visual information. Draw it for them, write it down, sketch it out, colour it in, etc., instead of talking to them. On the other hand, the key to



effective communication is regular testing of knowledge. Ask your mentee to summarise and explain what you have told them in their own words.

- **I do not have time for a mentee.**

Misconception. This is by far the most frequent attitude on the part of mentors. While you are drowning in work, your mentee is bored. They would truly like to help you with your duties but do not get the opportunity to do so. Plan your work and try to think as objectively as possible about how your mentee could help you. Preferably, start thinking the way an experienced mentor would: how can I include the mentee in the work, so that I can take some of the load off myself.

- **The mentor also learns from the mentee.**

Truth. Only if the mentor is open to this idea. If the mentor believes that there is only one right way of doing things and

that the mentee is just a newcomer spouting theories from school, then the mentor will close the door to this reverse learning path. If, however, they see potential in the mentee and actively ask the latter to express new ideas, they will quickly find that their mentee is actually their partner. In areas where the mentor's knowledge is not as strong, the mentee usually gets even more involved and engaged in order to help their mentor. This is, of course, only the case when the mentor allows this. Together, they are even better.

- **The youth of today have no manners whatsoever.**

Misconception. Even the Greek philosophers complained about young people. New generations arrive with new ways of thinking that are foreign to the older generations, which is why the latter react emotionally to such behaviour. Be aware that you are not

the first to find the different style of the younger generation frustrating. Instead of complaining, you could ask yourself what you could learn from this younger man or woman so as to become wiser yourself.

- **I can become a better mentor if I learn to ask better questions.**

Truth. Mentors frequently fall into the trap of talking instead of teaching the mentee through considered questions. If a mentee arrives at a solution by themselves, they will remember the procedure better and understand the rules associated with the work. Keep the following three questions handy every day: What have you learned today? How could you do this differently? What would you suggest?

- **I can teach the mentee more if I find out what they already know.**

Truth. Some mentees have no experience whatsoever, while others have accumulated immense practical experience during their school years. Your relationship will be more successful if you first put an effort into learning what your mentee already knows. Even if this is only a minor thing. If they truly do not yet know anything, the mentee will usually tell you so, but will be grateful to you for expressing an interest in them. By enquiring about what they already know, it will be easier for you to adapt to their current understanding of the work process. The mentee will get the feeling that you trust them and truly wish them to progress in the work.

Now that we know a few truths and misconceptions about mentorship, we can take a look at the story of mentor Jože from the point of view of the mentee Boštjan.

"A month ago, Boštjan received his first employment as a production technician at a furniture factory. He was tasked with the monthly planning of the manufacture of chairs and the preparation of reports. His mentor is Jože, a highly respected supervisor who is training him for the work of a production technician. He always explains everything in detail. Boštjan was afraid that he would not be able to remember everything, so he started taking notes. Over the course of the previous month, they had three mentorship meetings, and Jože explained everything using professional terminology, but Boštjan was unfortunately unfamiliar with all of it. Boštjan was very much interested in the production aspect, and he enjoys doing concrete tasks.

Last week, Jože asked him to prepare a proposed chair manufacture plan including the KPFs, whereby the deadline was this morning. Boštjan researched the entire weekend what KPF stands for and



Mentoring couple who is aware of the truth and misconceptions about mentorship.

found various definitions but did not know which definition was the right one. He was embarrassed to ask Jože, who acted as if that was a generally known term. Boštjan made an effort and prepared the structure of the Excel sheet, into which he could then import data from the PIS (production information system), and the only thing he was missing was the meaning of KPF.

Let us assume that mentor Jože and mentee Boštjan had read each other's stories as well as the text about the 'misconceptions and truths' regarding mentorship. The effect would be as follows:

Jože explained the expert terminology to Boštjan more slowly and prepared a glossary of expert terminology and acronyms. Boštjan now knows that KPF stands for key production factors (time, shift cost, energy, quality and number of employees). Boštjan also has the courage to present to Jože his knowledge of Excel and the pivot tables that they can use to capture data from the PIS.

Doris Sattler, Špela Sušec, Petra Bajt, Darinka Trček, Katja Cankar, Zoran Keser, Maja Deisinger, Bogdana Brglez Fink, Ksenija Yoder Batič, Sašo Jobstl, Dušan Mikuž, Nives Prezelj, Mateja Poljšak, Tina Godec

Scholarships

The fundamental aim of scholarships is to raise the educational level of young people so that they are best prepared for their entry into the labour market after leaving school. Naturally, different scholarship programmes have different purposes.

Scholarships for occupations in demand and company scholarships or their co-financing contribute to the satisfaction of the needs of employers on the labour market and reduce structural unemployment. These scholarships can also provide important guidance for young people when they decide on education. There is a demonstrated need on the labour market for these occupations, which in turn means better employment options after one's studies. Company scholarships provide the additional advantage of working with an employer

already during one's studies and thus offer better links between education and work. Employers emphasise this as a desired characteristic, especially in first time employment seekers.

Zois scholarships aim to encourage young people to upgrade their formal knowledge through innovation, research and other activities. They reward outstanding achievements, thus encouraging recipients to develop important 21st century competences such as self-confidence, active contribution to the society and critical and innovative thinking.

Scholarships for international mobility provide support to young people in obtaining a global perspective of the world. They also learn to look at their country and environment from a distance and acquire intercultural competences, independence, communications skills, a

network of contacts, etc. Those who have spent time abroad for extended periods more often bring a fresh approach to their job. They also have the ability to work in diverse environments and in a flexible and open manner, because they learned how to adapt even in culturally diverse situations. Other elements they offer into the mix include team work and good communication skills in both their mother tongue and in foreign languages. These are young people who are open to new challenges and are motivated and ambitious. Many such individuals with excellent knowledge and experience acquired abroad are willing to return to Slovenia. However, they need to be offered suitable opportunities and challenges that would enable them to contribute as much as possible to development in various fields – science, the economy and the society.

Darinka Trček

Co-financing company scholarships and scholarships for occupations in demand

Ksenija Yoder Batič, Dušan Mikuž, Mateja Poljšak, Bogdana Brglez Fink, and Sašo Jobstl

Company scholarships as a sound investment in a successful future. »You reap what you sow.«

The employment of new personnel at a company always introduces a certain level of risk. The new associate might not possess suitable work habits, they might not fit in well in a new organisation or their interests might even conflict with the expectations and interests of the new employer. Timely investments into future associates can reduce or even do away with such risks altogether. The employer can also prepare itself for an HR expansion by preparing long-term plans and shaping the human resources it requires or will require in the future. A company scholarship can be an opportunity for the employer and the scholarship recipient to get to know one another and develop together in a way that is beneficial for both, thus writing a common success story. The risk that the employer and the recipient of a company scholarship will not be compatible upon hiring is thus significantly mitigated

The Fund's programmes in the area of company scholarship provision and investment in HR development enable investment into knowledge and occupations. They generate potential, satisfy the needs of the economy, contribute to the reduction in structural unemployment, increase the educational level and promote the return of educated members of the labour force from urban centres back to the local environment.

Integration of the scholarship recipient into the work process

In the period of the disbursement of the scholarship, it is crucial for the scholarship provider to plan and ensure the implementation of joint projects and activities (writing of papers and diploma theses, mandatory practical training – work placement, summer job, etc.). These allow the provider to get to know the scholarship recipient, their attitude towards work and their work habits as well as the opportunity to develop the recipient. The scholarship recipient thus gets to know the work, the team and the general atmosphere at the company.

Matic Kadliček received a scholarship from the Trgotur company throughout his education – from secondary school to the completion of his studies. For the last four years of his education, Trgotur received co-financing for his company scholarship

from the Fund. The company made it possible for Matic, as a scholarship recipient, to gradually familiarise himself with the work process already during his studies as well as to perform less exacting operational work assignments. He also learned about the company's principal activity and the workflow, met the company's clients and business partners and gradually acquired knowledge in the area of business thinking, networking, work ethics and customer support. Based on his experience and as a person involved in HR development at the company today, he is convinced that one of the biggest advantages of scholarships is the



Matic Kadliček, former recipient of the Trgotur company scholarship



Matej Kadliček, Managing Director of Trgotur

familiarisation and accustomization of the scholarship recipient to both the company's culture and work process.

Trgotur is a family-run company that has been providing HR services on the market for over 25 years. It is often the case at family-run companies that new generations of the family pursue education for occupations required by the company. Selecting a calling that makes one happy and contributes to the successful expansion of a family company is an especially gratifying choice. Matic decided to study psychology based on his own interests. They coincided with the interests in expanding the company into areas where the collaboration of a psychologist was required. The company namely detected a change in the thinking of employers. If a company's survival used to depend on development and equipment, today the emphasis is mainly on employees and their development. It frequently observed the need for soft and leadership skills on the market as well as for the monitoring of the pulse of the company – satisfaction, dedication, commitment, atmosphere and culture. Already during his studies, Matic began to work at the company more frequently, helping to build a more systematic approach to marketing using the developed new website, promotional coupons and services. He also helped develop "typical psychological" services and other services arising from HR development. When Matic completed his studies, he was employed at Trgotur as an HR psychologist, where he has been working for 4 years. During this time, he developed an entire new area of HR development that comprises more than 10 new services. He thus broadened the company's activities as well.

"In addition to broadening the activities, the scholarship recipient also developed the area of marketing, which already covers initial investments." Matej Kadliček, managing director of Trgotur

Deciding on a company scholarship should also be a decision towards a brighter future

The Fund has been co-financing company scholarships for employers since 2007. The calls for applications, under which the Fund co-finances up to 50% of the company scholarship but no more than 30% of the minimum wage, have to date attracted the applications of nearly 1,400 employers from around Slovenia. These companies applied for scholarships for more than 3,200 scholarship recipients.

Nataša Prostor is a custodian of agreements on the co-financing of company scholarships at the Trgotur company. She firmly believes that the co-financing of company scholarships offered by the Fund encourages even employers that are still somewhat reticent or have good ideas but too few resources to grant company scholarships. She also says that serious employers decide to award scholarships regardless of receiving state co-financing. Trgotur encourages granting company scholarships to people who exhibit potential, because they believe that it is an excellent way for the scholarship provider and recipient to help and get to know one another. The former can monitor the latter and to some extent also develop the recipient so that it is easier for the recipient to enter the provider's work environment.

The advantage for employers that grant company scholarships is mainly in their orientation and view towards the future and the raising of quality. These employers are aware of the opportunities and the fact that development is a never ending journey that requires new people, different modes of thinking, different approaches and tools and the like. In the long-term, even the most reserved employers recognise the potential of investing in future human resources that later turn out to be essential for the company.

Using Regional Scholarship Schemes (hereinafter: RSS) to reduce development differences between regions

The RSS project reduces the gap between the economies of individual regions, educational activity and conditions on the labour market and at the same time illustrates a model example of good cooperation between employers, the local community and the state. At the regional level, the RSS project contributes importantly towards the reduction of unemployment among youth, it provides (in a planned manner) for a more coordinated balance between educated human resources and actual needs on the labour market in an individual region and contributes to more congruous regional development.

Co-financing of company scholarships within the scope of the RSS project takes place in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, the Fund and the regional development agencies (hereinafter: RDA) as the providers of the RSS, i.e. by providing funds to the RDAs from the European Social Fund for the 50% co-financing of the company scholarship and the coverage of expenses arising from the implementation of the RSS.

The result of the successful implementation of the RSS project is demonstrated in the number of company scholarships granted. Since the 2008/2009 academic year up to an including the 2013/2014 academic year, the RSS assisted in the awarding of 3,462 company scholarships at the level of the entire country; 1,881 scholarship recipients completed their education during this period, and nearly 1,000 are now employed.

The fact that the RSS project is enjoying strong support and is considered highly important is evident from the example of the border region of Koroška, where an



Ceremony upon the signing of the scholarship award agreement in Celje, 7 December 2012, Source: RASR, d.o.o.



Information event for the promotion of company scholarship programmes in the Gorica region organised by the Posočje development Centre (SOURCE: Posoški razvojni center).

Analysis of the Implementation of the Koroška Regional Scholarship Scheme was carried out in June 2014. The scheme was implemented in the Koroška region starting in 2005 in the form of direct financial incentives, but from 2008 onwards it has been carried out within the scope of the joint regional scholarship scheme with co-financing from the ESF and is therefore well-known to the region's population. The scheme has been accepted well by employers, pupils and students, as it is realising its purpose and yielding the expected results. In the 2008 –2014 period, there were calls for applications for 728 scholarships and 402 of these were granted. Most of the scholarships that were not granted were for the area of mechanical engineering, i.e. occupations such as a metallurgist, metal worker and mechanical engineering technician. The Koroška RDA states that the reason for this lies mainly in the lack of interest in such vocations, while it is these vocations on that are the most required in the region. Pupils and students decide to apply for company scholarships on account of the current economic conditions in the Koroška region, as it is difficult to find employment after the completion of studies. A scholarship also represents an important source of monthly income. Scholarships also motivate pupils and students to regularly fulfil their obligations and complete their education on time.

A typical scholarship recipient under the RSS of the Savinjska region is a first year student of mechanical engineering at the University of Maribor receiving a company scholarship in the amount of EUR 367.55. Analysis of the implementation of the 2014 Savinjska region RSS

Jernej Turščak decided on a company scholarship in his second year of studies at the faculty of Natural Sciences and Engineering because of his desire to get a job in his home town after completing his studies. His story was presented in June 2014, i.e. in the analysis of the implementation of the Koroška RSS.

Jernej Turščak found the study of metallurgy to be attractive and interesting but did not decide to apply for a scholarship in his first year of study. "Upon enrolling in the faculty, I was not familiar with company scholarships, and I was also not sure about how my studies would proceed as I got scared in the beginning that failure would mean that I would have to pay back the scholarship." He decided on the scholarship for other reasons in addition to the guaranteed employment. "After completing my first year, I knew that I was good at this so wanted to ensure certain financial security for myself and decided to apply for a scholarship. I was encouraged to do so by the company where I had a summer job." Metal Ravne, a company with around 1,000 employees, is one of the employers in the region that applies for tenders and awards the most scholarships.

"There is no need to look for additional work during the academic year, and you can thus devote all your time and energy to your studies. You can establish strong ties with the employer while studying, and they provide you with materials so as to help you in the preparation of seminar papers. They also provide you with a summer job, work placement and help with the diploma thesis." Jernej Turščak, recipient of the company scholarship granted by the Metal Ravne company, on the advantages of a company scholarship.

Jernej received the scholarship for four years and has now been employed at the company since 2011. He believes the advantages of the scholarship to be financial security and ties established with the employer as well as the possibility of gaining experience while studying. "As part of the summer job, you learn about various areas of the company's operations and you can find the area that suits you best and for which you can specialise during your studies." During his studies, Jernej thus quickly found a plant that attracted him most and which he found

interesting from the point of view of research activity. " Already during my studies, I familiarised myself with the work in production, which was very useful for me upon employment as I did not have to start from scratch."

Jernej's obligatory employment period under the scholarship agreement will soon expire, but he nevertheless says: "I am content with the work and relations at the company, which is why I see myself working for the company in the future." He adds: "If I had to make the choice again, I would have decided on the scholarship a year earlier, at the very start of my studies."



Balancing supply and demand on the labour market with scholarships for occupations in demand

One of the most pressing challenges on the labour market is the structural imbalance that is reflected in the large gap between the demand by employers for individual profiles and the supply. Despite the high unemployment figures, employers are unable to secure adequately educated and trained personnel for certain occupations. The purpose of scholarships for occupations in demand that will be granted by the Fund in accordance with the new Scholarship Act is to guide young people to choose these occupations in order to contribute to the balancing of the situation on the labour market.



Brain circulation with the Ad futura programme

Doris Sattler, Špela Sušec, Petra Bajt, Darinka Trček, Katja Cankar, Zoran Keser and Maja Deisinger

Promoting Mobility to Foreign Countries – The World Is Our Classroom

Today's rapidly changing and knowledge-based society requires a highly educated, flexible, creative and innovative labour force. Encouraging study abroad and short-term study mobility or student exchange is an important component of the internationalisation of higher education and contributes in various ways to increasing the competitiveness and employability of young people. Students who have had mobility experience abroad undoubtedly stand out on the labour market, as they enhance their knowledge of one or more languages while abroad, which is certainly an advantage in the eyes of potential employers. Knowledge of languages facilitates communication and the building of relations with (potential) foreign partners. As part of their time abroad, students also experience personal growth and development.



Tina Vujašković, International Relations Office, Faculty of Economics, Ljubljana

When they move abroad and integrate into a new environment, they encounter a different culture and customs and are often faced with unexpected problems and challenges. Managing such situations contributes to their flexibility and creativity in the search for solutions, their independence in making decisions and finally their maturity and self-confidence, which are indispensable qualities for career success.

"Students who have had the opportunity to experience study abroad return home more independent and with higher self-esteem. They see things and events differently and are more open to new projects and ideas. The student exchange programme provides them with a vision of where and how to start their professional careers. Many exchange students later find it easier to find work or mandatory practical training (work placement), because the student exchange programme teaches them how important it is to acquire work experience during one's studies. Companies that hire in an international environment look for candidates who are capable of adapting to stressful situations and solving problems and are accepting of cultural differences. It is important for future employment seekers who wish to be competitive in these times of growing unemployment to encounter the need to adapt to cultural changes as early as during their studies."
Tina Vujašković, International Relations Office, Faculty of Economics, Ljubljana.

International enhancement of knowledge during study visits

Short-term mobility programmes or study visits abroad provide individual students with an international educational, language and cultural experience in the selected country in Europe or outside it and contribute both to their personal development and their qualifications. Study visits can be made within the scope of organised programmes, whereby one of the best known ones among students is Erasmus+. Students can also alternatively organise such study visits by themselves.

The Fund has enabled the acquisition of knowledge and experience in the international environment to more than 11,000 pupils and students since 2009 by way of financial incentives for various forms of study visits.

Young people who do part of their studies abroad find themselves in a completely new environment, surrounded by new people as well as different customs, languages and cultures. This creates personal growth. They also acquire knowledge or working and practical experience at recognised foreign educational institutions, companies and other organisations. As part of their study visit abroad, they acquire competences they would certainly not have acquired by simply studying at home. Short-term study-related mobility is also a suitable alternative for those who are thinking about studying abroad, because it provides them with an opportunity to explore and find out whether studying abroad is in fact something they truly desire.

Where there's a will there's a way!!

Erika Gioahin, microbiology student, broadened both her professional and cultural horizons during her practical training at the Institute of Life Science, Thai Nguyen University of Agriculture and Forestry in Vietnam: "It is undoubtedly very challenging to live and work in a place where people and their culture and language are entirely different," says Erika. She also emphasises that it was not easy for her in the beginning but is now happy to say that those times are her most valued life



Work at the lab, Vietnam.

experiences. Owing to her stay and work in Vietnam, she has become more independent, responsible and resourceful. She has also become more confident in her work at the lab. The international experience has given her an additional impetus and the desire for continued training abroad, which is why she is now gaining new knowledge in Brno within the scope of the Erasmus practical training.

Experience is the greatest capital

"As an architecture student in Istanbul, I was able to discover different spaces and interiors as well as different cultures, which is an important experience for a space planner. In today's world, it is very important to establish ties and gain new experiences, both of which are that much more intensive in a new environment. Young people can thus bring many newly acquired experiences and successfully integrate them at Slovenian companies."
Katja Keržan, architecture student, host institution: Istanbul Bilgi University, Turkey.

Broadening one's horizons

"The things I learned abroad and could not have learned here are tied to a different method of work. I attended courses that are not available at the faculty at home; I encountered a different culture and environment and have tasted life abroad. I am happy to use the concepts and knowledge gained in my current studies and compare them to the domestic

environment." Jernej Drofenik, student of the University Business and Economics School, host institution: National University of Singapore, Singapore.

"No worries, mate!"

The study visit of Timotej Turk Dermastia took place "down under" in faraway Australia, i.e. the Edith Cowan University. The biology student describes his experience in Australia, which is mostly one giant wilderness, as a privilege: "Kangaroos and snakes roamed freely in the garden of the place where I stayed. And there was also the ocean and my love for scuba diving and surfing and of course the life at sea. It is still difficult for me to say how my experience is linked to my competitiveness, but the fact remains that I was willing to go half way around the world. This gave me a completely different outlook on life and the field I am involved in. While there, I attended lectures in English and successfully passed the tests in a country where English is the official language. I got better grades than my local colleagues on many occasions. I am now able to see the big picture in the field of biology. I have also gotten to know many experts, mainly professors, with whom I might even work again. Australia is an expensive country, it is far away and Australians are a bit too stubborn for my tastes, but they keep repeating the sentence that you cannot help but start repeating yourself if you live in Australia: "No worries, mate!"

Go with the flow and it will take you in the right direction!

"I learned in secondary school that I need a lot of knowledge and Let yourself be taken by the current, into experience in order to be competitive. This is why I decided on active and educational vacations in Spain where I attended a course in Spanish and also experienced Spanish culture."

Ana Marija Udovič, pupil of Gimnazija Želimlje (grammar school); host institution: Lacunza International House, Spain.

Be adaptable and nice, and trust in yourself and your own abilities!

"In Russia, I learned mainly to trust in myself and my own decisions. By learning Russian and getting to know the Russian way of life and thinking, I have become more competitive on the labour market, as this has provided me with the opportunity to work abroad. I will soon be starting a new life in Dubai." Manca Čalič; *culturology student, host institution: Saint Petersburg State University, School of International Relations, Russia.*

Beer – from the initial idea to the end buyer

Helena Treska, a student of entrepreneurship, did her seven-week practical training at a micro brewery in Ecuador. She describes her experience as "phenomenal" and "very instructive" both from the point of view of culture and of work. In addition to different customs, foods and ways of thinking of the people, the work environment is also extremely different to that in Slovenia. It is namely highly disorganised, lacks specific knowledge and is characterised by different work habits.

"Everything is more laid back", says Helena. I am convinced that the practical training has provided me with a lot of useful knowledge. Working in a small company has given her an insight into all of the processes, as she was able to follow the company's product from the initial idea to the end buyer. She worked on different processes at the micro brewery: preparation of business models, marketing, promotional event organisation, contacts with business partners, logistics and production. "That's true, I learned a lot of other things like chemistry and processes that take place in the wondrous vats when beer is brewed," Helena concluded.

Life is too short to be average. Don't ever be afraid of anything new and different

"While abroad, I certainly learned how to integrate into an environment that is completely foreign and different. I also learned to trust in myself and my own abilities. After the student exchange programme, I became a lot more self-confident, which helps me enormously in overcoming new challenges." Marko Vidić, student of the University Degree Programme Business and Economics Sciences, host institution: Kyungpook National University, Republic of Korea.

Exchange = knowledge for one's whole life

"The study visit in Kazakhstan enabled me to learn Russian quickly, which makes me a much more interesting candidate for employers, especially those doing business in the country I visited." Max Borštnar, student of the University Degree Programme Business and Economics Sciences, host institution: KIMEP University, Kazakhstan.



Brewing beer at a micro-brewery, Ecuador.



Teaching at a primary school in India.

"Tell me and I will forget. Teach me and I may remember. Involve me and I learn."
(Benjamin Franklin)

The Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Initiative is the first youth programme that aims to develop relations between Europe and the US. Its objective is to promote ties between American and European youth and raise awareness of common values and cultural ties.

It is an exciting and unique summer school for young people from the US and Europe that organises numerous activities. It focuses on civic education and the acquisition of leadership and activism skills with the aim of training a young generation of Europeans and Americans to be able to jointly face the global challenges of the 21st century. Despite the jam-packed schedule, there is certainly no shortage of fun at the summer school. Students can attend sporting events, visit parks and go to concerts as well as see promotions of the participants' countries.

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) was a statesman, a diplomat, a journalist and an enlightened man. His name was adopted by The Benjamin Franklin Transatlantic Fellows Initiative programme.



Benjamin Franklin

Summer school in the US as a Hollywood movie

Jure Tuš attended the summer school in the US in 2014. The knowledge gained comes in handy when he plans

academic projects, research assignments and public appearances. He believes that going to America is an excellent reference for the future. The variety of activities can in his opinion convince employers in fields ranging from entrepreneurship and art to volunteering in the community. He would like to tell his peers that the decision to study abroad is one of the best decisions they can make. A visit to any foreign country can only serve to broaden a student's horizons. If you are unable to find your way around, you can still return home, but you will be richer in terms of a myriad new experiences.

"In many ways, the summer school in the US was like a Hollywood movie: a vortex of emotions ranging from the initial excitement, even fear, to the sadness at the end when I realised that my visit was drawing to a close. But my experience was nevertheless different in one way. I will remember it my entire life, as it has marked me and my way of thinking in numerous ways." Jure Tuš



Jure Tuš, USA

"I would advise anyone wishing to go on a study visit abroad to be as open, courageous and fearless as possible. New experience and personal contacts gained abroad are invaluable. Each new experience is perhaps difficult in the beginning because of the distance and loss of the safety of the home environment, family and friends, but it is also a new beginning. Despite returning home, your world changes because you leave a part of your heart on the other side of the world." Nives Trošt

Getting a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree abroad

A student who has been on a short study visit abroad may decide – on account of the positive experience in a different study system – to continue their studies abroad. There are many educational institutions



abroad that offer a broad range of excellent study programmes that are not (yet) available in Slovenia. Quality, a different method of study and the reputation of the educational institution are the most

frequent reasons for students deciding to study abroad. In addition to a different educational system, better conditions for studying and research and the numerous extracurricular activities a student can participate in during their studies, there are plenty of other advantages to studying abroad. It contributes to an individual's personal, cultural and language development and employability. Many of them decide on an independent business journey.

International knowledge and the establishment of ties are vital for continuing the family tradition

"While abroad, I learned mainly that success requires connecting people from various professions and industries (wine-making, culinary arts, tourism, etc.)." Aleš

Aleš Kunej hails from a family that cultivates reed and makes wine. His family desired to keep developing the cultivation of vineyards and winemaking, so he took a scholarship from Ad futura and ventured out to France to gain new knowledge.



Aleš Kunej, MSc International Vintage, École Supérieure d'Angers, France, while pouring wine

Once there, he enrolled in a wine-making study programme at a private French university, the École Supérieure d'Angers. After completing his studies, he and his schoolmate from Portugal, who is now his wife, received concrete employment offers in France but chose Slovenia despite having some second thoughts about it. Once he had returned home, Aleš used the knowledge he acquired abroad and merged it with the efforts within the family company to create a unique beverage, the first chocolate wine in Slovenia.

The hunt for effective applied solutions

One of the young recipients of the Ad futura scholarship who planted entrepreneurial seeds in Slovenia after completing his studies is the promising researcher Luka Mustafa, who completed his studies at University College London and established the Inštitut IRNAS Rače institute in Slovenia. He researches innovative construction of new and useful items and strives to come up with unusual and effective solutions that are directly usable in the broader environment. Employing open source approaches, he connects the knowledge acquired during his studies with fresh new technologies, thus generating applied solutions for general use.

International knowledge applied to the development of cycling



Borut Fonda, student of the PhD Sport and Exercise Sciences programme, University of Birmingham, UK.

Borut Fonda, a former mountain biking competitor, used the Ad futura scholarship to enrol in a PhD study at the University of Birmingham. He joined the S2P Znanost v prakso company that is involved in scientific research and development of measurement technology for application in sports, medicine and rehabilitation. As the head of the S2P Cycling Science programme, which specialises in cycling and is the result of several years of research and development, he is able to continue to develop his passion for sports. It provides diagnostic-practice services. The programme received a lot of attention from Slovenian and foreign professional and recreational cyclists. The technology and work method were also noticed by the organisers of the Slovenian innovation forum.

We can improve ourselves internationally and gain locally

Žiga Pižorn became interested in energy generation studies when observing the construction of a passive house at home. He was completely fascinated with the study, as it was based predominantly on project work that was mainly performed in conjunction



Žiga Pižorn, Master of Science in Sustainable Energy Engineering, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden.

with various Swedish companies. They produced a proposed energy plan for Bolivia for the extraction of lithium from a salt lake. During his studies, he studied the conditions and methods for the generation of electricity from low temperature flue gas and then brought his knowledge to the Štore Steel company and later the Kolektor company.

Impossible is possible

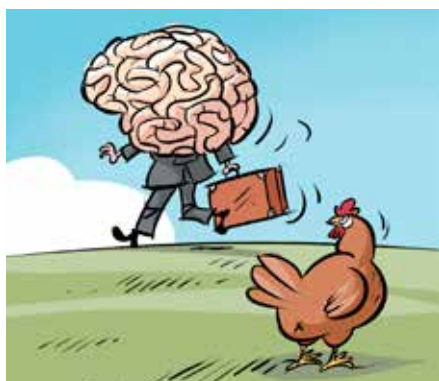


Luka Banović, BSc in Acoustics and Music, University of Southampton, UK.

Studying with the assistance of the Ad futura scholarship in the English Southampton allowed Luka to connect his musical talent with technology. He was aware that studying acoustic engineering and music is rather unusual, especially for the Slovenian market, but he wanted to prove that the two fields, which are antithetical at first glance, could be merged. Upon his return to Slovenia, he got involved with the Primorska-based Letrika company, where he tests his knowledge in practice under the mentorship of Martin Furlan, head of research and development in the fields of noise, vibration and product durability.

Brain drain or untapped potential abroad?

The mobility of young people for the



purposes of study, work or research abroad is not bad in and of itself, because knowledge needs to be enriched. This becomes a concern if people into which the state has invested heavily remain abroad on a long-term basis. Only in this case do we speak of brain drain, which certainly represents a loss for the country in terms of precious development potential. This is why the state must strive to attract educated people (to return) to Slovenia and create an incentivising environment in order for them to stay (on a long-term basis). Among the measures for the creation of favourable conditions, we should mention primarily the scholarship, family and tax policy as well as the labour market policy, etc.

The state should also be aware that educated Slovenians who live and work abroad represent enormous untapped potential. Using their knowledge, invaluable experience and connections, acclaimed and well-established experts working abroad could contribute to change that is vital for the further development of Slovenia. It is therefore important for the state, in conjunction with other stakeholders (educational institutions, the private sector, Slovenian experts and their societies abroad), to continuously search for ways of preserving and establishing ties with educated people abroad and to enable mutual exchange of knowledge within the scope of various forms of association and cooperation.

Training future Slovenian doctors with the help of a top level expert, Dr. Igor D. Gregorič, MD



Dr. Igor D. Gregorič, MD

Dr. Igor D. Gregorič, MD; a top level cardiovascular and thoracic surgeon at the Texas Medical Center in Houston, took across the pond in 1984 as a young doctor. Today, he enables Slovenian medical students to perform elective rotations in the field of cardiovascular surgery and cardiology at the world's largest medical complex. Aiming to promote international cooperation and training of future Slovenian doctors, he has hosted more than 250 Slovenian medical students who took part in the programme with the help of Ad futura scholarship.

It's not the winning...



but the taking part!

Competing for the best position in a competition motivates young people to put in their best effort and to be as innovative and creative as possible in their thinking. This contributes to the discovery and realisation of their potential as well as to the popularity of the discipline.

Since 2007, the Fund has financed the participation of more than 1,500 students and their mentors in international competitions abroad. Pupils and students took part in knowledge competitions (mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry, programming, etc.), research competitions and competitions in the field of development (robotics, construction of remote controlled planes, construction of single-seater race cars, etc.). Competitions take place all around the world, but competitors most frequently attend competitions in the US, Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic and Germany.

The strengthening of the competitive spirit at such competitions contributes greatly to enhancement of the knowledge acquired during one's education, development of practical skills and effective presentation as well as critical assessment of knowledge and abilities. By competing abroad, young people also come into contact with other cultures, customs and languages, thus broadening their horizons. These competitions are also an excellent opportunity to establish ties between schools and faculties and sometimes even companies. They also contribute to the recognition of Slovenia abroad.

It's not the winning but the taking part that matters

A well-known saying suggests that

it is not about the triumph but the struggle, yet the pupils from the Postojna Secondary School of Forestry and Wood Technology can also boast of the triumph, and not only once! At the European forestry skills competition that they have been competing in for 11 years, they have achieved the championship title three times, came in second place five times and placed third on two occasions. In a competition between 18 countries where knowledge of the forest and specific knowledge of



European championship in forestry skills, felling cut and undercut.

chainsaw work techniques is assessed (chain fitting, felling, limbing, bucking by combined cut and precision bucking), their results rank them at the very top in Europe. This year, they will attend the competition in Estonia, and we are keeping our fingers crossed!

"At the competition, pupils show and test the level of knowledge they acquired during their education. They also acquire communication and presentation skills and bolster their sense of perseverance and patience. Thanks to the challenges during the preparations for the competition and during the competition itself, they leave secondary school more mature, independent and responsible as well as better prepared for the challenges awaiting them in their lives." Janez Meden, mentor at the European Championship in Forestry Skills.

Legal safe cracking...

This may sound funny, but in all honesty if you forget the code to the safe that houses your precious belongings, look no further than the students of Gimnazija Nova Gorica for help. They have for several years been taking part in the safe cracking competition that takes place at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. Each group taking part in the competition produces a safe in order

to be eligible for participation; the safe is a locked box that is unlocked by solving non-trivial physics puzzles.



Highlights from the physics safe cracking competition.

Groups have 10 minutes to break into a competitor's safe. The scoring takes into account originality and implementation of the puzzle in the locking mechanism, the number of groups that are able to crack the safe, the number of safes a group has managed to crack and how the safe was assessed by the other groups. In 2012, they took an excellent second place. In March of 2015, pupils from Gimnazija Želimlje won the competition.

"It takes the pupils who take part in the competition several months to plan and produce the safe. During this process, they learn the steps that need to be taken and the problems that need to be overcome on the journey from an idea to the production of a functioning and resilient safe. Pupils must possess a strong theoretical background in the principles of physics and must be able to apply a great deal of engineering knowledge for the safe to function as they had envisioned. Often, the original ideas need to be adjusted, modified or even abandoned, and new ideas frequently spring up during the safe production process. Pupils learn about the process of planning and producing a prototype of a scientific and engineering product." Janez Meden, mentor for the safe cracking competition.

Fly ... an unmanned plane

For the eighth consecutive year, students from the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of the University of Ljubljana departed for the competition in the construction of remote controlled unmanned planes. The event, which was organised by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics, took place in Tucson, Arizona, US. It challenges aeronautics



Competitors of the unmanned plane construction competition.

students to use the theoretical knowledge accumulated during their studies in order to construct a competitive remote controlled aircraft, which requires sound knowledge of aerodynamics, aviation structure mechanics, materials, electronics, aircraft electric motors and piloting knowledge. Despite their airplane sustaining damage during the trip, putting the team's participation into question, the students managed to repair the plane by the start of the competition through sheer perseverance and hard work. Despite the unfortunate event, they won, beating 84 teams from 16 countries. According to their mentor, students learned an important life lesson from this unfortunate event, i.e. that team work and a competitive spirit yield top level results and that one should never give up no matter how dire the situation may seem.

"Students gain practical knowledge at the competition. They learn how to build a competitive plane, how to construct an efficient plane that can fly fast using a small amount of energy and how to use light-weight materials for airplane construction. The competition also encourages innovative ideas for the design of mechanisms. Students learn to calculate the actual flight characteristics of the plane, the methods for the testing of the plane and the measurement of actual flight characteristics using flight parameter recorders. Students come to the realisation of how to transfer their theoretical knowledge into actual practice and also learn team work, skills they can use when producing their diploma thesis, in their employment in the aviation industry or for further studies. The competition has all the traits of a competitive battle on the market where various manufacturers compete for the global market share and try to satisfy the requirements of the market with their product as best as possible. Students go through practically the entire process – from the requirements and product development to the manufacture and trials." Janez Meden, mentor for the unmanned plane competition.



1st place in the unmanned plane construction competition, Faculty of Engineering, University of Ljubljana.

Compete and take part in "healing" the world

Pupils from Gimnazija Vič will be attending the ISWEEEP competition (International Sustainable World Energy, Engineering, Environment – Project Olympiad) for the fifth year running. It is an Olympiad where competitors square off against each other in the areas of energy, engineering, the environment and sustainable development. It is a contest geared towards direct applicability of research in the area of sustainable development. The competition is organised by Harmony Public Schools and the K-12 Public Charter School System with

partners from universities and the industry. It enjoys extensive support from the Cosmos Foundation, other sponsors in the area of energy and companies involved in resolving environmental problems and in computer science. The competition, which is held in Houston, US, includes competitors from 70 countries from around the world and more than 40 states of the US. The pupils of Gimnazija Vič boast four silver and three bronze medals.

"The competition emphasises integrating research in a broader social context and displaying the practical use of one's research as best as possible or at least the planning (in the paper) of a concrete continuation of the research. This orientation is not as pronounced in Slovenian competitions, even though it is highly important.

Competitors also learn to present their work at all levels of difficulty:

- explaining in a straightforward manner the basic terms to the youngest visitors from primary schools as well as lay adult participants;
- providing an in-depth explanation and justification of one's findings to the experts from research institutions; and
- demonstrating the importance and usability of one's research to representatives of companies and politicians.

It is crucial that the presentation is interesting and attractive and for the pupils to be able to adapt to the comprehension level and demands of the audience. In doing so, they also acquire the ability to express themselves in English.

The authenticity of the research is substantiated by the participants through a printed version of the research report and the log that has been diligently compiled throughout the research period, which is something that is not required in Slovenian competitions." Alenka Mozer, mentor for the ISWEEEP competition.



Highlights from the ISWEEEP competition

New knowledge creation is the driving force of progress

Science is also responsible for the development of the society as it can contribute significantly to the improvement of Slovenia's competitive capabilities and the development of prosperity and the quality of life at home and around the world. As the science generates new knowledge and engages people in the resolution of concrete economic and social challenges, its role in the broader social environment becomes increasingly recognised.

If we want science to address global challenges and continue to be a driver of progress, we must promote an active overcoming of national boundaries and the international training of top level researchers and scientists. The Fund has contributed to this goal in the 2005–2014 period with the programme involving the co-financing of research collaboration to facilitate entry to world-renowned research centres, institutes and universities to future doctors of science.

Over the last ten years, the Fund has helped more than 400 young researchers and PhD students to go abroad and start various research projects in order to contribute their own piece to the colourful mosaic of joint knowledge and experience for the development of our economy, society and the environment, especially from the point of view of the observation of new requirements and challenges facing the global society.

Taking into account extreme weather conditions when planning energy infrastructure

Landscape architect Maruša Matko is involved in the observation of risks resulting from climate change and extreme weather conditions when planning energy infrastructure. The scholarship programme has provided her with an opportunity to perform part of her practical training at Fukushima, Japan where they are actively planning for reconstruction measures as part of the remediation measures following the earthquake, tsunami and the release of radioactive substances in March 2011. They are also planning for new use of space there.

"I believe that the knowledge of the consideration of risks in spatial planning that I acquired in Japan can help me contribute to the quality and safety of spatial planning in Slovenia and consequently the development of our society." Maruša Matko, researcher at the Jožef Stefan Institute.

Greater energy efficiency is essential for the adaptation to environmental change as it carries a lot of potential for the improvement of the society's competitiveness, green growth and employment opportunities. This was the goal of the nanoscience and nanotechnology student at the Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School, Rok Rudež, who used the scholarship to attend the Wrocław University of Technology in Poland for three months.

The product of the joint work by a research group was a prototype of a high-



Rok Rudež, student of the Jožef Stefan International Post-Graduate School.

efficiency and stable thermoelectric micro generator which converts heat directly into electricity. Thermoelectric generators thus represent great potential for the use of waste heat energy that would otherwise end up in the environment (e.g. heating, car exhausts, industrial processes, etc.).

"The possibility of working with top level institutions and experts from around Europe allows us to deepen and expand our knowledge and become top level experts in our fields. The knowledge thus gained

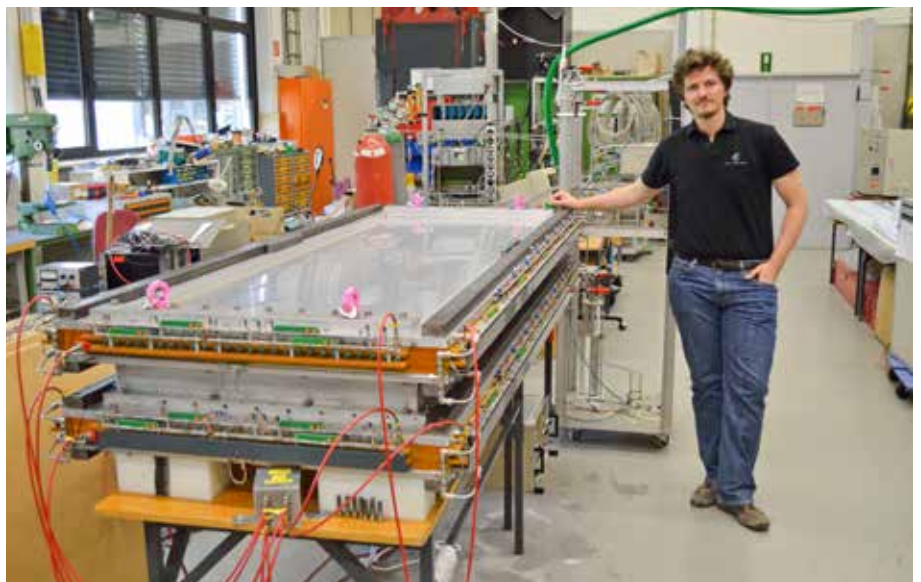
is important both for the development of science and the transfer of knowledge into the economy." Rok Rudež, PhD student at the Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School.

Ensuring the safety of the use of nuclear energy

During his study visit at the Nuclear Research and Consultancy Group in the Netherlands, PhD student of nuclear technology, Tadej Holler, performed experiments simulating the combustion of hydrogen in containment buildings of a nuclear power plant that are used to contain fission products in case of damage to the reactor system that would otherwise be released into the environment. The simulations are crucial for designing and analysing the structural integrity of the containment building and contribute to ensuring the highest possible safety of the use of nuclear energy.

Nuclear physics in everyday life

Samo Štajner concerns himself with questions in the area of structure and behaviour of atom cores. He has the following to say about his visit to the Institute of Nuclear Physics of the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz where he learned to operate gas drift chambers among other things: "The visit's value is enormous in terms of the transfer of knowledge into the Slovenian academic environment, and the corporate sector also has extensive needs for such knowledge, e.g. in the nuclear and medical industries. The most basic example of the use of ionisation chambers in everyday life is smoke detectors."



Samo Štajner, PhD student of physics, next to a gas drift chamber.

Think the unthinkable

The Fulbright programme has been in operation since 1946, awarding around 8,000 scholarships for visits by Americans to over 155 countries around the world and for visits by foreigners from said countries to the US. In order to establish a system for international exchange, it was the US senator James William Fulbright, from whom the programme got its name, who invested a lot of effort more than 60 years ago. Slovenia has been participating in the Fulbright programme for 50 years. During this time, approximately 400 Slovenians visited the US, among them acclaimed scientists, researchers, culture professionals, attorneys, university chancellors, medical doctors and others. The Fund has been a partner of the Fulbright programme since 2011, whereby the Fund works with the US Embassy in Ljubljana on the implementation of the programme.

"We must dare to think about unthinkable things. We must learn to explore all of the options and possibilities that confront us in a complex and rapidly changing world." James William Fulbright.



J. W. Fulbright, US senator, 1905–1995.

"Let's play the flute"

Ana Kavčič Pucihar, MA, academic musician, flute specialist and professor, is the author of the first Slovenian notebook for the flute entitled "Let's Play the Flute" and the founder of the flute teaching system through musical didactic games.

As a Fulbright grant recipient, she visited the Boise State University in Idaho, USA, in 2015 where she translated and adapted the notebook Fluting Stars for American children. In cooperation with the host university, she also developed a mobile phone application that will further enhance the notebook. The distance from home helps her see things in a different light. Access to resources that are not available at home or are

very expensive, the proactive approach of professors and their interest for the exchange of knowledge will all certainly enrich her both on the personal and professional levels. She proudly finds that she has begun to appreciate much more the system of music schools in Slovenia that is taken for granted, which was also confirmed by her American colleagues. She can also confirm that Slovenian musicians exhibit a higher level of quality than their American peers.

Hand in hand with nature

"We exploit nature all too often and never give anything back. We are eternally indebted to her." Peter Movrin.

The sustainable development strategy has three pillars according to the definition of the UN: economic development, social development and environmental protection. It is all about development that strives to maintain the balance



Creation of Peter Movrin

between the three pillars and represents a road to an equilibrium in the society and in nature. Because of the historical heritage, we can add culture to these three pillars of sustainable development in Slovenia.

In recent years, the Fund has been encouraging and making young people aware of the importance of active involvement in sustainable development of Slovenia by giving awards to Slovenian pupils and students who contributed to sustainable development in the economy, society and nature protection in Slovenia and in the broader environment through excellent achievements.

Sustainable fashion

One of the recipients of the award for the contribution to sustainable development includes the fashion designer Peter Movrin who received the award for his collection "Polst" (Felt) which is made entirely by hand from wool from autochthonous Slovenian sheep bred in Kočevje. Sustainable fashion, sometimes referred to as eco fashion, is part of a growing philosophy in design that state "re-use, make smaller, recycle". These are the principles of environmental protection and social responsibility towards the environment through the use of environmentally-friendly materials and an eco approach to the creation and manufacture of clothes. The use of natural and autochthonous materials also

strengthens our cultural identity and enables development even in the economically weaker parts of Slovenia.

"The award came just at the right time and the right person. The project was very interesting as I worked with people who used to be part of the textile industry and shepherds. Sustainability is a much talked about topic in fashion today and all too often strewn with deception. In addition to the factors and the process that are important for an article of clothing to be created from a plant, I also deal mainly with 100% consumption of the material used for making patterns for clothes. All of the material colouring and processing procedures in the textile industry are very inhumane. Buyers are not aware of this enough. I would like to communicate to my peers, employers and the general public that one needs to be fast and have a good idea. Making a purse from wood and bragging about it being made of wood from Slovenian forests is much too little. You need to have something more." Peter Movrin.

Devoted to the work in the area of sustainable development

Gašper Benedik received the Fund's award for the contribution to the sustainable development of the society in 2009



Centrifugal separator for water vacuum cleaners.

for his research and development of an innovative product – the centrifuge separator for vacuum cleaners. He remains fully committed to the work in the area of sustainable development.

"This was my first real success story; the diploma thesis that resulted in an innovative product on the market and two patent applications. The Fund's reward represented an important recognition of the work I have done and an additional incentive and guidance towards projects in the area of aerodynamics that came over the following years. I have changed

my area of work twice since receiving the reward, but remained faithful to sustainable development.

As part of the managing of the hydrogen technology development centre, the consortium of 8 partner companies, institutes and the faculty have been dealing with technology that produces energy without any carbon dioxide emissions. In recent years, we have been responsible at the Danfoss multinational for the development of a product portfolio of innovative solutions for air conditioning which brings 20% savings in terms of energy consumption and carbon dioxide emissions as compared to the traditional solution. When I received the award, I became aware of the importance of sustainable development and I undertook to devote my career to the development of technologies that contribute to the sustainable development of the society. What is better than watching the results of your labour reflected in the decrease of environmental burdens, improved health of the users and increased employment rate as well as a simultaneously contributing to the improvement of the economic indicators of Slovenia." Gašper Benedik.

Promoting mobility to Slovenia

Supporting incoming mobility is very important for the development of higher education because it brings numerous indirect and direct benefits. Some of the direct benefits include the so-called internationalisation at home or the setup of an international environment for domestic students who are not mobile, meaning that such internationalisation represents an alternative to outgoing mobility. Attracting quality students from abroad enables the exchange of cultural values, points of view and knowledge which in turn contributes to variegated and quality study. The indirect effects include the deepening of cooperation between countries, from which the students hail, and assistance to developing countries in the area of education in terms of the training of educated human resources for the countries' further development. Quality foreign students represent a potential labour force for the host country after their studies, i.e. mainly in the areas or occupations, for which the demand exceeds supply on the Slovenian labour market.

Tina Vujašković, International Relations Office, Faculty of Economics, Ljubljana: "The Faculty of Economics also provides for the students who do not have

the opportunity to study and live abroad. It is mobility that has provided the faculty with the important component of internationalisation at home. We offer students a broad range of subjects and programmes that are provided in the English language. They are thus able to recognise, participate and establish ties with foreign students. We prepare special workshops in the area of intercultural awareness that aim to increase the awareness of intercultural differences and stereotypes."

Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School – MPŠ – emphasises as its mission the "creation of knowledge as well as material and cultural goods" and doing so within an international framework. The realisation of this mission is directly associated with the international flow of young people who develop top level R&D abilities. This is why MPŠ strives to attract a high share of foreign students who regularly exceed a quarter of all postgraduates enrolled, whereby the school endeavours to raise this share to 50%.

The Slovene Human Resources Development and Scholarship Fund has held a very important role throughout the operation of the MPŠ, i.e. in attracting and providing support to foreign students who first came from European countries and US states, while lately the Fund has unfortunately limited this to students from the countries of the Western Balkans.

MPŠ hopes that the Fund will at least maintain the current territory and possibly broaden it to the European, US, Asian and African countries where Slovenia has special interests, especially in the area of the economy. The experience with foreign students who received their PhD degrees from the MPŠ to date shows that they are excellent ambassadors of the Slovenian economy and culture upon their return to their homelands." Prof. Dr. Aleksander Zidanšek, Jožef Stefan International Postgraduate School.

Education for a better future of developing countries

International development cooperation or official development assistance is aid that is provided by developed countries to support the economic, social and political development of developing countries and is an expression of solidarity and the interests of both countries involved. In accordance with the development goals for this century and other

international commitments, donor countries contribute a share of their GDP for a balanced global development. The membership of the EU makes the provision of official development aid an obligation and moral duty of Slovenia which turned from a recipient to a donor of development aid.

Development goals of the century or the millennium development goals are:

1. To eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
2. To achieve universal primary education.
3. To promote gender equality and empower women.
4. To reduce child mortality.



Ahmad Farhad Skandary, construction student, University of Ljubljana.

5. To improve maternal health.
6. To combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases.
7. To ensure environmental sustainability.
8. To develop a global partnership for development.

As part of Slovenia's fulfilment of development obligations, the Fund – in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – publishes a call for applications each year for the Ad futura development assistance. The purpose of the scholarship programme is mainly to return suitably educated human resources to their respective countries of origin and contribute to their economic and social development. Scholarships for study in Slovenia were put up to tender for the citizens of Kosovo, Cape Verde Islands, Afghanistan, Egypt, Tunisia, Ukraine and Palestine.

Ahmad who comes Afghanistan received the Ad futura scholarship for his masters degree study of construction in Slovenia. According to him, the education system in Slovenia is much better developed than in his native Afghanistan as the professors who teach at faculties there only have masters degrees and much less research and pedagogical experience than their Slovenian counter

parts who mostly hold PhD degrees. His biggest desire is to receive a PhD degree in Slovenia, return to his home country and become a professor at the faculty in Herat. Ahmad Farhad Skandary, construction student, University of Ljubljana

There is strength in unity



There is strength in unity.

"Differences can separate, but a right approach can enable synergies and progress," says Janko Pogorelčnik, Principal of the Mechanical Engineering School at the Velenje School Centre.

As part of the assistance to the countries of Western Balkans, Slovenia has



Students from Western Balkans – best promoters in their milieus.

undertaken to promote the education of the citizens of those countries in Slovenia through an active scholarship policy and thus enable the exchange of experience and examples of good practice. Based on the said commitment, the Fund has provided education for acquisition of the International Baccalaureate Diploma in Slovenia to 116 pupils, and also provided technical education to 87 pupils. Since 2008, the Velenje School Centre has been actively enrolling pupils from the Western Balkans into programmes for vocational and practical knowledge at the secondary schools for mechanical engineering, electrical engineering and computer science. In 2008, they began the pilot programme entitled "Education of Pupils from Serbia for the Needs of the Gorenje, gospodinjski aparati, d. d. Company", while the programme was later expanded to include pupils from other countries. Pupils are ordinarily included from the 3rd year of vocational programmes onwards. The programme places a great emphasis on practice that is performed by said pupils at companies that operate in the territory of the Western Balkans. After completing secondary school, some of these pupils continue their studies in Slovenia but most return home where they either continue their studies or find a job which is also the primary purpose of the programme. Many pupils who complete this education are employed at the Gorenje company in Valjevo, Serbia.

"The Velenje School Centre has traditionally cooperated well with the private sector. Thanks to our modern equipped Intercompany Training Centre, we have established even stronger ties between training and work as modern workshops and labs are equipped to train the unemployed and the employed in various forms of functional education, i.e. in addition to the pupils and students." Janko Pogorelčnik, Principal of the School of Mechanical Engineering, project manager.

In addition to secondary education, the Fund also provides scholarships for postgraduate education of the citizens of countries of the Western Balkans in Slovenia as it has already awarded 123 scholarships for postgraduate (master's and doctoral degree) study, i.e. mainly in the area of natural sciences, technology and medicine.

Some scholarship recipients transfer the knowledge acquired in Slovenia to their home country where they enrich the labour market, which in turn contributes to the economic development

of their homeland. Many of them also maintain not only personal but also business connections with Slovenia, which strengthens cooperation between countries in various fields.

The Fund's scholarship was a unique opportunity for him that helped him complete his PhD study of mechanical engineering at the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Ljubljana. With the desire to transfer the knowledge gained in Slovenia to his own country, he returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina after completing his studies and got a job as a professor at the University of Zenica where he currently teaches three subjects. In addition to the theoretical knowledge he gained during his studies, the ties he established with his Slovenian colleagues and researchers are also invaluable and represent the foundation for the subsequent cooperation between the two countries. He has been working for several years with Slovenian researchers on bilateral group projects financed by both the Bosnian and Slovenian governments. He finds the scholarship programme to be highly useful, and not only for the students but also as a contributor to the subsequent development of cooperation between the scholarship recipient's country of origin and Slovenia. He believes the programme should continue in the future as well. Samir Lemeš, PhD (Mechanical Engineering), University of Ljubljana.



Samir Lemeš, PhD (Mechanical Engineering), University of Ljubljana.

Son of the Slovenian nation

By supporting young Slovenian patriots abroad, Slovenia wishes to pre-

serve and strengthen the Slovenian national identity as Slovenians outside the country's borders are the natural social, cultural and economic facilitators of relations between Slovenia and the world.

By providing scholarships to young Slovenians living abroad for studies in Slovenia, the Fund helps set up new ties between young people and the home country. In this way, it also supports the objectives of the strategy for economic cooperation between the Republic of Slovenia and the Slovenian national community in neighbouring countries and around the world. These objectives include synergy of knowledge, experience, human resources and activities as well as the strengthening of the existing and the establishment of new economic flows between the territories where the Slovenian national community lives and Slovenia.

Since 2008, the scholarship programme has enabled more than 400 young Slovenians to come to Slovenia for their undergraduate studies and thus visibly strengthened the knowledge of the Slovenian language and culture. The experience of studying in another country has positively affected their independence, ingenuity and self-confidence, prepared them better for the entry on the labour market and also strengthened the bond with their homeland.

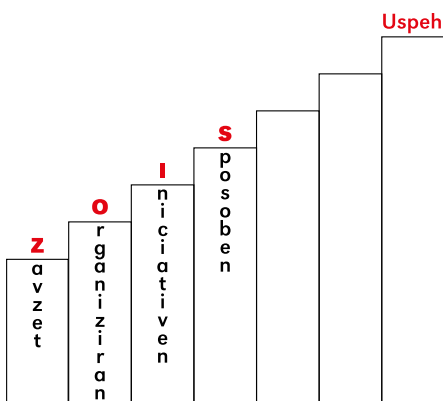
"The extraordinary people around me, the quality of the study and all the opportunities I had during my studies, the many rewards I got while I studied Slovenia – despite me coming from Croatia – there were never any differences," is how the Slovenian from Rijeka describes the positive aspects of her stay in Slovenia. "I have mastered the Slovenian language and this helped me land a job; I know many people from Slovenia," is how the Slovenian from Hungary who completed her studies in Slovenia and has not been living in Slovenia for a while now answered the question of what were the personal benefits of her study experience in Slovenia. She continues working on an international project with Slovenia where she is always happy to return in her free time. A Slovenian living abroad who completed her studies in Slovenia this year and who has already returned to Italy where she intends to find a job also says that the experience has provided her with "new knowledge and findings as well as employment opportunities".



Zois Scholarships

(Mateja Poljšak, Nives Prezelj, and Tina Godec)

"There is no elevator to success...there are only stairs."
(unknown author)



Žiga Zois (1747–1819).

Zois scholarship recipients are dedicated, organised, incentivised, capable and more and more. They are active in various fields where they achieve above average results.

Zois scholarships that got their known from Baron Žiga Zois are aimed at the discovery of multi-talented pupils and students and the promotion of the development of their professional journey by their attainment of

the highest levels of education. In order to promote science and excellence, i.e. values supported already by Žiga Zois, the Zois scholarship system has been complemented and upgraded ever since its establishment in 1986. In recent years, the emphasis in the acquisition of a Zois scholarship has been on talent and outstanding learning success, while legislative amendments now place a greater emphasis on outstanding achievements in the areas of knowledge, research, development activities and art.

Žiga Zois (1747–1819)

He is a Slovenian representative of the Age of Enlightenment, an economist, entrepreneur, a patron of the arts and mineralogist. He is known for his Zois circle where he gathered important Slovenian Age of Enlightenment artists, among them Kopitar, Linhart and Vodnik. He was their patron, provided them with monetary support, and also encouraged and guided them. He believed in science, technological progress and intellectual excellence.

In the 2008–2014 period, there was EUR 100 million allocated for Zois scholarships.

Regular brain "training" as a way of achieving top level results.

Vid Kocijan, a student of the university interdisciplinary study of computer science and mathematics at the Faculty of Computer and Information Science, received the Zois scholarship based on his achievements in the area of natural science and technology. In second-

ary school, he was mainly active in the fields of computer science, mathematics, chemistry, physics and logic. He took up these fields based on his interests and the support of his mentors. With the desire of deepening his knowledge and skills further, he took part in many competitions. With the help of good mentors, the professor at Gimnazija Vič and regular brain training, he was able to attain top level results. As part of his studies, he attends the university programming marathon and various Internet competitions because he believes that achievements there are a good reference for further professional work. In addition to his abilities and hard work, his achievements are predominantly the result of motivation for and enthusiasm about his work. He has not finally decided on his further career goals. He strives to try his hand in as many different activities as possible and thus find his true calling. The Zois scholarship helps him in these endeavours as he can devote the time, which he would otherwise use for earning a living by working through the student service, for other activities.

"Motivation and enthusiasm are key for an individual rising above mediocrity and therefore sometimes also more important than brains and hard work, which are emphasised in our educational system."

Zois scholarship as a reward for achievements and motivation for engaging in a multitude of activities

The student studying for her master's degree in physics at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, Marion Antonia Van



37 Marion Antonia Van Midden, 1st year MSc student at the Faculty of Mathematics and Physics, University of Ljubljana.

Midden, received the Zois scholarship based on outstanding achievements in logic and the publication of the scientific research paper entitled Optimum Muffling of the Helmholtz Resonator. As early as during her primary and secondary school education, she competed in various competitions in the fields of mathematics, chemistry, physics, logic, Slovenian, English and German languages, and history. In secondary school she devoted her attention to natural science, mainly physics, thanks to her professor. During her studies, she competes in logic competitions and is very successful. Competitions are very important for her as they represent a challenge, which is why she always strives to be the best she possible can, and is also motivated by learning and mastering new skills. She also works on the research in the field of solid-state physics at the Jožef Stefan Institute and is an active contributor for the Matrika journal which presents select topics in modern physics and mathematics. She sees the Zois scho-

larship as a reward for her achievements as well as motivation for continued work. It provides her with financial independence. She uses the savings that are left over from the costs of the study to travel to different European cities.

Acquiring diverse skills through participation and success in competitions

A pupil of the Secondary School of Chemistry, Electrical Technology and Computer Science of the Celje School Centre, Peter Robič, has been enthusiastic about competing in various competitions for years. He received the Zois scholarship based on his outstanding achievements in the areas of mathematics and chemistry. His interest in chemistry was roused by his primary school teacher who presented the subject matter in a very interesting way. He has been competing in school, regional and state competitions in chemistry for several years now and garnering enviable success. He prepares for school

competitions by himself, while professors, schoolmates and parents help him with the preparations for regional and state competitions both in terms of moral and professional support. Through his participation in competitions, he has gained valuable experience and skills that help him in his school work, and he also gained in self-confidence. He is convinced that all of this will benefit him in his further schooling and later on the job. He finds motivation to be extremely important as without it he would not have applied for competitions and would not have gained the mentioned skills. He is certain that chemistry is the right field for him which is why he wants to enrol in a chemistry programme at the Faculty of Chemistry and Chemical Technology in Ljubljana after secondary school. If he succeeds in doing so he would like to work for the pharmaceutical company Krka in Novo mesto or another successful company. The Zois scholarship makes his studies easier. This year, he will use it for a trip to Paris organised by the school.

Programme name	Purpose of the programme	Period	Number of calls for applications published	Number of fund recipients	Funds awarded or disbursed Information as at 31 December 2014 (in EUR)
Ad futura programmes for the promotion of outgoing and incoming mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of outgoing mobility as a method for the development of human resources with knowledge and experience from abroad, which importantly contributes to the multi-faceted development of Slovenia and its economy; support for the internationalisation of education at home through the provision of scholarships for the education of foreign citizens in Slovenia; development assistance in the field of education to select countries. 	2002 - 2014	140	13,363	47,794,611.60*
Zois scholarships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion of education and the attainment of a higher level of education; increasing the scholarship recipient's responsibility for their own education as well as for the selection of the educational programme; shorter period of education and improvement of employability. 	2008 - 2014	7	17,046	101,449,112.59**
Direct co-financing of the company scholarship	Encouraging employers through the co-financing of company scholarships to award scholarships and thus promote the enrolment into those educational programmes that enable improved employability, which contributes to the balancing of demand and supply on the labour market.	2008 - 2014	8	2,826	10,603,614.68***
Common regional scholarship schemes (direct co-financing of company scholarships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connecting the educational system with the labour market; returning young people from education centres back to their region; provision of quality human resources to employers. 	2008 - 2014	8	3,462	14,736,995.23****
Scholarships for Slovenians living in neighbouring countries and around the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promotion and strengthening of ties between Slovenians living in neighbouring countries and around the world and the homeland; and provision of opportunities for undergraduate study in Slovenia to Slovenians living in neighbouring countries and around the world. 	2008 - 2014	7	456	2,761,699.84*****
Rewards for sustainable development	Encouraging pupils and students to create and be creative in the field of sustainable development, which contributes to the sustainable development of the society in Slovenia.	2008 - 2011	3	650	949,250.00*****
Total			173	37,803	178,295,283.94

* Funds disbursed from 2008 to 2014 for all years the scholarship recipients received the scholarships

** Funds disbursed to Zois scholarship recipients by the Fund from 2008 to 2014

*** Funds disbursed from 2008 to 2014 for all years the scholarship recipients received the scholarships

**** Funds disbursed from 2008 to 2014

***** Funds disbursed for academic years from 2008 to 2014

***** Funds disbursed between 2008 and 2011

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