

e-novičke

Winter 2016

Dear readers, please find attached the Winter edition of the online bulletin edited by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE), available also at http://www.acs.si/bulletin_e-novicke. The content briefly presented here is a result of our creative energy and momentum in the second half of the year 2016. We wish you pleasant reading, Simona Kavčič, editor, and Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, editor-in-chief.

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Abbreviations

AE: Adult Education

AEC: Adult Education Centre

EAAL: European Agenda for Adult Learning

EPALE: ePlatform for Adult Learning in Europe

GOAL: Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners

LLW: Lifelong Learning Week

LP: Learning Parade

MESS: Ministry of Education, Science and Sport

PIAAC: Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competences

SIAE: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education



<http://www.acs.si/index.cgi?lang=4>



<https://www.facebook.com/AndragoskiCenterSlovenije>

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SIAE PROJECTS AND EVENTS

Adult Education Colloquium – what is the meaning of the results presented at the Colloquium?

On 29 September 2016, SIAE, in collaboration with the [MESS](#), successfully organised the 20th Adult Education Colloquium called *Adult skills: reflection on current situation and challenges*. This year's Colloquium was focused on literacy, the main topic of the event being the first comprehensive presentation of the results of the international [PIAAC](#) survey of adult skills in Slovenia, realised in the scope of the ESF project *Measuring the efficiency of education and training to improve the competences of adult educators*.



The Colloquium was opened by Aleš Ojsteršek, the Head of the Education Development Office at the MESS ([video](#)) and by Andrej Sotošek, MSc, Director of the SIAE ([video](#)). The professional and scientific event was brought to a higher level by the plenary speaker William Thorn, a noted [OECD](#) expert, who positioned the Slovenian results of the PIAAC survey into the wider context ([video](#)). We also did an exclusive interview with William Thorn that can be found on the [EPALE blog](#).

The main part of the 20th Adult Education Colloquium was dedicated to the presentation of ten thematic studies from four thematic sets realised by

the PIAAC research groups in the years 2014–2016.

Adult literacy from ten viewpoints

This first part of the presentation began with the statement that knowing the characteristics of low skilled adults helps us understand their needs and then manage the risks they face. The PIAAC Survey confirms that low achieving adults form a very diverse group. It is very important to get to know and understand the characteristics and need of this target group, since it represents a considerable part of the adult population between 16 and 65 years of age (Esteria Možina, MA, – [presentation](#)).

Low level of social trust is related to low level of education, low income and unemployment (Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar, PhD – [presentation](#)), while inclusion into education depends on factors such as age, education and employment, the negative effects of which can all be avoided (Jasmina Mirčeva, MA – [presentation](#)).



It was also stressed that the government does not sufficiently support education of low-skilled older adults and that employers and syndicates should contribute more for these activities (Sabina Jelenc Krašovec, PhD – [presentation](#)). In the last presentation in the first part, we learned that the frequency of ICT is above average in Slovenia compared to the international average, but the skills for problem solving in a technology-rich environment are considerably below average (Maja Mrzel – [presentation](#)).





Furthermore, we learned that there is more and more of a (mis)match between the education and skills of individuals and the demands of their workplaces, which is also a challenge at the global level (Robert Kaše – [presentation](#)). We also have to consider the problem of differences between regions, and the PIAAC Survey results showed that low-skilled adults hinder the development of a region much more than high-skilled adults encourage it, which is why the measures of regional development policy must focus on the individuals with less developed skills (Irena Ograjenšek, PhD – [presentation](#)). It was also pointed out that when preparing the strategy for development of skills and competences, Slovenia should focus on its priority tasks. When developing knowledge-based workplace and competences, it is important that the individual performs the right and diverse tasks and develops learning strategies (Samo Pavlin, PhD – [presentation](#)).

One specific characteristic, which is more pronounced in Slovenia than is average for the participating countries, is that those who participate in non-formal education, not related to the needs at work, achieve better results. This means that we need to develop the infrastructure for adult education that is not directly related to work and increase the options for participation (Janko Muršak, PhD – [presentation](#)). The presentations of thematic sets of the PIAAC Survey concluded with some words on development of skills in career development of an individual, where we also learned that an unsuccessful career is closely related to low results in calculating skills, low level of education and low difficulty of work (Petra Javrh, PhD – [presentation](#)).

International participants asserted Slovenian endeavours

The final lecturer was Bryan Maddox, PhD (University of East Anglia (UEA) – [video](#)), who pointed out the high quality of PIAAC Survey implementation. The Colloquium ended with speeches by William Thorn (OECD – [video](#)) and Jasmina Mirčeva, MA (SIAE – [video](#)). The Colloquium was led by Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, who also took care of the publication on the [LLW Twitter](#) together with Franci Lajovic.

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Colloquium and the 25th anniversary of the SIAE, we also brought cake for the participants of the Colloquium. The second half of the 20th Adult Education Colloquium was introduced by rapper Zlatko, who says: “A day when you do not learn anything new is a lost one!”

Simona Kavčič (simona.kavcic@acs.si), SIAE

We helped create the 16th Festival of the Third Age

For the fifth year running, [SIAE and partners](#) participated at the Festival of the Third Age ([F3ŽO](#)), which is the only event for the older generation in Slovenia and the biggest event of this type in Europe. The event brought to Ljubljana 17,000 visitors from all over Slovenia. The 160 organisations presented interesting topics, ways of active aging and cross-generational integration, showing new pathways to improved life of the older generation. Through talks and by presenting examples of good practices, we encouraged numerous visitors to continue learning. They could participate in creative learning of English words, by spinning the Knowledge wheel, they were able to test their knowledge in different fields, we encouraged them to [write by hand](#), which has many positive effects on the development of our cognitive and motor skills.



The participants of the four study circles and of the University of the Third Age in adult education centres draw attention by creating artworks from waste materials, teaching how to play zither, singing folk songs and sewing *peča*, traditional Slovenian head-covering, through which they help preserve cultural heritage. The six ladies who received the SIAE [Award for promotion of adult learning and knowledge](#) and who are constantly in the process of learning provided inspiration for others as they are well aware of the importance of lifelong learning. As learners, they shared their stories with visitors of all generations.



Talent and creativity do not age



The diverse expert and educational programmes at the Festival included the round table discussion of creativity in older people, which was enriched by the experiences and knowledge of the SIAE director, Andrej Sotošek, MA, and the winner of the SIAE Award for promotion of adult learning and knowledge 2009, [Natalija Planinc](#) from the Anbot Piran Association. According to the SIAE director, the key objective of promotion of creativity in older people is to improve their personal development and social inclusion. Natalija Planinc highlighted the importance of integration of all generations in the local environment and collaboration with the experts, which greatly encourages creativity in older people.

The photo gallery of our activities is available on the [SIAE Facebook page](#).

Mateja Pečar (mateja.pecar@acs.si), SIAE

Winners of the SIAE Awards 2016

From 17 applications the [Awards committee](#) chose, on 1 December 2016, five winners of the [Awards for promotion of adult learning and knowledge](#) for the year 2016. We received 11 proposals for category I (individuals), one proposal for category II (groups) and 5 proposals for category III (institution/company/local community).

The winners are chosen with the aim of promoting learning and education, and we hope their stories will motivate others to continue learning. In the applications, the applicants describe the candidate's learning and educational activities and achievements that followed as a result of these activities, the problems they faced and their contribution to enriching the knowledge of others and to positive change in the environment. In order to accurately present the variety of lifelong learning and offer the opportunity for identification to as many target groups as possible, we always take care to choose candidates who focus on different activities, are of different sexes and ages and come from different regions.

As is the case every year, the committee chose five winners in three categories.

In the category of individuals, the winners are *Zlatan Čordić* from Ljubljana, *Vinko Hlebš* from Tržič and *Janja Urbiha* from Stari trg pri Ložu. In the group category, the winners are *Young volunteers*, who carry out the activities in the Intergenerational centre in Zagorje ob Savi. In the category of institutes/companies/local communities, this year's winner is the *House of Experiments* from Ljubljana.

As every year, it was hard to decide who to put in the spotlight. While we chose five, 12 remained unchosen. Many of them surely also deserved the award. Together with the committee, we have also decided to take time in June or July, after we are done with the tasks for the [LLW](#) project, to update and improve the call for applications and the method of application.



We would like to thank all applicants and candidates and offer sincere congratulations to all the winners of SIAE Awards for 2016.

Darijan Novak (darijan.novak@acs.si), SIAE

Expert External Evaluations in Adult Education

In the beginning of September, as a part of the *Introduction of Expert External Evaluation (EEE) in Support of Development of the Quality of Adult Education*, we carried out further training for expert external evaluators, who then in October carried out expert external evaluations in those educational organisations that responded to this year's call for applications. At the further training, we discussed the changes in the field of quality of adult education, reviewed the standards and criteria prepared for the expert external evaluation in 2016 and refreshed our knowledge regarding use of the application for evaluating the organisations' self-evaluations. The training was also intended for agreements on this year's course of expert external evaluations in the chosen organisations. Throughout the following month, the evaluators were intensely preparing for the October visits of the participating organisations.



The expert external evaluators visited the following educational organisations:

- The public institute Cene Štupar – Ljubljana Adult Education Centre ([Javni zavod Cene Štupar - Center za izobraževanje Ljubljana](#)),
- Kranj Adult Education Centre ([Ljudska univerza Kranj. Center za izobraževanje in kulturo](#)).

The purpose of these visits was to confirm the correct understanding of the self-assessments of internal quality systems, support for participant's or organisation's development orientation prepared by the two participating organisations. In discussions with employees, external staff members and participants, the expert external evaluators obtained additional explanations and information with the help of which they were able to clarify the dilemmas and justifications included by the educational organisations in their self-assessments. The visits lasted a full day and were an important part of objective external quality assessment.

In November, the evaluators prepared a final report on the expert external evaluation for each participating organisation and in December met again with all the representatives of the organisations at the evaluation workshop. Organisations were also awarded with certificates of participation in expert external evaluations of adult education in 2016.



More information about Expert External Evaluations at the SIAE is available at our [EEE website](#).

Aleksandra Radojc (aleksandra.radojc@acs.si), SIAE

Publication of Results and Effects of Adult Education

In August 2016, as part of the activity Systemic placement and further development of self-evaluation in adult education for the project *Professional support for acquisition of basic competences 2016–2022*, financed by the European Social Fund, SIAE published a professional publication entitled *Results and Effects of Adult Education: recommendation for assessment of results and effects of education, educational activities and projects*. This publication in support of professional work in the field of quality assurance in adult education was written by Sonja Klemenčič and Tanja Možina, PhD.

The recommendations offer us an insight into one of the possible systematic approaches for following and evaluating the results and effects of the education and educational activities and/or projects.

The publication contains recommendations for institutions involved in adult education and those who implement different activities and/or projects related to adult education that wish to improve their work in the area of monitoring and assessment of results and effects of their education and educational activities and/or projects.

The institutions can use the recommendations and adapt them to their own needs. We expect most of those who will use these recommendations to want to change or improve only a specific manner of following and/or assessing the results and effects of their work. After they incorporate it into their practice, they will perhaps again reach for our recommendations and choose another developmental challenge to improve their internal system of quality.

The publication was published as part of the collection of quality indicators on the Bookshelf of the website Development of quality in AE (in Slovenian language you can read it [here](#)). The printed version is available in our [library](#).

Jasmina Orešnik Cunja (jasmina.oresnik.cunja@acs.si), SIAE



The STATUS ZERO Film

The first screening of *Status Zero* (watch trailer [here](#)) by the Sever and Sever production was on 20 September 2016 in Kino Šiška in Ljubljana. The film highlights the problem of unemployed young adults in Slovenia. The young protagonists, who at the time all participated in the programme Project learning for youth (Projektno učenje za mlade – PUM), cast some light on the problem through the stories of their lives and show the viewers their human sides. People who walk on the edge have different experiences from those who do not even know that the edge exists. The first protagonist already went to jail for violence, the second only finished high school and then strayed into “extensive partying” and the third came from well-to-do but non-functioning family.

Boys, 18 to 22 years old, and a 16-year-old girl talk about their situation and indirectly help to clarify the picture of the needs of excluded young people. On one hand, we can recognise the risk factors (non-functional family, stigma due to homosexuality, lack of response of the environment, exploitation and abuse by employers), but on the other hand we have different sources of support that allow young people to gather their energy and move from their position “that provides nothing and leads nowhere” – the “status zero” was described by the English sociologists who worked on the problem of excluded young people in the 1990s. The PUM project is one of the factors that helps young people to take the necessary steps.



After the end of the film, the film crew and the young protagonists from the movie talked about the production of the film and about their lives one year after the events in the film. Some of them gained employment, one finished high school and currently studies at university, one went travelling abroad and took care of everything by himself, etc. Even though some did not quite achieve everything they set out to do, it was easy to tell that they had changed, become stronger, more thoughtful and mature. They received an ovation from the public, which filled the room to the last seat.

Natalija Žalec (natalija.zalec@acs.si), SIAE

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Completion of the SHAPE project

With the end of August 2016 the international SHAPE project (Shared expertise in provision of adult education in 5 European countries; Erasmus+ programme) successfully concluded. The project started in September 2014.

Partners in the project were: [Keski-Uudenmaan koulutuskuntayhtymä](#), KEUDA adult education, Finland; [GIP Formation Continue](#), France; [Istituto Formazione Operatori Aziendali](#) – IFOA, Italy; [Tietgen](#), Denmark and [Slovenian Institute for Adult Education](#) – SIAE, Slovenia.



In the project adult education provision and training has been analysed from five thematic perspectives chosen as innovative and interesting to all partners. The addressed themes were: *Professional development of adult education staff*, *Qualification labels for professional higher education*, *implications to adult education sector*, *Quality assurance in adult education provision*, *Key competences and entrepreneurship* and *Competence-based vocational qualification / Young adult's and adult's upskilling programmes*.

As a result of the workshops each workshop leader prepared an analytical report of the workshop theme. Keuda as a coordinator of the project compiled an e-output called "[Shaping Vocational Adult Education and Training](#)", which describes best and next practices in vocational adult education provision in five European countries.

Another result of the project is a [short promotional video](#) about the project and its outputs.

Good experience gained in international partnership led to the conception of a new Erasmus+ project "ReSHAPE the future" that will address the urgent and topical subject of adult education and training for migrants and refugees.

Jasmina Orešnik Cunja (jasmina.oresnik.cunja@acs.si), SIAE

International project Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners (GOAL) – first part of the evaluation

The SIAE is a partner in the three-year international project *Guidance and Orientation for Adult Learners (GOAL)*, 2015–2018, which is implemented in the scope of the Erasmus+ project. The project promoter in Slovenia is the [MESS](#) and the second partner beside SIAE is the [Institute of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training](#). Other partners in the project are from Belgium (project coordinators), the Czech Republic, Iceland, the Netherlands, Lithuania and Turkey (silent partner). The associates of the London



Institute of Education take care of the project evaluation and development of methodology for monitoring and measuring the effects of guidance.

For implementation in practice in Slovenia, there are four “pilot” implementers of guidance activities according to the “GOAL methodology” from two regions: in the Central region, we have Biotechnical Educational Centre Ljubljana ([BIC Ljubljana](#)) and [Guidance Centre Ljubljana](#) and in the Savinjska region there is [Velenje School Centre](#) and [Guidance Centre Velenje](#).

The objective of the project is to improve the guidance options for less educated adults in all partner countries, which will contribute to increased inclusion into lifelong learning and consequently to higher social inclusion and mobility in the labour market.

In October 2016, we concluded the analysis of the first phase of the project, after four thematic sets: guidance process, partnership and networking, use of guidance tools and counsellor competences. As such, we used the fourth international meeting of project partners, which took place from 10 to 14 October in Haag, to discuss the results of the evaluation in all six countries. The reports of all participating countries and the general report (*Cross-country wave 1 Report*) are available at the [project website](#). Together with the other partners, we also planned the activities for the second part of the project till January 2018 when the project will be finished.

Tanja Vilič Klenovšek, MA, (tanja.vilic.klenovsek@acs.si), SIAE

Conference Building bridges in adult education is becoming a tradition

On 21 and 22 October 2016, the Slovenian delegation composed of some of [SIAE](#) employees and members of the [Adult Education Association of Slovenia](#) attended the international conference [Building bridges in adult education](#) in Mostar, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The conference was held for the second time; the first one was organised [last year](#) in Ljubljana. This year, our associates from the [DVV International – Office in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#) took care of the organisation and traditional hospitality.

Overview of the situation and interesting workshops

The aim of this conference of ex-Yugoslavian countries was to present an overview of the current situation and to improve the practices and collaborations in the field of adult education, the emphasis being on the definition of priority areas for the near future. The two-day conference started with welcome speeches, where we must mention the speech by professor Katarina Popović, PhD, secretary general of the [International Council for Adult Education](#), a position which gives her probably the best insight into the situation. She gave us an [overview of the events at a global level](#). Selected speakers from each country participated at the panel discussion – for Slovenia Andrej Sotošek, MA, director of the SIAE – and presented the current events.



The key part of the conference involved four workshops, which were chosen by the organisational committee from the seven workshops on offer. The colleagues from Macedonia prepared for us a SWOT analysis of the concept of lifelong learning in each country. The colleagues from Montenegro opened the question of standards in adult education and the colleagues from Croatia discussed the professionalisation of workers in adult education. Ester Možina, MA, and I prepared and led the workshop on adult skills based on the [PIAAC](#) survey and its results and on the Strategy for development and use of skills in Slovenia. The survey and the strategy were realised within the framework of the [OECD](#). The prepared materials and the results of the workshops are published on the [official website of the conference](#).

It is not over yet!

In the final speech, Emir Avdagić, PhD, told us the happy news that we will meet again next year in a similar configuration in Macedonia and the year after that in Croatia. As the organisers of the first conference, we could not be more proud that these meetings are becoming a tradition. Considering this, we should already start seeking funding for the participation at future conferences, as we wish to take with us our colleagues from the ministries and other public educational institutions as well as adult education providers.



Darijan Novak (darijan.novak@acs.si), SIAE

First notes on the EU conference on adult skills

After a couple years of intermission – the last similar event was held in 2013 in Vilnius – the European Commission organised a conference on adult skills called [Adult Skills: Empowering people](#). Around 300 participants, representatives of the policy makers as well as of the professional and practical spheres of adult education from 37 countries, attended this event, which was organised on 6 and 7 December as part of the [European Vocational Skills Week](#). Slovenia was represented by the official delegation composed of 11 members: Irena Kuntarič Hribar from the Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Katja Dovžak, MA, from the MESS, Tanja Taštanoska and Saša Ambrožič Deleja from the Eurydice unit of the MESS, Suzana Kerec and Antonija Pezdirc Tandler from the Employment Service of Slovenia and Estera Možina, MA, Tanja Vilič Klenovšek, MA, Andrej Sotošek, MA, and the author of the article, all from the SIAE.



It was easy to tell that the event was sponsored by the General Directorate of the EC for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, which is responsible for adult education, as many of the speakers came from the field of employment: Commissioner Marianne Thyssen, Detlef Eckert, Director for Skills, Dana Bachmann, Head of vocational training and adult education unit, representatives of economic institutes and associations and representatives of vocational education and training. Some balance was restored with the key speakers from the world of adult education, such as the representatives of the European Adult Education Association ([EAEA](#)), two convincing ambassadors of learners from Ireland, the representative of the Slovak Ministry of Education and – last but not least – the Dutch princess Laurentien, UNESCO’s Special Envoy on Literacy for Development.

Concrete topics of adult education were much more thoroughly discussed in the three subsequent workshops in smaller groups. On the first day, the work was based on the theoretical background of the four priority areas of the European Agenda for Adult Learning ([EAAL](#)), the implementation of which in the member states started in 2012. On the second day of the conference, we touched upon the messages of the new [Council Recommendation on Upskilling Pathways: New Opportunities for Adults](#) (so far known as the proposition entitled *Skills Guarantee*). The document was officially published on 19 December, after a very quick coordination process in the EC boards, which started after the adoption of the [New Skills Agenda for Europe](#) on 10 June 2016.

At the conference, it was often plainly asked: “What is new?” A Finnish participant in the panel discussion, Petri Lempinen, even began his contribution by stating that he had been listening to similar things for years and years, but the data (the latest comes from the results of the PIAAC Survey, brilliantly presented at the conference by Deborah Roseweare from the OECD) shows that there has been no real progress.



The opinions of some of the Slovenian delegation members on the benefits of the conference are published below.

Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, (zvonka.pangerc@acs.si), SIAE

Impressions from the Conference on adult skills:



For me personally, the conference confirmed the importance of guidance in adult education and all its specificities, including guidance before, during and after the learning process. This means support and guidance during the entire learning pathway of the individual! The conference strengthened my realisation that we have to develop innovative approaches to guidance, i.e. new outreach approaches to reach different groups of adults, especially those who are less motivated, who do not know about the options and benefits of education/learning. In order to do this, we should learn from each other, from examples of good (efficient) practices. The networking and collaboration

between partners at different levels must also find new forms of connection and collaboration – at the national

and local level. It was also confirmed for me that we must include the learners into all processes of education and guidance as ambassadors who represent positive learning experiences and motivate others.

Tanja Vilič Klenovšek, MA, SIAE

In short, the topics that were announced were also discussed at the conference panels and workshops, though mostly from a general point of view – in the form of realisations of research on the assessment of levels of (general) skills in the adult population and subsequent general guidelines for their improvement. Even the examples of implemented systems and examples of (good) practices in public and private institutions in the wider adult education field I had the opportunity to hear did not introduce anything new. The common realisation was that both the functioning of an already implemented system and the realisation and transfer of good measures into practice depend on the money. What I missed the most were more concrete guidelines and perhaps even more concrete answers/solutions and novelties we would be able to use in our work with a specific target group of vulnerable adults and in our work with persons with low skill level.



Personally, everything that happened at the conference sparked my interest or maybe even made me realise that I and all other individuals (and as a consequences the entire society) should be more aware of the problem of the so-called inactive and excluded or, as the Dutch princess called them, the “invisible” people who are not among us. But they are still here – close to us and yet far from our thoughts and eyes! How do we find the way to them?

Antonija Pezdirc Tandler, Employment Service of Slovenia

The conference on adult skills included very different participants, brought together by the Directorate of the EC for employment in order to prepare the national environments for the implementation of the upcoming recommendation of ministers Upskilling Pathways. After transferring adult education and vocational education from the Directorate for education, the General Directorate of the EC for employment was forced to deal with a field governed by different rules than the labour market. It seems that the General Directorate of the EC for employment considers the independent national policies in the field of education, which has been even further subordinated to the labour market by the new “skills agenda”, a managerial problem. The dispersion of the adult education sector and the diverse national policies make the problem even worse.



During the panels, I expected a more in-depth presentation of the upcoming document. The presentations at the workshops and thematic discussions I visited (Coherent policy in adult education and Information technology in adult education) were mostly illustrative and did not focus on the concrete problems.

It seems that the efforts of the Commission (and the resources for the event) were focused mostly on workshops, where they brought together stakeholders from different countries, gave them the planned structure of the discussion and schematics of the action plan and forced onto them the responsibility for implementation of a document that has not yet been adopted and which will not have legislative power but will act only as a political commitment.

Tanja Taštanoska, Eurydice Slovenia

One of the important highlights from the EC initiative Upskilling Pathways is that for many adults secondary vocational education (level 3 and 4 of the European Qualifications Framework) can be an unattainable goal, since these adults first need to improve their basic skills, such as literacy and mathematical and numerical skills. At the conference in Brussels, we came to a realisation that most people agreed with, that the success of the Upskilling Pathways initiative mostly depends on the efficiency of the policies for improving basic skills provided by the Member States.



However, despite the very positive intentions of the EC and the above mentioned initiative, some of the participants, mostly adult educators, warned that the political language uses labels and terms that emphasise the development of only some of the skills. They believe that the term 'low skilled' is inadequate and misleading and that it puts in jeopardy the success of the well-meaning policies, since it is based solely on the results of education and the results of international surveys that assessed only a narrow selection of skills. The political speeches highlight only those skills that were assessed by standardised surveys. But the reality is the adults have many skills, knowledges and competences that were not measured and assessed by the surveys or the school system. Using the term 'low skilled', which has a negative connotation and puts the emphasis on the lack of something in the adults, can lead to policies in Member States that will deter adults from education and training. With this term, we stigmatise groups of adults who need to develop certain skills. The researchers warn that the terminology we use is very important, since it marks our discourse and influences our beliefs and values. If the policies of the Member States are based on prejudices, inadequate assessments and lack of understanding of the needs of certain groups of adults, they will not be able to draw these groups into the programmes. According to David Mallows, researcher and adult educator from Great Britain, we will only be able to ensure successful learning pathways for adults within the EC Upskilling Pathways initiative if we carefully listen to them and recognise their actual interests and needs.

Estera Možina, MA, SIAE

The conference on adults' skills again showed why lifelong learning is so important. Through presentations of different practices, the participants from all European countries realised that acquiring skills and competences is essential for the development of an individual, for his/her better inclusion in the society and, last but not

least, active participation in the labour market. The emphasis was mostly on researching measures that different stakeholders can implement to offer less skilled and especially inactive adults, motivating adults to participate in trainings to improve their reading, computer and digital skills and competences and to improve their vocational competences. The countries combat adult inactivity in different ways, but the most important thing is to adapt the measures to the individual.

The conference concluded with an inspirational speech by her highness, the Dutch princess Laurentiene, who pointed out that each of us must through our work contribute to improving the situation in the acquisition of general competences for all adults. We must focus primarily on all adults who are inactive, excluded and invisible – recognise them, motivate them for active participation and render them visible.

For me, the most important message of the conference was that we must invest in adult education and draw inactive and less skilled adults to participate in different forms of adult education.

The most important part of this is getting to know the adults and listening to them, since their hidden skills offer the key to their personal success and the success of the entire society.



Dutch princess Laurentiene

Suzana Kerec, Employment Service of Slovenia

Final conference Intercultural competences in career guidance in the Alpe Adria region

On September 2, 2016, [Papilot, Institute for enhancement and development of the quality of life](#), organised the final conference called *Intercultural competences in career guidance*. The results of the international project *Alpe Adria Working Mobility – Intercultural competences in career guidance*, coordinated by Papilot, were presented at the conference. The project was realised in collaboration with six partner institutions from the countries of the Alpe-Adria region: Austria, Croatia, Italy and Slovenia. The project was financed by the European commission through the Erasmus+ programme for improving the competences and increasing employability of young European citizens.



The aim of the project was to improve the development of intercultural competences of career guidance counsellors for providing guidance to people who want to gain employment in the Alpe-Adria region (Austria, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia) in order to increase employability and the competences, especially of the young unemployed, for work in the countries of the Alpe-Adria region.

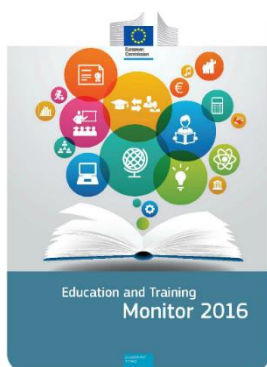
The results of the project included the analysis of the labour market and of the existing practices and methods of career guidance, with an emphasis on the cultural and language competences of career counsellors in the Alpe-Adria region; the preparation of a handbook for career counsellors for international career guidance; the realisation of training for career counsellors for international guidance and increased mobility in the

participating countries; the preparation of on-line tools and materials for career counsellors and people who want to find employment abroad; and ECVET certification.

You can read more about the achievements of the project on its [official website](#).

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

Education and Training Monitor 2016



[Education and Training Monitor 2016](#) is an annual publication that covers all the shifts in education and training in the EU. This year's Monitor shows the progress in the implementation of important EU goals and reflects the need for the Member States to adapt and open their educational systems to allow inclusion for newly arrived refugees and migrants.

The Monitor provides an international comparison and analysis for each country and can be used as a basis for discussions on priorities in education and training and on national educational reforms. It is also a reliable and current source of information for mutual learning of the EU Member States.

The results in this year's Monitor showed that Slovenia already achieved some goals of the European Strategy 2020. The data shows that less than 10% of young people leave school and that at least 40% of people between the ages of 30 and 34 have higher education. We are also better than the European average, since the European average of early school leavers is 11%, while it only reaches 5% in Slovenia. The percentage of people with a degree in higher education also keeps growing and is currently at 43% (EU 38%).

Adapted by: Neja Colja (neja.colja@acs.si), SIAE

National presentation of the Education and Training Monitor 2016

At EU level, the official release of the [Education and Training Monitor 2016](#) was on 7 November 2016. It was accompanied by a [press conference and thematic seminar](#) in Brussels. For the second year, the publication was presented to the Slovenian public at a national event organised by the MESS in its offices on 30 November 2016. The overview, evaluation of current situation and the trends in education and training in the EU were presented by an associate of the European Commission (EC) named Geir Ottestad, while Nadia Manzoni from the EC gave an original presentation of Slovenian achievements, published in the [National Report](#).

The Minister of Education, Science and Sport, Maja Makovec Brenčič, PhD, asserted the importance of the Monitor and pointed out that “Slovenia will consider all the information – about our strong and weak points – brought to us by the Monitor as a call for us to continue with our work and as an opportunity to move forward”.

With cooperation, we will achieve better results in negotiations with the EC and in promotion of our results

The main part of the event was a panel discussion entitled *Importance of European indicators in the field of education and training in Slovenia*. The participants of the panel discussion were Mojca Štraus, PhD,



researcher and coordinator of the [PISA Survey](#), Barbara Kresal Sterniša, head of the [Eurydice](#) unit in Slovenia, Tanja Vertelj, MA, head of the service for implementation of cohesion policy at the MESS, Tit Neubauer, head of the service for international cooperation and EU matters and the MESS, and the author of this article, Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, Slovenian representative in the EU Standing Group on indicators and benchmarks.

Tit Neubauer pointed out that the key component for coordinated efforts in the area of ensuring data-based decision-making is collaboration of the MESS, public institutes in the field of education and the EC. “The results of Slovenian achievement also influence the cohesion policy and determine which investments will have priority,” said Tanja Vertelj, and she warned about the terminological differences and the need for integration of indicators (quantitative and qualitative ones). “The indicators only answer the basic question and often create more questions than they give answers,” commented Mojca Štraus, and she pointed out that successful operation in international groups demands coordinated efforts at the national level and often also at the level of schools. “Well prepared and well interpreted statistics can contribute to the quality of the educational system,” noted Barbara Kresal Sterniša, and she used the opportunity to briefly present the work of the Eurydice unit, which collects, transfers and presents data in many up-to-date and attractive forms, based on the agreed international methodologies.



In the discussion, I defended the position that, using the analogy of the lifelong learning chain, all the levels (subsystems) of education and training should be included in Slovenian efforts in this area and that cross-sectoral integration would also be welcome. My primary area of work is raising awareness on the importance of learning, and I believe that promotional messages based on data work best. However, large data, publications, different tools, etc. offer an abundance of information that is not always clear, comprehensible and concise, which is why the function of the so-called knowledge broker is gaining importance. The knowledge broker would connect the worlds of researchers, decision makers, professional and other stakeholders and “translate” large or complicated pieces of information into language and messages easily understood by a specific group (including the general public).

Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, (zvonka.pangerc@acs.si), SIAE

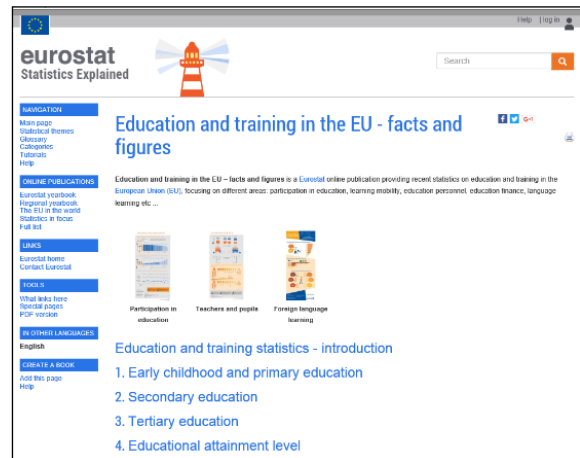
Figures and facts about education and training in Europe

Do you operate at the national level and are interested in comparison of data on education between EU countries? Are you participating in an international project where you are expected to know how Slovenia compares regarding participation in lifelong learning?

In both cases (as well as in some others), you can use the convenient explanations of the European educational statistics published on the website [Eurostat Statistics Explained](#). The site [‘Education and Training in Europe – Facts and Figures’](#) contains attractive and relatively simple presentations of the key contents, supported by up-

to-date statistics. The articles are grouped according to the educational system level and also touch upon learning mobility, founding of education and learning of foreign languages. Some of the titles that might attract you are *Vocational education and training*, *Lifelong learning* and *Transition from education to work*.

We, of course, are most interested in [adult education](#) (AE) and [lifelong learning](#). The former is presented using short explanations of the conclusions based on the 2011 Adult Education Survey – AES. The article shines a light on some key components of AE and includes a list of links to the statistical tables and the relevant political documents and publications. The same can be said for the article on the statistics of lifelong learning, which is based on the Labour Force Survey – LFS, completed with the data from the above mentioned AES. We can see from one of the presented tables that in Slovenia the participation of adults (age 25–64) in lifelong learning drastically decreased in the last couple of years from 16.4% (2010) to 11.9% (2015), as measured by the LFS methodology, which is also explained in the article.



In short, you can find on these websites exactly those statistical data that you have always wanted to have but could not find.

Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, (zvonka.pangerc@acs.si), SIAE

EPALE

EPALE – great tool for disseminating the results of the projects implemented in the scope of the Erasmus+ programme

EPALE National Support Service operates under the [CMEPIUS](#), whose main responsibility is the implementation of activities of the National Agency for the Erasmus+ programme in the fields of education, training and sport – promotion of the programme, selection of projects and help with their implementation, assessment of the effect of collaboration on the individuals and institutions and placement of the results within the field of education at a national level. The aim of the Erasmus+ programme is to have a positive and sustainable impact on education, training, youth and sport policies and practices.



The first applicants to the Erasmus+ programme recognised the EPALE as a great tool for dissemination of project results, both at the national and European level. Simona Šinko, PhD, from the Ljubljana City Library, where the LinkINjob project is being implemented as part of the Erasmus+ programme, told us that for them the EPALE represents a window into the world of adult education. Through this window, they can see what is happening behind the walls of different organisations in Slovenia and abroad and show others what they do and how they work in their library. Their publication on the EPALE and the responses it received brought them opportunities for new project collaborations, new information and new opportunities for promotion of activities in their library.

The EPALE platform offers many opportunities for project coordinators to present their activities, results and effects to other educators and professionals and thus spread their knowledge, experiences and good practices. Collaboration and distribution of different contents create a diverse platform and contribute to professional development of the educators, who built this community by responding to the published content and exchanging their knowledge and practical experience with specific topics. The content of the EPALE platform covers the fields of adult education and continuing vocational education and training (C-VET).

If you have not yet registered with the EPALE, you are kindly invited to register and participate in the community of over 20,000 adult education professionals from all over Europe. [Users can register](#) and participate for free, but the experiences and knowledge exchanged between the users are priceless.



For more information on opportunities offered by the EPALE, please contact the representative of the National Support Service (the author of this article), who will gladly answer all your questions and help you get to know the platform.

Maruša Bajt (marusa.bajt@cmepius.si), CMEPIUS

New promotional video for the EPALE Slovenia platform

National Support Service EPALE Slovenia filmed a [new promotional video](#) to invite professionals in the field of adult education to participate on the EPALE platform.

In addition to Tomaž, who links individual contributions, there are 7 individuals who appear in the video. Three of them are adult educators and four are participants of different adult learning programmes.

In the video, we can see the learning experience of Andrej Trojar, participant in the dialogue coaching, and Kaja Kosec, coach and education manager at the For dialogue Institute, where they train people for strong leadership and business dialogue through different learning programmes. Irma Pureber participated in the adult education programme and used the guidance centres. She participated in different programmes to improve her knowledge and competences, which she now skilfully uses at her new



job. She was told about the options for education and employment by Tina Strnad, adult education organizer and guidance counsellor at the Guidance Centre Novo mesto, which operates within the Development and Education Centre Novo mesto. Matjaž Višnar and Urša Šemrov visit dance lessons at the Prodance studio in Ljubljana, where they are taught hip-hop dance moves by a dance trainer Erik Bukovnik.

In addition to the above mentioned organisations, adult educators and learners, we also want to thank the filming crew of the EnaBanda association and the associates from the Na robu Institute. They helped us prepare the screenplay and took care of the entire video, from filming and cutting the video to the final technical support.

The video is also available on [Cmepius Youtube channel](#).

Maruša Bajt (marusa.bajt@cmepius.si), CMEPIUS

EPALE ambassadors – passionate, informed, convinced and convincing!

There are currently no so-called EPALE ambassadors in Slovenia; however, the expert team members (and some other eager users) certainly promote this platform for adult learning in Europe. What is the actual role of an EPALE ambassador – what are his/her required and recommended characteristics, what tasks should he/she realise and how? These are the challenges we confronted at the meeting of EPALE ambassadors in Rome.



I was interested to listen to the Italian organisers, who were the first to introduce the concept of EPALE ambassadors that was registered by the European commission as an example of good practices possibly transferable to other countries. The Italians definitely set a good example, but we were not convinced by their selection of people, some of whom could only be ambassadors and not users of the EPALE platform. I felt more connection to the approaches shared with us by our French and Dutch colleagues during the panels, but what I valued most was the information exchanged

within the work groups by the associates of the EPALE support services and their ambassadors.

The meeting in Rome also highlighted the fact that in some countries, EPALE is seen as ‘merely’ a tool for promotion of adult education among the stakeholders. Unfortunately, the principles of the European Commission here exclude the learners. In other countries, especially in Italy, the EPALE is understood as an opportunity for implementation of adult education as such. This dichotomy is certainly related to the level of the (non-)development of the adult education system. In Italy, adult education is dispersed, which is why the national agency – the main carrier of the EPALE – sees the platform as a welcome unifying factor and implements it in this function.

Another reason I wanted to hear many different points of view on the definition of an (EPALE) ‘ambassador’ is that we work with the ‘ambassadors of learning’ as part of the Lifelong Learning Week – [LLW](#) project. In both cases, an ‘ambassador’ can be defined as an enthusiastic user, advocate and spokesperson for something that is part of our mission. In addition to the above mentioned challenges, this requires one more task from us as professionals in adult learning – we have to train the potential ambassadors to successfully perform their tasks, regardless of whether they are adult educators or learners.



I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this event, and I am also proud of our well-coordinated and professional contribution, which reflected the quality of the Slovenian part of the EPALE platform that is based on a participative approach. We also received approval regarding the work of the expert team, which is well planned, efficient and can to some extent take on the role of the EPALE ambassadors.

Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, (zvonka.pangerc@acs.si), SIAE

We look back and move forward

The year 2016 was marked by 19 thematic activities on the EPALE, all related to the field of adult education and the current topic for each month. Every month, we highlighted at least one topic and prepared a selection of current contents and some support activities. The community of the registered EPALE users is growing, also thanks to our thematic activities, and now includes over 20,000 adult educators from Europe, with a little over 200 registered from Slovenia.

The EPALE is currently available in 24 languages, and 36 National Support Services are operating to cover the needs of the multilingual European community. On the Slovenian EPALE site, we have published, with your help Dear Users, altogether over 800 different contents in the field of adult education.

We try to ensure that the contents published on EPALE reach a wide circle of adult educators. We promote the contents on our Facebook site [EPALE Slovenija](#), which has over 420 likes, and on our [Twitter account](#), which has over 150 followers.



In this past year, we have also prepared different webinars and EPALE workshops in order to help users with their everyday work to help them recognise the opportunities presented by the EPALE. In the coming year, we will adapt these activities, which have gained recognition and were well attended, to the current needs and invite you to participate again. We also wish for our community to keep growing and for the EPALE platform to become an everyday companion of every adult educator in Slovenia.

Maruša Bajt (marusa.bajt@cmeplus.si), CMEPIUS

RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS

Three Slovenian examples on the list of good practices for the implementation of the EAAL

Three Slovenian examples of good practices for the EAAL project found their place in the publication [Good practices in the implementation of the European Agenda for Adult Learning from 2012 until 2016](#), namely [motivational videos](#), Promoting Adult Skills (PAS) events and the [Learning Parade](#).



During the implementation of the EAAL, national coordinators developed several successful activities with positive effects. They want to share these examples of good practices with others interested in adult education.



The publication introduces many examples of good practices, including the three from Slovenia, developed by national coordinators between the years 2012 and 2016. The publication is the first version of a collection of good practices by national coordinators. More such collections are planned for the future.

National coordinators for Implementation of [EAAL](#) receive financial help from the EC within the Erasmus+ programme. The funds are intended for activities that help solve the problem of low inclusion of adults in education and training, especially adults with low skills.

Simona Kavčič (simona.kavcic@acs.si), SIAE

Publication of comparative report on assessment of needs and analysis of deficits in the strategies of adult education

In the scope of the international project [A Toolkit for Developing, Implementing and Monitoring Adult Education Strategies](#) (DIMA), a report on the *Analysis of needs*, led by the SIAE, was published.

The report was written based on a thorough analysis of 342 answers (mostly by organisations implementing adult education in the partner countries: Cyprus, Ireland, Slovakia and Slovenia) to the on-line survey, on interviews performed with the main stakeholders and on organised discussions within the focus groups. The respondents from all partner countries agreed that the keys for successful management of the policy in this field are proper legal framework and the existence of a national strategy on adult education. The Slovenian Adult Education Master Plan (ReNPIO 13–20) was identified as an example of good practice.

Most of the respondents agreed that there is not enough attention paid to the education of vulnerable groups. The opinions of the interviewed persons on the needs for programmes in adult education can be divided into two groups – the first group believed that the



focus should be on programmes for the labour market needs and the second believed the focus should be on basic skills programmes.

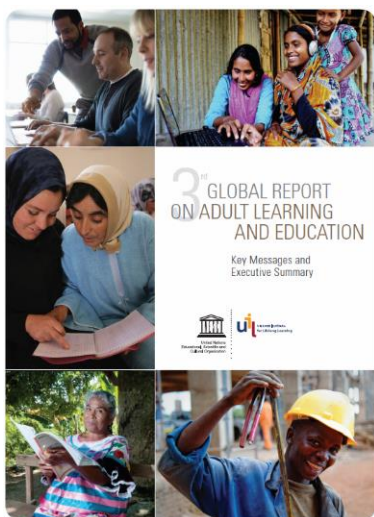
More interesting conclusions are available in the report (*Needs assessment and gap analysis at the national and EU level*) published at the [DIMA project website](#).

Margerita Zgajmajster, MA, (margerita.zgajmajster@acs.si), SIAE

Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education (GRALE III)

On the [50th anniversary of the international literacy day](#), the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) published the *Third Global Report on Adult Learning and Education: The Impact of Adult Learning and Education on Health and Well-Being; Employment and the Labour Market; and Social, Civic and Community Life* (GRALE III).

This report is based on national reports of 139 countries and shows that adult learning and education since 2009 have had a profound effect on health and well-being, active citizenship, social connection, diversity and tolerance. The countries reported an improvement in all areas since 2009.



GRALE III shows adult learning and education as a key component of lifelong learning that will have an important impact on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many countries report that adult learning and education positively affect health and well-being, employability and the labour market as well as the social life of adults.

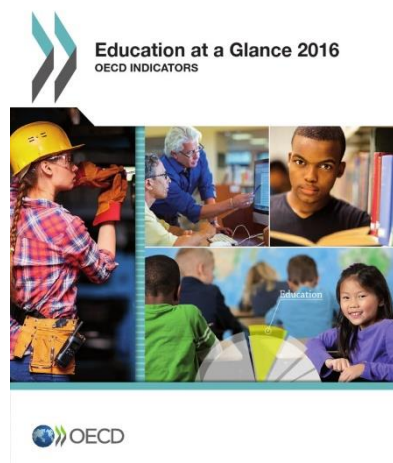
Literacy is the key for development of all other skills. 65% of countries cite low literacy as the main reason why training and education do not have a higher impact on health and well-being of adults. Literacy is also an essential skill for effective work performance. Three quarters of the countries also report that literacy programmes contribute to development of democratic values, peaceful coexistence and solidarity in the community. You can read more about the report on the [UIL website](#), where you can also find the reports from 2009 ([GRALE I](#)) and 2013 ([GRALE II](#)).

Adapted by: Simona Kavčič (simona.kavcic@acs.si), SIAE

Education at a Glance 2016: OECD indicators

The Organisation for economic cooperation and development ([OECD](#)) published [Education at a Glance 2016: OECD Indicators](#), the most comprehensive overview of selected internationally comparable data on the state and effects of education. It allows us to monitor the successfulness of the institutions and systems of education by comparing them to the group of participating countries from all over the world (35 members of the OECD and key partner countries: Argentina, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, India, Indonesia, Lithuania, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and the Republic of South Africa).

This year's edition highlights the areas and aspects such as funding, gender differences and immigrants in education; the results of the second round of the PIAAC survey (international assessment of adult competences), in which Slovenia also participated, were added to the data sources. One of the novelties is the attempt to link Education at a Glance (EAG) indicators with the agenda *Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, adopted by the United Nations, especially with the fourth goal, which states "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all".



The emphases, tables and graphs, as well as the entire publication, are available at the [OECD website](#), where you can also find a [summary in English](#). Among the presentations prepared by the OECD Secretariat for individual countries, you can also find the presentation for Slovenia ([Country note – Slovenia](#)).

Source: [OECD website](#)

Adapted by: Nevenka Kocijančič (nevenka.kocijancic@acs.si), SIAE

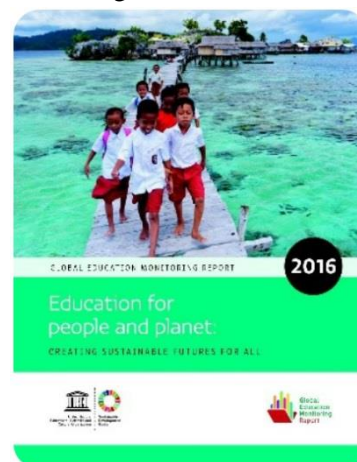
UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report

[UNESCO's New Global Education Monitoring Report](#) is important mostly for those who work in the fields of global citizenship and sustainable development. The report also references the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. For the first time, the themes in the report are presented as individual chapters, giving us the opportunity to raise awareness of global learning and the agenda for education on development.

The report shows that education drives the development needed to achieve all global goals of the new [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). It also emphasises the need for transformation of education if we want to reach the potential for achieving global goals and address the current challenges for humanity and our planet. There is an urgent need for greater progress in the field of education.

Considering the current trends, universal primary completion will be achieved in 2042, universal lower secondary completion in 2059 and universal upper secondary completion in 2084. This means that the world will miss the deadline for the goals of sustainable development in education by half a century, since the deadline set by the signatories is 2030.

Adapted by: Neja Colja (neja.colja@acs.si), SIAE



20 years of the Centre for Self-Directed Learning in the Ljubljana City Library



In Slovenia, Centres for Self-Directed Learning were formed on English examples. The so-called “open learning” centres, which today are mainly associated with adult education and lifelong learning, became known in Slovenia during the project *Organised self-directed learning* that was operated by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. The project is funded by the MESS.

Ljubljana City Library ([LCL](#)) joined the project in 1996 and was even a coordinator for a while. The goal was to develop a network that would provide easier access to general knowledge for a large circle of people.

The centres offer a wide range of computer and language self-learning courses, the help of a counsellor and computer-equipped rooms for all who decide to engage in this type of non-formal education. The main concept has not changed over the last twenty years, however we are adapting to the changing needs of our users. At the beginning there was demand for basic computer skills, but nowadays the most popular courses involve foreign language learning, advanced computer contents and searching for various information on the internet. At the centre, we attempt to meet the wishes of our users by buying appropriate study materials and by updating the IC technology. We also organise special workshops that prepare them for self-directed learning.

We celebrated the 20th anniversary in the spirit of our mission. During the Open day week, we presented some of our study materials recently enhanced with materials for learning Slovenian, German, English and French. We organised numerous workshops such as Birds around Us, Dropbox, Spanish and Typewriting. Our most loyal members were given gifts and recognition awards. And since the quality of work and the atmosphere at the centre depend mainly on the employees, they were given recognition awards as well.



We are proud of the fact that during only the first nine months of 2016, 383 members studied for more than 7,400 hours at our centre. We expect that the number of visits will continue to grow in case of steady financial support.

We are facing new challenges, particularly when searching for new contents to respond to individual learning needs and the development of the society.

To conclude, here is a thought from Valentina, one of our users: “You lose a day when you learn nothing new.”

Špela Šubic Zalezina (spela.subic-zalezina@mkj.si), LCL

Kaluma – a bench that connects and unites people of all generations and nationalities

As the coordinator of the Lifelong Learning Week for the Maribor area, Maribor Adult Education Centre joined forces with the creators of the project entitled *Zgodba o klopeh in ljudeh* (Story about benches and people), an idea developed by Liljana Jarh. The goal of the project is to bring together various creators (such as architects, sculptors, designers, painters) who are willing to give to the city of Maribor and its citizens a unique artistically designed bench, thus adding to the artistic and visual style of the city. Apart from that, the benches also have a practical use: they activate spaces and invite people to congregate and connect.

We are honoured that one of the benches – seventh in a series – is situated in front of our building at Maistrova ulica 5 for people to admire and enjoy. The bench named KALUMA is a creation of Tomaž Plavec, an academically trained painter, graphic artist and sculptor from Ptuj.

In the words of Liljana Jarh: “...the name and the materials are not randomly selected but with an intent to convey a meaning. The idea behind the bench is connected to its surroundings and symbolises the purpose of Maribor AEC.

From raw materials (the legs are made from pressed aluminium), new ideas, thoughts and knowledge rise to the surface. That is why this unique bench was given the name KALUMA – a name containing multiple meanings: KAL (germination), UM (mind, intellect) or UMETNOST (art) and ALUM for aluminium. On the bench surface, there are two groups of a total of 35 small heads made from aluminium that are symbolically linked together. The grouping and positioning of the heads carries a message of intergenerational and intercultural connections. Simultaneously, this practical artistic creation speaks about integration, respect for differences and abolishment of restrictions that cause discord between people.”



We are proud to have unveiled the KALUMA bench on Thursday, 16 June 2016 as part of the Lifelong Learning Week 2016. The event also marked the end of the Learning Parade that was organised by our institution in Maribor again this year.

The unveiling ceremony was accompanied by an artistic programme. After a speech by Irena Urankar, the directress of Maribor Adult Education Centre, and Liljana Jarh, we were honoured by a personal greeting from Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik from SIAE. Musical numbers by vocalist Urška Gajšt and Igor Bezget on stringed instruments elevated the event. The duo is better known to the public under their artistic name *u&i*.

Every bench tells its unique story. Ours speaks about all the learners visiting our house of knowledge. These are people of different generations and nationalities that seek education, training and new competences. All are a part of the adult education story.

You are cordially invited to Maribor. Once here, do not forget to visit Maistrova ulica 5, where you will be able to admire a very special bench. More information and photos from the event can be found on our [home page](#), our Facebook page and on the [Facebook page of the project Zgodba o klopeh in ljudeh](#).

Neža Bojnec Naterer (neza.bojnec@azm-lu.si), Maribor AEC

Edible Park for outdoor learning in Brje

The village of Brje in the Vipava region hosted a “green” Brje Edible Park for outdoor learning study circle, which took place from February to June and was carried out by Ajdovščina Adult Education Centre

Organisers of the kick-off meeting of the Brje Edible Park for outdoor learning study circle, which took place in February, were surprised by the impressive number of participants. A total of 40 participants attended the event. The idea has since developed over several months under the supervision of adult educator Maja Marc and in cooperation with designer Leonora Jakovljević as well as landscape architect Orjana Velikonja Grbac.

The automation of work contributes to the fact that people dedicate too little time and care to nature and are thus losing touch with it. However, more and more people are becoming aware of the importance of life in harmony with nature, whose laws are actually mightier than humanity. Movements for the revival of nature, such as permaculture, natural farming and landscape planning using edible plants, also include the idea of edible parks, which was introduced to Slovenia by Leonora Jakovljević.



The village of Brje is well known for its vineyards located on the slopes of the Vipava Hills that benefit from sun exposure and have thus contributed to the rich wine-growing tradition of the village. Locals from Brje have lived in touch with nature for many years. Almost every house in the village owns a vineyard or an orchard. However, it seems the fertile soil of the Vipava Valley is still little known and cultivated. The

concept of an edible park for outdoor learning enhances the commitment to nature including the so called "artificial nature". The latter involves a natural ecosystem that is organised in a systemic way, taking into account the laws of nature. In order to establish Brje Edible Park for outdoor learning, the use of rooms in a new learning centre was taken into account as well as the fact that the project would serve everyone: creators and users of the Edible Park for outdoor learning and also the future visitors to Brje.

Over the course of the meetings, participants were introduced to the idea of an edible park for outdoor learning, which is roughly considered as a self-sustaining system for the empowerment of the local community. Its implementation involves therapeutic, educational and pedagogical approaches. Systems and principles of the edible park comprise the following: permaculture, landscape architecture, pedagogy and didactics, biodiversity and the needs of the local community.

At the meetings, which took place twice a month from February to June, participants were educated in the fields of design and permaculture. They also learned to recognise the needs of the local community and

functions of the natural ecosystem in connection to the coexistence and growth of the local community as well as the individual, both freely and in a functional way.

Skills and experience acquired could later be used in home gardening and landscape maintenance. Participants mostly socialised, shared their ideas and knowledge as well as spent their free time actively. They also showed great interest in the fieldwork, which was carried out with the support of biologist Stipe Hečimović. He enthusiastically presented edible plants in the surroundings and possibilities of their use in the kitchen as well as for healing purposes.



Brje Edible Park for outdoor learning study circle was free of charge for all participants and was successfully completed in June. Active participants of the study circle commended the concept of the edible park for outdoor learning and expressed great pleasure regarding the present subject as well as great interest in similar future projects. According to the possibilities offered by the Brje learning centre, a number of similar learning workshops could be carried out in the future.

Maja Marc (maja.marc@hotmail.com), Brje

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