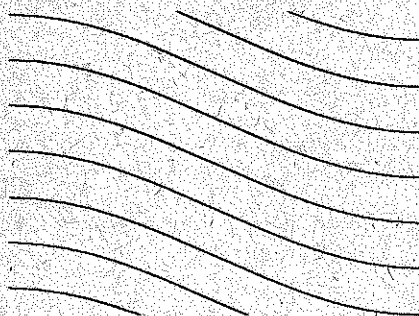


Andragoški center Republike Slovenije
Slovene Adult Education Centre

NOVIČKE



SUMMER / 1994

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● ILSCAE the 8th Annual Conference ▲ **COMMENTS** ● Functional Illiterates are People
Who Give Me a Hard Time ▲ **NEW BOOKS**

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

F. Prešeren: THE TOAST

Slovene national anthem



PROGRAMME BASIS OF NOVIČKE

- Novičke (The News) is an information bulletin with which we wish to inform individuals and organisations abroad with adult education and learning in Slovenia.
- We plan to provide the following types of information:
 - description and presentation of events and activities in adult education;
 - development, research and other programmes and projects;
 - information on organisations, their needs, plans and activities;
 - information on policy and strategies of adult education;
 - the latest news in administration and legislation;
 - statistical data;
 - information on forthcoming events, workshops, seminars and conferences;
 - presentations of new books and articles.
- Novičke will provide brief, concise, objective and unbiased information.
- Novičke will be published three times a year in English language.
- Users will receive Novičke free of charge. This is a policy we intend to continue, provided we are able to cover the costs of publishing from the public funds allocated to adult education.
- Novičke is edited and published by the Information Centre at the SAEC. In charge of the publication are: Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar - head of the Information Centre and Peter Monetti - editor of Novičke.
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SLOVENIA - WHERE IS IT?



Economic Perspectives for Slovenia **Recent Trends in the Slovenian Economy**

A Challenge for Slovenia

For Slovenia - a new, two-year-old State in Central Europe - the question at hand is whether to regard it as the most developed part of the former, undeveloped Eastern Europe or, according to current and expectable indicators, as a slightly less developed country in a highly developed Europe - with the challenge of ascending the ladder of development as rapidly as possible. This would also require a rapid, successful integration into the new Europe - the Europe of unification and co-operation, the European integrations. Slovenia certainly perceives itself as part of such Europe, as much in spiritual, cultural and political sense as in an economic one.

With per capita GDP of USD 6,186 and per capita export (goods) of USD 3,350, with relatively large foreign trade, the lion's share of which is the EU and EFTA countries in both imports and exports, with a geographic location in the Alps-Adriatic region and, last but not least, with the beginning of the positive economic trends which have come about in a relatively short time (considering the economic and political circumstances of the last few years) Slovenia is convinced that the prospects are quite good.

The Last Two Years

After attaining monetary independence in the autumn 1991 and international recognition of Slovenia as a sovereign country by the EC countries in the beginning of 1992, Slovenia went through a period of harsh economic adjustment to the new market conditions - as much in this specific part of Europe as in a wider international sense. Individual companies had to adjust rapidly in order to make up for the loss of their markets in ex-Yugoslavia as well as in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. Parallel to this ran a process of transition in economic system and adaptations to concepts as desired by Slovenia and as demanded by a developed market economy - including competition in all aspects, not only economic.

At the same time, Slovenia succeeded in cutting down the former Yugoslavian inflation, which, for example, reached a height of even 30 percent per month in 1989. The December 1993 inflation in Slovenia was down to 1.5 percent which still represented a relatively high annual inflation rate - compared to the European Union (approximately 20 percent), but disparities in prices as well the price - rise - expectation have been reduced and inflation is expected to fall further in 1994.

Sales within the Slovenian economy dropped most drastically in 1991 and 1992. Under this influence, the gross domestic product for 1992 fell in real terms by 6 percent - actually a success - whilst industrial production declined by as much as 13 percent. The 7 percent drop in consumer spending and 3 percent drop in real incomes indicated a fall in the standard of living in 1992. The greatest decline, however, was witnessed in investment. In the same year that the Slovenian economy concretely experienced a drastic contraction of 60 percent in sales in the former Yugoslavian market, exports to other countries rose by 5.8 percent and imports by 1 percent, thus achieving a trade surplus and positive balance of payments. The foreign currency reserves have been steadily accumulating. The Bank of Slovenia insisted on a very strict monetary policy whose only target was the pursuit of stabilization and strengthening of the new local currency, the Slovenian tolar (SIT), and the gradual establishment of its convertibility.

Drop in Inflation, Financial Problems, Unemployment

Whilst inflation was stabilizing, a number of previously quite successful companies began experiencing financial and liquidity difficulties. These conditions, beside other problems, forced companies in the industrial and service sectors to slash the number of employees in 1992 and 1993. Some of these, termed as "technological surpluses", resulted in plain unemployment. The rate of unemployment in Slovenia, measured by the number of those officially registered as unemployed opposed to the employed or the working population, which was in Slovenia practically nil in the past, risen rapidly to 14.9 percent by Autumn 1993 (less according to the ILO methodology). Retirement was also accelerated.

This fundamentally transformed the ratio between the working and the non-working population acutely increased the need for greater social transfers as well as more funds for this purpose. In 1993, every individual of the working population had to support 1.53 non-working individuals, compared to 1.44 in 1992 and 1.07 in 1987, when this situation in Slovenia was the most favourable in the last ten years. In 1993, the ratio between pensioners and the working population was 1:1.8, compared to 1:2.9 in 1987. Public spending in Slovenia increased because of other reasons as well - the establishment of a new country, for example. the proper elements of social welfare are only just being implemented.

A Relatively Balanced Economic Structure

According to current estimates, the gross domestic product for 1992 amounted to USD 12.3 thousand million. Industry accounts for 41 percent, services for 54 percent and farming (including fishing) for 5 percent of the structure of value added in Slovenia today. The most important manufacturing industries are food and beverages (at 4.7 percent of total value added), manufacture of textiles and textile products (at 4 percent), manufacture of metal products (at 3.6 percent), manufacture of electrical and optical equipment (at 3.5 percent), chemical products and man-made fibres, furniture and timber products, vehicles, paper products and printing and publishing. The most

important services industries are trade (at 11.3 percent), transport, business services (11.6 percent) and tourism.

Organisational Structure of the Slovenian Economy

In 1992, and later as well, an intensive and different organizational structure was being established in Slovenian companies. The number of new small companies grew rapidly, especially in the former lacking service sector. The number of banks also grew, numbering 32 at the end of 1993, five of them with foreign share holders. Of the nearly 20.300 companies that operated in 1992 and the 23.300 in 1993, over 92 percent are small companies, 5 percent are middle sized and 2.5 percent are large companies.

Table: Breakdown of Slovenian Companies In the middle of 1993

COMPANY	NUMBER	EMPLOYEES	INCOME
Small	92%	16%	20%
Medium	5%	28%	19%
Large	2.5%	58%	60%

As far as ownership was concerned in 1993, 83 percent of the companies were privately owned, 1 percent by co-operatives, 5 percent were mixed ownership and 11 percent in the form of social ownership.

Recent years have seen a dynamic increase in the number of small and private companies - in terms of income, employees and profit. This represents a drastic change in the economic structure in Slovenia. With the new Commercial Companies Act, passed in 1993, the founding capital must be approximately 20.000 DM in tolar for limited liability companies and 40.000 DM in tolar for share holding companies. With this new systematic legislation on companies, Slovenia has acquired a system compatible with those of the European Union members.

Legislation Transition

Apart from the Commercial Companies Act, the so-called "Privatisation Act" (Law on the Transformation of Company Ownership) is undoubtedly the principal systematic act. This act was passed by Parliament at the end of 1992. It is an act in which companies that were socially owned (and self managed) were to be transformed and privatised. The basic Slovene scheme of privatizing socially-owned property is:

- 10% - to the Slovenian Pension and Disability Fund
- 10% - to the Compensation Fund
- 20% - to the Development Fund for further distribution to authorised companies
- 20% - to the internal distribution in the enterprise under special conditions, if the enterprise opted for internal purchase
- 40% - to sale

The more important phase of the privatisation of companies with a majority share of socially owned capital - primarily in industry - should be finished till May 1994, when the companies have to prepared their privatisation programmes to be finished by the end of 1994. As an example, the privatisation of the successful pharmaceutical company Lek at the beginning of 1994 aroused greatest interest with the exceptionally high public demand for shares and additional investment.

Foreign trade legislation

Slovenian foreign trade legislation, the foundations of which were set in 1992, is relatively liberal and undergoing a process of further compliance to the European Union. 96 percent of all imports are liberalised, 3 percent are under a quota system and only 1 percent requires licenses - only those articles for which Slovenia is obliged under international norms to have such a regime (e.g. narcotics). External payments are also liberalised. It should be noted that internal money movements in Slovenia are among the fastest anywhere in Europe. Slovenia also has a so-called internal convertibility of the local currency and external payments are therefore not a problem. The companies need only to have tolar. Legal entities in Slovenia can take loans from abroad.

Individuals - citizens of Slovenia - can freely buy and sell foreign currency in banks and exchange offices or open foreign currency accounts. Under the current conditions, savings in foreign currency in Slovenian banks exceed savings in Slovenian tolar, although recent attractive interest rates are causing the trend to shift in favour of tolar.

The Slovenian **exchange rate policy** follows a floating exchange rate which, depending on supply and demand, adjusts itself to the fluctuation of the inflation rate. In practice, the main benchmark is the relationship between the tolar and the German mark which, for mid-March 1994, was 78 tolar to the German mark in mid-march 1994 (22.96 tolar to the French franc) by the mean rate of the bank of Slovenia. Commercial exchange rates for commercial transactions are 2 to 5 percent higher than the Bank of Slovenia rate.

Slovenian companies have signed 3.169 (1.850 in the last two years) contracts with investors from 40 countries. The total value of **joint ventures** into the Slovenian economy is currently estimated at 1.865 million DM. Leading the list of investors is Germany with 721 million marks, followed by Austria with 332 million marks, Italy with 257 million marks, France with 115 million marks and Switzerland (58 million), Australia (36 million), Croatia (33 million), USA (12 million) and others (totalling 40 million marks). Germany has, therefore, invested nearly half of the total, Austria one fifth and Italy 16 percent. The French are in fourth place but only because of their investments into the automobile industry and are practically not yet present in other sectors. 56 percent of the foreign capital has been invested in industry, 10 percent in construction, 8 percent each in trade, tourism and transport and 5 percent in commercial services. Three sectors in industry have benefited most from foreign investment: the automobile,

paper and tobacco industries. Other sectors that have witnessed significant investment are the chemical, rubber and plastics industries as well as the food and beverage, electrical machinery and textile industries.

A survey conducted among the foreign investors indicated that the main **motivation for investing** into the Slovenian economy was access to the market and increasing their share of the market. The survey also revealed that foreigners invest in the Slovenian economy in order to avoid trade barriers, because of the possibility to import machinery and technological equipment free of customs duty (which the Slovenian foreign trade system enables for such investments) and because of the relatively low production and work costs, as well as manufacturing for third countries, etc. It is this last option which interests the Slovenians the most.

The orientation in new systematic solutions concerning customs duty is primarily in greater liberalisation. This holds true for **customs duty** as well. The customs tariffs are between zero and 25 percent and are used on the basis of the principle of ad valorem. In view of Slovenian endeavours to join GATT, the natural tendency is to adjust as much as possible to the internationally excepted principles of GATT.

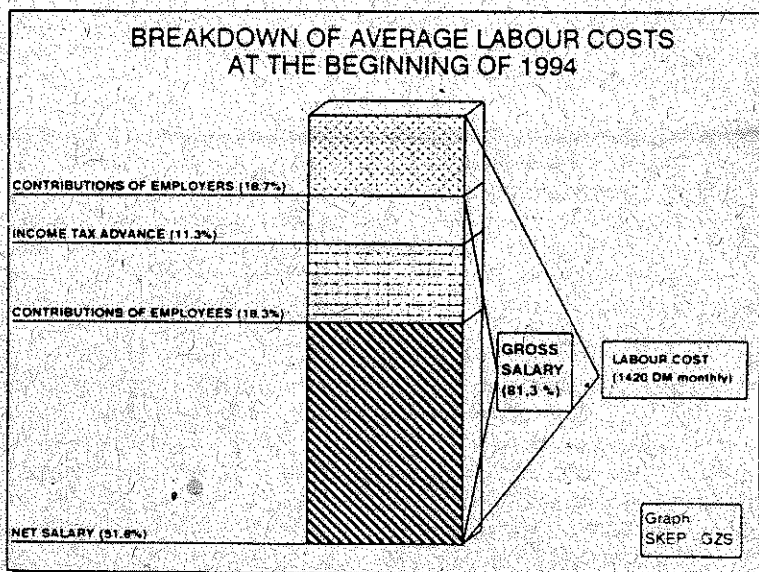
Fiscal Regime

The fiscal regime in Slovenia was radically modified approximately two years ago. It changed from the previous, relatively obscure system of numerous contributions and taxes with miscellaneous exceptions and peculiarities to a satisfactorily transparent system already adapted to Western European solutions. VAT - value added tax, the preparations for which have been proceeding for a year and a half, is to be introduced in 1995.

Legal entities in Slovenia are obliged to pay the following taxes and contributions:

tax on profit
contributions for social security
advance on income tax
sales tax
(only on the "ending" sales, similar to that in Switzerland)

In 1992 and 1993, the business community, i.e. companies and employers, constantly complained that the taxes and contributions they had to pay for financing public spending burdened the competitive position of Slovenian companies too heavily, especially concerning the salaries and the cost of labour, onto which the taxes were strongly bound. In spite of this, the cost for an average hour's work in Slovenia is still rather competitive at 8 to 10 DM (cca 30 to 35 FF).



Actually, the greatest disagreements concerning economic policies among economists in 1992 and 1993 were in the fields of foreign exchange rate policy, as well as public income and expenditure and wages policy. One of the problems in 1993 was in that no consensus was reached regarding the division of expenditure. Nevertheless, a new collective tariff agreement for business sector was signed and talks were held on social pact. The atmosphere in public and political circles was such that the so-called proponents of expenditure were most successful than their opponents, during the 1993. Even a multi-party parliament.

(From: SKEP - Economic Outlook and Policy Services, Chamber of Economy of Slovenia, 1994)

SAEC EVENTS

Unemployment Can Be a Challenge

Sonja Klemenčič, SAEC

A seminar entitled "Unemployment Can Be a Challenge" was held at the Slovene Adult Education Centre (SAEC) from 7 to 10 March 1994 within the framework of the PHARE Democracy Programme. The seminar was attended by 24 participants from 12 different organisations from all over Slovenia, who had to prepare and stage a

seminar for the unemployed. The purpose of the seminar is not professional specialisation or training for the unemployed, but to alleviate the psycho-social effects of long-term unemployment.

In seeking to identify the existing types of educational programmes for the unemployed in Slovenia we found a relatively satisfactory number of programmes for retraining and higher training and programmes for enhancing people's competitive edge on the labour market, but also that there are almost no programmes which would help the unemployed in coming to terms with the hardships which accompany the loss of a job, such as reduced social security. It is for this reason that we announced the preparation and trial run of a programme of this kind when applying to the PHARE Programme.

The purpose of the programme is to help the unemployed understand the reasons for their being out of work, which are circumstantial as well as personal, so that they can come to terms with the reality that their unemployment may be more than temporary, that they might have to live with the situation for a longer period of time, some of them forever, and also so that they become aware of the legal opportunities for doing something about their position and find various forms of aid in addressing their social status and that of their families. A fundamental part of the programme is devoted to helping the unemployed get to know themselves, learn to solve their difficulties and search for opportunities for a quality existence even in circumstances such as theirs — by encouraging them to have an active input in their own lives and maintain or broaden social contacts.

At the seminar organised by SAEC we sought to "arm" the programme's providers with the body of knowledge and skills that they would need in carrying it out.

The programmes were taking place in a number of municipalities in April and the first half of May. After having evaluated the programme we offered it to other organisations interested in it, so they were able to carry it out independently or as part of other programmes for the unemployed.



Can You Advocate Your Rights? The Phare Democracy Programme

Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar, MSc, SAEC

The Slovene Adult Education Centre is coordinating the PHARE Democracy Programme for Slovenia, the only programme in Slovenia directly financed by the PHARE Democracy Programme. Work is being conducted in eight project groups, some of which are divided into sub-projects. Public lectures on local self-government, organised by the Murska Sobota Popular University (*Ljudska univerza*) were one of the sub-projects.



Those cooperating in the PHARE Programme will confirm that there is a lot of work involved. Much of it has to do with the preparation of reports: monthly reports must be submitted regarding the activities carried out each month within the project, then there is an intermediate project report and ultimately a final report. When reporting on the activities conducted a good deal of documentation must be appended to the report. The education programmes also require programme evaluations which must include at least two viewpoints: one from the participant and one from the teacher and/or programme provider.

In accordance with the report requirements we have prepared a questionnaire for our programme which the providers are expected to complete and return to us.

We process the questionnaires, as we are interested in what the participants think of the programmes co-funded from the PHARE Democracy Programme budget. Here we present the first results from the processed questionnaires sent to us from Murska Sobota. Of course, these are only initial, provisional and very general results, which will be processed in detail at a later date.

We asked the participants to answer questions concerning the location and schedule of the programme, their sex, age and formal education. As the PHARE Programme is aimed at different target groups we also asked them to supply data on their employment. Most of the questions concerned the evaluation of the content and aims of the programme or lecture and the participant's opinion of these.

We received quite a few completed questionnaires from Murska Sobota. Out of 50 participants, 45 participants or 90% returned the questionnaires.

Twenty-seven participants or 60% of them replied to the question of what they thought was the purpose or aim of the programme. Over half of them were of the opinion that the aim of the lecture was to acquaint people with the Law on Local Self-Government. When we compared their replies to the aims of the programme as formulated by the programme's designers we found that they corresponded. Sixty per cent of the replies said the purpose of the lecture had been achieved, 13% of replies said that it had not, and 2% believed that it had been achieved only partially. Those who felt the objective had not been achieved supported their view by saying that they did not learn enough about the financing of local self-government and that above all the differences between the present and the new administrative arrangement should have been pointed out, rather than concentrating solely on the new system.

We found a wide diversity in responses to the question of how participants were informed about the lecture: the majority (20% of the replies) found out about the lecture through their local community (an invitation), others received an invitation to their home address (17%), from the media, notices and leaflets, information boards, by telephone, through acquaintances and from posters in restaurants. Alan Knox, who told us in 1984 that this is where much can be learned about needs for adult education, would be very pleased with the last answer.

Thirty-three (or 70%) of respondents said they liked the lecture; 47% liked the lecture but did not elaborate on this, while the others said they liked: the explanation and approach; what they heard about financing; the graphic diagrams and well-presented content; the conciseness, direct communication and detailed explanations. Three participants did not like the lecture.

We received 37 replies (82%) to the last question, which asked participants to state their opinion of the extent to which they acquired new knowledge and of how to improve work in this field. Of these, 6% felt they had acquired a lot of knowledge, 27% quite a lot and 31% a moderate amount, while 18% had acquired only a little new knowledge. None replied with the most undesirable response of "none at all".

Not all the questions in the questionnaire were answered. However, if we take the questions which were answered by at least a half of the respondents, we can see that the lecture working group achieved the purpose of the lecture (to acquaint participants with local self-government) and that the participants liked the lecture and on average got quite a lot out of it.



From SAEC Research Projects The Systemic Organisation of Adult Vocational Education

Angelca Ivančič, MSsc, SAEC

One element of the three-year research project entitled "Adult Education as a Factor of Development of Slovenia", held at the Slovene Adult Education Centre between 1991 and 1993, was a sub-project entitled "The Systemic Organisation of Adult Vocational Education". This sub-project included the preparation of studies on the organisation of vocational education for adults in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Germany (for acquiring a degree in Germany, Denmark and Sweden) and a comparison with the situation in Slovenia.

The study encompassed the following areas:

- Locating adult vocational education in the education system;
- The legislative regulation of adult vocational education;
- The basic providers of adult vocational education and their competence;
- The financing of adult vocational education;
- The organisation and functioning of organisational and programme networks in adult vocational education;
- Monitoring the realisation of vocational education for adults;



These and other studies on vocational education and adult education which were conducted at the SAEC and other institutions provided the basis for formulating Principles and Proposals for the Systemic Organisation of Adult Vocational Education. This document was created to serve as a professional basis in developing a system of vocational education and adult education and, to those making up the network of providers of adult vocational education, as an aid in preparing education services of this kind which will take into consideration the requirements posed to education by various societal changes.

The study is divided into three sections. The first encompasses theoretical premises for systemic organisation. It defines the position of adult vocational education within the education system, the distinctive and common elements in the vocational education of young people and adults and terminology in adult vocational education.

The second part features a schematically illustrated proposal for placing adult vocational education in the sub-system of vocational education. The starting point taken for this purpose was the common premises for the vocational education of young people and adults and the scheme of the proposed composition of vocational education for young people which were prepared at the Slovene Ministry of Education and Sport in 1992. This scheme is supplemented with structures that are specific to adult education and point to connections between formal and informal education.

The third part deals with the feasible systemic organisation of adult vocational education in Slovenia. The starting point applied here is that the system should guarantee all the elements necessary for development and operation in this field and that they therefore cannot be left to chance factors. It proposes legislative arrangement of the following areas above all:

- compulsory framing of a national policy of adult vocational education as a constituent part of national education policy;
- fundamental providers of adult vocational education and their competence;
- delimitation of the legal competence of various providers;
- sources of financing and their distribution;
- mechanisms for promoting adult vocational education;
- conditions for the development and operation of a network of adult vocational education;
- conditions for the operation of supporting institutions and an information system.

Findings on the situation in the countries reviewed and in Slovenia are put forward for each of these areas, and this is followed by a proposal for the future system of organisation in Slovenia. It could be said that there are two kinds of proposals: proposals concerning the legislative arrangement of these elements and proposals which point to the substantive development of adult vocational education (programming methodology, assessment, development of new forms and methods, etc.).

In speaking about development proposals it is perhaps appropriate to draw attention to the proposal for developing a methodology for assessing knowledge and skills acquired informally and determining its comparability with knowledge acquired in formal education, and to the introduction of a testing system. Both are intended to give

greater social value to adult vocational education of an informal kind and also to represent a link between formal and informal education.

Another important innovation is the proposed introduction of a certificate system. A certificate system would make possible the assessment and acknowledgment of qualification for a given vocation or area of a vocation acquired through informal education and training and through work experience. A certificate system provides a public document of an individual's employment or vocational abilities (not of his/her school education!) which is valid on the labour market but not for the purposes of entering further education. It would thus provide workers from lower qualification levels with a greater degree of mobility in the labour market and those from higher levels with more opportunities for pursuing a career; this would increase the appeal of formal vocational education and ensure that employers would be able to employ competent workers without having to carry out a special evaluation of their ability. At the same time this would encourage educational providers to improve the quality of their programmes and adapt them to the demands of the labour market.



SLOVENE ADULT EDUCATION SCENE



**I am glad to offer my knowledge to
others**

**How the Learning Exchange is Evaluated by Its
Users**

Irena Benedik, SAEC

A year and a half ago the Slovene Adult Education Centre developed the Learning Exchange as part of a larger project. We have already described the Learning Exchange in detail in the Spring and Summer 1993 issues of *Novičke*, so we will just briefly recap on the way it works. The Learning Exchange is an institution which collects, stores and forwards data on people looking for a certain type of knowledge and those offering this knowledge. All types of knowledge, skills and information are taken into account, from the ordinary to the academic. People do not need a certified formal education to join the Exchange, all that matters is that they possess a certain knowledge and are willing to offer it to others. Almost all communication is by telephone. Supply and demand are recorded on computer and then, using the media (those who publish or broadcast such information free of charge), we try to find the suitable person seeking or offering the knowledge.



Popular response has proved the Exchange to be beneficial new service. Today, a year and a half on, nearly 1000 people are part of the Exchange, having offered or requested around 1400 different types of knowledge. We were interested in what users think of the Exchange, how they rate it and what their wishes for the future are.

We put together a questionnaire consisting of 10 questions. Some were of the open type, others were multiple choice. We sent the questionnaire to everyone using the Exchange at the time and half of them responded. We consider this to be a very good result.

For understandable reasons, the suppliers' replies to certain questions differ from those of the seekers, while other answers tend to correspond. We present here the answers which appeared most frequently or which are of particular interest.

How did you find out about the Learning Exchange?

Most of them found out about the Exchange from *Delo* (a leading Slovene daily newspaper, in which we published our first advertisements several times), the radio and teletext (today the situation would probably be somewhat different, since the regular flow of offers and demands are now being published and broadcast free of charge by other media, too). Surprisingly, only a few learned of the Exchange from the poster and pamphlet, even though we distributed them in considerable numbers.

Why did you opt for the Learning Exchange, even though you could have offered or received knowledge elsewhere? What reasons led you to this decision?

(Because it is something new; because it could provide an income; because all communication is by telephone; because you can obtain or offer knowledge that is not available elsewhere; because you enjoy offering your knowledge to others; because you want to establish contacts with other people, etc.).

The replies of those offering knowledge were surprising. More than a third replied that they decided to join the Learning Exchange because they simply enjoyed offering their knowledge to others. Other replies were that the Exchange was a novelty worth trying out, that it was a chance to earn income, that it presented an informal means of learning and that they joined out of a desire to make new contacts. The seekers see the main benefit of the Exchange in the fact that it provides an opportunity of obtaining knowledge that cannot be had elsewhere. Another very important aspect for respondents is that they can learn in informal conditions and adapt the time and place of learning to their needs. Those with lower incomes obviously also benefited from the Exchange, as they listed another reason for entering the Exchange, namely that they could obtain knowledge at lower prices than elsewhere. Something else users considered important was the ease and speed with which they could obtain information. Here are some of the other answers:

- Through long years of work spent in certain fields you acquire a certain knowledge and experience which cannot be found in books and in this way a person can save someone else time and effort, and at the same time acquire knowledge in fields that others master.
- It seems such a waste to keep knowledge that you have acquired at school and through self-instruction to yourself.
- I am the 'owner' of knowledge and experience which is much sought-after abroad and which is not yet available in Slovenia.
- As I am disabled, and if the Learning Exchange expands I will have easier access to things I would like to find out about.
- Because I was intrigued by this form of mediation. You dial six numbers and the automatic answering machine tells you everything about who is offering what and what others are looking for.
- I was looking for information on somebody who could translate a professional text for me. Though I did not get an answer to that question, a lady on the phone asked if I would like to offer my knowledge. And why not? That is how I decided perhaps I'll even be able to earn something.
- I opted for the Exchange because I had already tried all the other possibilities without finding the knowledge I was looking for.
- Through you (the Exchange) I can decide to learn anything I please.
- The Learning Exchange seemed to provide simple solutions to many questions. Contact between people with similar interests can only bring success.

In your opinion, is the Learning Exchange an appropriate way for establishing links between people with common interests?

Of the Exchange users, 97% agreed with this statement, 2% did not answer the question and one person did not consider the Exchange to be an appropriate way of transmitting knowledge. These figures speak for themselves.

Would you visit the Learning Exchange more often if it were in your neighbourhood?

Three-quarters of the respondents said they would visit the Learning Exchange in person if it there was one in their neighbourhood. This reply may seem to be inconsistent with the fact that people almost exclusively contact the Exchange by telephone. However, another circumstance should be taken into account. The Slovene Adult Education Centre, the initial location of the Exchange when it began collecting data, is sited in an industrial zone which is not frequently visited by people. Their need for personal communication is nevertheless obvious.

Are you satisfied with the system for passing on data?

Most of the users are satisfied with the system, only a few who have not yet been able to get in touch with someone with the knowledge they are seeking are not satisfied. In view of the fact that supply and demand have increased considerably we presume that they too have found what they were looking for. There was some dissatisfaction with the computer programme, which caused problems at first, but this has fortunately been remedied.

Were you satisfied with the staff of the Learning Exchange?

We were pleased to find that users were very satisfied with the individuals who were, and with a few exceptions still are, working at the Exchange and that some would like to meet them in person. The number of neutral answers ("I don't know") showed that perhaps it was not easy for them to assess the staff given that they had only brief contacts with them.

Do you feel the manner in which supply and demand is publicised in the media to be appropriate?

Sixty-six per cent of the users had no comment on the established manner of publishing and broadcasting the information, and as many as 21 per cent were not satisfied. Their most frequent comment was that there were too few public notices. We, too, want more, but we are wholly dependent in this regard on the good will of the media organisations who broadcast or publish the current supply and demand free of charge, since we do not have the funds for other approaches.

Would you turn to the Learning Exchange again?

People evidently need the Learning Exchange, since only 1 per cent of users said that they would not turn to the Exchange again.

Comments and proposals

The Exchange users offered many comments regarding the way the Exchange works. Some are positive, some negative. There were some welcome suggestions which we will be able to act on, while others unfortunately remain unachievable wishes. The desire most often voiced was to receive more information. As we have mentioned before, informing users requires funds which we unfortunately do not have at our disposal. Quite a few users would like us to inform them in person on all goings-on at the Exchange. We regret that this is not possible, as ever since the Exchange moved from its experimental phase to that of regular operation only one person has been employed. Her basic and essential work is answering and recording telephone calls, and this does not leave her time for other activities.

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The users' proposals could be categorised into three areas: advertising campaigns, the extension of the Learning Exchange and the organisation of meetings. Enough has been said about the problem of informing users on a larger scale and advertising, while the proposals on extending the Exchange are quite interesting and feasible. The users propose the setting up of local Exchanges (concrete discussions in this regard are already underway), and at the same time that links be established beyond Slovenia's borders, creating a kind of international Exchange. Definitely food for thought. A large number of users expressed their desire for meetings to be organised at which they could exchange experience and knowledge; these meetings could perhaps be organised on a specific theme and we could invite experts or organise interest groups. There are many interesting proposals, although unfortunately most of them are beyond the scope and possibilities of the Learning Exchange.

How often do you follow the various media?

We put this question in order to help us direct future advertising to greater advantage. Most of the users follow the programme on the national TV channels (regrettably, this medium with the exception of the teletext has shown little understanding for our activities). Then comes the main Slovene daily *Delo*, professional magazines and newspapers which publish classified advertisements, followed by various radio programmes and other daily newspapers and periodicals.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we found that people are on the whole quite satisfied with the Learning Exchange. They see it as an acquisition providing easy and expedient access to information and knowledge, particularly of the kind that they cannot obtain elsewhere.

Moreover, it offers suppliers of knowledge a sense of satisfaction in passing on their knowledge to others while enabling them to earn an income. The Exchange has given them a new route to knowledge, or as one of the users expressively put it: "The Learning Exchange patches up the holes in the education system."

We would like to make changes given the number of proposals, but the actual possibilities are very few. The results also showed that users are very keen to associate, meet each other and to partake in different forms of learning than are usually available to them.

To end with, here is another thought expressed by one of the users: "People only get together for celebrations, but where is the opportunity for something else, for learning something new for example? Sadly, it just doesn't exist!"

The truth is that there is now a modest opportunity, though we hope to gradually develop more forms to satisfy the needs of all kinds of people.



We Visited Study Circles



Sonja Klemenčič, Jasmina Mirčeva, Ester Možina, MSc, SAEC

The project we embarked on in 1992 has obviously been well received. This is demonstrated by the successful operation of the study circles (SC) already underway and by the strong interest being shown for training new SC leaders and mentors. This year study circles will be able to begin working in half of Slovenia's municipalities. It is especially pleasing to note that these include a number of those which have not previously offered adult education or have done so only very modestly.

Here are some of the subjects being covered in the study circles we have visited so far: Personal Communication Development, All About Textiles, Decorating, Cultural Education Circle, Cereal Products - Homemade Bread, Painting on Glass, Creative Literary Workshop, Pottery, Italian Language and Culture, Treasure Hunters - Methods and Forms of Educating Adults, Society, Family, Individual, Postojna Local Cuisine, Museum Circle, Waldorf Pedagogics, Handicrafts, Let's Eat Healthier Food, Surviving on a Small Farm, Ecological Circle, Bio-Gardens, Theatre Circle.

Below we present three study circles in greater detail:

Tourism as a Way of Life

This study circle is being held in a village primary school in Drežnica above Kobariidom under the mentorship of Andreja Krapež. The nucleus comprises members of the recently established Drežnica Tourist Association and 8 people from Drežnica meet in the circle.

The Drežnica Tourist Association is endeavouring to open up the area to foreign and Slovene visitors and to introduce them to the local historical and natural sites. The study circle members put together a plan for making the area's attractions available in a non-commercial form to future visitors and at the same time to preserve them in their natural form; in short, to interfere in the flow of local life as little as possible. At study circle meetings the participants are restoring and documenting village customs and traditions, they are collecting old recipes and material on local history and directing



attention to its natural attractions and landmarks. The area's popular tradition has turned out to be so rich that one study circle will not be enough to cover all of it, so each of the fields mentioned will be studied separately in the future.

The participants report that the most precious source of information are oral transmissions, which they are meticulously transcribing. The area played an important role in the First World War, when the front line passed through it. There is therefore a great deal of information to be found in history books. Church chronicles represent another important source. Some of them will have to be sought just across the border in Italy, as the village was under the administrative rule of Cividale during the Italian occupation.

The study circle meetings feature discussion and debate, group work (the women, for example, collect recipes, while the men see to the revival of old customs such as "Pustovanje" or the traditional Shrovetide masquerade, traditionally a "male affair"). We also enacted roleplays during our visit.

The study circle members have set out a specific goal: they would like to present the cultural and natural items of interest in a brochure or pamphlet and publish it. In short, much work lies ahead, and we can safely say that they have already gone about their work seriously and systematically. They convinced us that tourism in their village under the Krn mountain is truly becoming their way of life.

A Bike Gets You the Farthest

Regular readers of Slovene newspapers will doubtless recall a report in December on a campaign being prepared by this study circle, which is working under the auspices of the Grosuplje College for the Quality of Life (College za kvaliteto življenja; study circle leader: Stefan Huzjan, mentor: Sebastjan Vehar). The campaign had quite an impact. In Ljubljana, for example, snow was removed from some of the cycle lanes which the local services "forgot about". However, this was only one of the study circle's secondary activities. At the moment they are preparing a handbook for cyclists in which they will publish sport, health, tourist, technical and other advice for all cycling enthusiasts. They also intend to prepare a map of the cycle routes in Ljubljana which, as well as cycle lanes, will include tips on shortcuts between various parts of the city, warn of dangerous intersections, etc.

There are eight men in the study circle, which is rather unusual in view of a survey which showed that so far it has been mainly women who have shown an interest in study circles. To achieve their goals they have assembled and studied a great deal of domestic and foreign literature and have also been making contacts with experts from various fields.

Communicating in English

This study circle is taking place in Velenje under the mentorship of Nena Mijoč, who is also the study circle leader for the town. It consists of nine retired women from

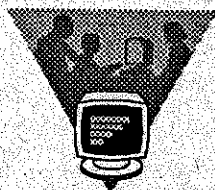
Velenje whom the mentor recruited through the press and cable TV, while some obtained information on the study circle at the Worker's University. The members meet once a week for two hours in the meeting room of the Association of Pensioners' Societies.

The study circle's goal is to increase its members' knowledge of the English language and to acquaint them with the society and culture of Britain and the USA. The members are highly motivated, since, as they themselves say, learning English has been a life-long wish of theirs which they now have the opportunity to pursue. And it is a fact that during their meetings the members talk with relative ease about their everyday problems, the mood of the group, about things they have recently read, about letters and contacts with English-speaking friends, relatives and acquaintances. A very relaxed and friendly atmosphere was perceptible within the group. At our meeting with the study circle the group had to relocate to make room for a different activity. One of the study circle members immediately offered to host the meeting and we thus continued our work in her home. The fact that the members celebrated the 69th birthday of one of their number also points to the pleasant atmosphere that prevails among them. The members occasionally meet with other circles active at the University of the Third Age, find out about their areas of interest and socialise with them. The study circle uses English magazines and dictionaries and an overhead projector.



Slovene Education Days

Maša Stavanja, SAEC



"As each winter recedes it is becoming customary for us 'teachers' to meet at the Ljubljana Fair and thus announce the coming of spring," said Dr Slavko Gaber, Minister of Education and Sport, in his opening remarks to the opening of the 14th Fair of Teaching Aids and Slovene Education Days. Those of us working in the field of adult education found this a pleasant invitation and challenge, since this is only the second time that we have prepared an organised presentation of our activities at an education fair of this kind.

Now that this creative hustle and bustle is behind us, we have found that Slovene teaching is gaining its own niche and character as the numerous visitors — over 15,000 - confirmed.

All those who cooperated with us or paid us a visit during the event could sense the level of attention being devoted to education. Some 130 educational events took place.



On Thursday, 10 March 1994, the exhibition area set aside for adult education was especially lively. Twenty-four professional topics were presented within the fair's accompanying programme and these were attended by 530 visitors. That day many people had the chance to meet and exchange information, experience and inspiration. Everywhere there was a sense of highly motivated and creatively promising discussions suggesting the future of adult educational programmes.

The exhibitors and colleagues that we met with during the week attended these events and the fair itself with different goals. They wanted to acquaint the wider public with their activities and programmes, to attract as many participants as possible to their seminars - in short, to successfully market their activities and discuss orders for the different forms and contents of education they develop. Many had joined us the previous year, while some were participating for the first time, and all of them would like to be part of future events of this kind.

If I were to compare my impressions of this year's event with a similar event which took place in the USA and which was attended and described to us by a colleague of ours, Miran Morano, I could not venture to claim that education is a already "business" in Slovenia in the way that it is there. The range on offer, competitiveness and endeavours of individuals in organisations, institutions and companies do however point to a development in this direction. We will be able to ascertain what has been achieved when we meet again in a year's time.



The Training for Life's Assurance Programmes in Slovenia

The Mengeš Group

Danica Cedilnik, TLA teacher

Most of the Training for Life's Assurance (TLA) programmes have already concluded. In Mengeš two groups have completed the programme.

This is how teacher Danica Cedilnik described work in her group:

My group consisted of 11 young women between the ages of 18 and 26. They responded to the invitation to attend the programme because none of them had completed their education and they therefore had no vocational education. They saw the TLA programme as a springboard for continuing education and acquiring a vocation.

The group was very homogeneous in terms of literacy, communication skills, learning abilities, openness and attitudes to group work. Very early on the participants realised that they would benefit from the programme and so they attended it regularly, and any brief absences were due to serious illness.



Since the group had no problems with basic literacy (reading and writing) I merely reinforced their reading aloud and to themselves, and picking out the essential. I also made them aware of the latest Slovene grammar and prepared exercises in the more difficult issues of grammar.

The practical exercises included composing and writing applications, reports, complaints, various forms and letters. We corresponded with the author Berta Golob. The main emphasis of my 75-hour-long seminar was on social learning. The more important topics included:

- Quality communication - the route to success
- Conflicts and how to solve them (causes of arguments, feelings, attentive listening, first-person accounts, etc.)
- Will I change the world or myself?
- Advice, criticism, disappointment, whose problem is it, the autonomous individual
- Alcoholism, drug addiction
- Family planning
- Healthy eating
- A minute for song, a minute for exercise and massage, a diary of pleasant minutes, etc.

I was aware that the success of the programme depended primarily on three elements: attitude, motivation and appropriate forms of lessons.

With regard to the first, I can say that we developed a very sincere attitude, the motivation came from the subject matter, which was drawn from life and therefore appealed to them, and I achieved appropriate forms of lessons by frequently creating new pairs, by means of enjoyable games and roleplay and due to my principle that the teacher must be above all a good organiser who prepares most of the work at home and leaves as much scope for initiative as possible in the programme to the participants. MI AMIGO, which gave us access to a whole range of learning material and aids, also contributed to the success of the seminar work.

Right at the start I directed the participants' attention to self-assessment. They assessed themselves as they went along and at the end of the seminar proved that they were aware of what they had acquired and what progress they felt they had made. Some of their statements: I am more self-confident, I accept diversity, I am aware that I must be persistent; I learned to listen and thus avoid conflicts; I learned to pronounce and write correctly (a Muslim woman); I am less headstrong, I am becoming more at ease, adaptable, sociable; I am less easily offended, I view arguments in a different light; I realise that I must socialise in order to learn about life; I am not all that different, since changes come about slowly; I now try not to tire others with my talking, since I am more aware of the communication problems I cause; I really like the proverb: "Don't be angry, just astonished"; I value what I am, what I possess; I realise that if I persevere I will achieve more of my wishes; I am less nervous, I see

problems in a different light; I have a better self-image; I look to my future with greater optimism.

It was a real joy to work with this group. I had the feeling that I was teaching them for life, that here was where I could realise my vision of a healthy, successful school, and the girls discovered that this knowledge could immediately benefit them in day-to-day life.

Their determination and desire for further education deepened and their confidence in the future increased.



Employee Education

Educational content in short-term forms of professional education and continuing professional education attended most frequently by employees in 1990 and 1992

Angelca Ivančič, MSc, SAEC

All too often in recent years we have encountered that employers are investing less and less in the education of employees. Assessments of this kind are often confirmed by organisational restructuring, which either discontinues or at least considerably limits educational activities even in areas where the necessary structures had already been developed. In this light the statistical findings and comparisons regarding the number of employed people attending comprehensive forms of professional education and continuing professional education (courses, seminars and lectures) in 1990 (the RAD-IZ study) and 1992 (the ŠOL-ZAP study), are quite encouraging, at least as far as the supply of education programmes concerned. The data show that in 1990 as many as 215,267 people in employment attended these forms of education and that this number rose in 1992 to 239,138 employees or 11% comparing to 1990.

We were interested in finding out which educational subjects were attended by the greatest number of employees and how attendance in individual subjects had changed between 1990 and in 1992. Although the data are not very recent (unfortunately figures for 1993 are not yet available), I believe that they can at least be used as a guide in planning the provision of education.

As regards educational attendance in different subjects, the participants in both years were very dispersed and only a few of the subjects were attended in sizeable numbers. All the courses attended by 1% or more of employees undergoing short-term forms of professional education and continuing professional education are listed below.



1990

1% to 5% of all participants

• management	3.89
• business, finances, bookkeeping, accounting	3.86
• law	2.99
• social work	2.52
• machine and instrument maintenance	2.08
• marketing	1.90
• pharmacy	1.71
• metal working and processing	1.25
• labour market	1.19
• economics	1.18
• catering, tourism, cookery	1.17

Over 5% of all participants

• psychology, pedagogy, andragogy	21.56
• computer science, information science	8.83
• work safety, fire prevention	7.90
• health care	7.20
• languages	5.03
• other	11.56

1992

1% to 5% of all participants

• management	3.43
• law	1.46
• labour market	1.20
• trade	1.14
• other	1.28

Over 5% of all participants

• psychology, pedagogy, andragogy	28.92
• work safety, fire prevention	9.53
• computer science, information science	8.35
• accounting, bookkeeping, finance	6.10
• languages	5.53
• marketing	5.51
• health care	5.09
• standards and quality	5.03

The data show that the greatest concentration of participants was in educational subjects related to services. Public services are well in the lead (nurture and education), followed by financial and business services and production services. In 1992 major subjects included work safety regulations and fire prevention, accounting, bookkeeping and finances, marketing and standards and quality. Computer science and information science enjoyed about the same attendance as in 1990. The proportion of participants increased somewhat in 1992, but not substantially. The percentage of those who


attended education and continuing education in management remained at the same level as in 1990.

Among the educational subjects where the concentration was greater, attendance in the following subjects fell by more than 50% between 1990 and 1992: farming and stockbreeding, food production and processing, pharmacy, chemistry, metal working and processing, general electronics, woodworking, machine and instrument maintenance, economics, small business and trades, social work and continuing education for work in administrative and state bodies. In comparison with 1990 there was also a considerable decline in attendance of subjects which are not classified (other), although on the other hand new subjects were introduced in 1992. The numbers of participants show that the greatest interest was in developing communicational skills and personal growth.

The greatest increase in attendance between 1990 and 1992 was in subjects such as: electronics, automatics, robotics; marketing; business, finances, accounting and bookkeeping; work safety and fire prevention; standards and quality, hygiene and sanitation; psychology, pedagogy and andragogy; and transport. There were 22% more participants in language education and continuing education than in 1990, and 5% more in computer science and information science.



CONFERENCES, SEMINARS



International Workshop on the Research Project Research on Adult Education in the Former Socialist Countries

Dr Zoran Jelenc, SAEC

We have already reported that the Hamburg-based Unesco Institute for Education and the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults (ESREA), based in Leiden, the Netherlands, have been running an international project entitled "State of the Art' Study of Research on the Education of Adults." The Slovene Adult Education Centre (SAEC) has assumed the role of coordinator for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the special task of conducting a study on "The State and Development of Research on the Education of Adults in Slovenia" (a special report on this has been prepared for NoviČke). The international part of the project being coordinated by the SAEC (Dr Zoran Jelenc is head of the project) is being co-financed by Unesco.

In January we organised a workshop in Ljubljana which was attended by selected representatives from some of the countries cooperating in the study and a representative from Unesco. Taking part in the workshop were representatives from Estonia, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. In agreement with Unesco, the moderator of the workshop was Dr Jindra Kulich, a well-known expert on adult education in the countries of the former socialist bloc. The aims of the two-day workshop were: to contribute to the preparation of a final report on the study; to discuss the national reports already submitted (so far the coordinator has received reports from seven countries); and to compare the findings from the reports received to date and to submit proposals for future work.

It was established that the work conducted thus far had yielded useful results, but that it should be supplemented in two ways:

- The study should also encompass the countries that have so far not responded. This is particularly important because the situation in these countries has been rapidly changing since 1989 and as complete as possible picture of the situation - concerning both the education of adults and research being conducted in this field - is important for the overall project; this would enable a more complete picture of the situation and state of progress in the world as a whole.
- The submitted reports should be supplemented in such a way that the findings are interpreted in regard to the changes which have come about over the past five years. These changes have been both positive (especially good examples of this are Slovenia and Estonia) and negative, since in some places (e.g. the Czech Republic and Hungary) adult education has regressed in comparison with its prior level of development.

The findings indicate that the research activities in adult education in Slovenia are relatively rich and diversified even though conditions for this are not always conducive.

Once all the submitted data are analysed we will prepare a more detailed report on the findings and thus present the state and development of research on adult education in Slovenia.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have cooperated in the study and who have been prepared to sacrifice their valuable time to this end.



ILSCAE the 8th Annual Conference Adult Learning and Power



Vida Mohorčič Špolar, MSsc, SAEC

Adult Learning and Power was the theme of the of 8th Annual ILSCAE (International League for Social Commitment in Adult Education) conference organised jointly by ILSCAE and Slovene Adult Education Centre in Bled from 26 June to 3 July 1994. The conference brought together delegates from England, Northern Ireland, Poland, Switzerland, Sweden, Costarica, Chilli, Philippines and Somalia.

ILSCAE is an organisation which brings together adult education theoreticians and practitioners who share common concern with adult education as a vehicle for social and economic change. The purpose of ILSCAE is best expressed in the objectives set forth in the charter:

- To encourage all those involved in adult education to identify and act to overcome the social, political and economic forces which perpetuate the existence of poverty, oppression and political powerlessness.
- To encourage all those involved in adult education to view and practise adult education as a vehicle to enable all adults to gain and exert control over their own lives as part of the community and the environment.
- To encourage all those involved in adult education to direct resources towards the exploited, the oppressed and politically powerless and to work in solidarity in developing learning activities with social, political, economic, cultural and aesthetic content.
- To encourage all those involved in adult education to learn about the oppression from the oppressed, to name their own oppression, and to make explicit the ethics and values which guide their practice.
- To encourage the preparation of adult educators to provide not only for the enhancement of technical skills, but also for the critical examination of ethical and social issues.
- To encourage the design, conduct and reporting of research and other forms of scholarships focusing on adult education as a force of social change.

Those objectives led all the discussions. For how can we discuss adult education as social power if we do not tackle the questions regarding social division, if we do not recognise that society in general, and the labour market in particular, are deeply divided by gender and ethnic issues. How can adult education contribute in solving the questions of women, race, ethnicity, refugees, nationalism, economic power, civil society, non-governmental and voluntary organisations? Is it possible to contribute to legal equality for women only by education? Are there adult education programmes which actually support this?



How can adult education support people's cultural and national identity, both in their country of origin and when living as immigrants or refugees in other countries? How to prepare adult education curriculum that it will not be exclusive and narrow but broad and pluralist? What do programmes say about racial discrimination, violence against ethnic minorities and NorthSouth issues?

What are the relative positions of "education and training for economic development and education and training for citizenship" in praxis and experience of adult education? How does education and training for personal economic power fit in with the "needs of the national economy?" There are less jobs and higher levels of qualification are required to get these jobs. Is adult education and training simply a barrier people have to jump over in their search for work, rather than a real preparation for jobs? Can adult education contribute to new attitudes to work, e.g. job-sharing and shorter working hours? What kind of economic development does adult education support? Is it for the global economic system or for local people gaining some control over their local economy? How do environmental issues fit into this picture?

How can adult education contribute to strengthening voluntary organisations? Should we rely on the state to provide adult education? What other organisations can and do provide education and training, such as the trade unions of new social movements (women's movement, "green" movement)?

When preparing the conference organisers were well aware of the variety of perspectives and points of view and that adult education workers may have different strategies in different settings. It was not entirely so. To my mind there was unanimous agreement that adult education is power. But that in this respect there can not be enormous jumps but only small steps which lead to the goal. And, adult education practitioners make them every day in their work. Education on its own and by itself can not do all the work which needs to be done. Or, as a participant from the Northern Ireland wrote: "Northern Ireland is a deeply divided society and it is from this division that violence and political instability flows. Even were violence to end, it is important to realise that fundamental divisions in Northern Ireland society are likely to remain and threaten any progress achieved. If these divisions are to be healed the two sides of the community must live together on equal terms and perhaps just as important perceive this to be the case. Adult education exists within this context and cannot be divorced from the realities of socio-religious, economic and political division... While there is much evidence of new and innovative work in all sectors of education, the contribution it can make towards restoring social, cultural, economic and political problems will be determined by political progress, adequate funding and the promotion of education based on consensus, equality and justice for all." I think that in many cases this could be written almost in any country, maybe with different words but surely with the same message.

In the opinion of participants (gained by the questionnaire) the conference was successful. When we asked what they liked most about the conference, their answers show that they liked information on Slovenian practises, exchange of information,

willingness to think, sharing experiences and reflection, willingness to 'listen' to alternative ways of working and trying them too, to be able to meet new and old friends from all over the world and to exchange experiences with them, learning from others, democratic methods used, and the possibility to extend horizons. They felt strengthened and restored. But they also liked the place (Bled, Slovenia), friendly atmosphere and goodwill of all. Is there anything more to say?



COMMENTS



Functional Illiterates are People Who Give Me a Hard Time

Dr. Sue Gardener, Urban Learning, London

I was interested to read the report in *Novičke* Winter 1993 on the Second Slovene Conference on Functional Literacy. Interested, and slightly shocked to read the list of characteristics of functionally illiterate people identified by Employment Advisors.

Some of the items in the list are clearly features of relative illiteracy as such, since they relate to difficulties with literacy events and performance. Others describe some of the consequences of an education that was either not extended or unsuccessful, which is likely to be a precondition of people having difficulty with literacy in adult life. But others have, to this reader, no rational or necessary connection with literacy skills and performance at all, and some are simply the rendering of a negative perception of the person, especially in her or his relation to the difficult professional role of the employment advisor. Functional illiterates are people who give me a hard time!

This is useful research in that it identifies a field of difficulty in the performance of the job of advising and resettling unemployed people. It is not, I would argue, useful research about people whose literacy does not match societal demands. At worst, if we were to take this as a sound list of characteristics of a group of people, we would be saying that functional illiterates are or have become a sub-class, with cultural characteristics of their own, and that the programmes we run for them must address changing these negative, fatalist and socially alarming cultural characteristics as much as teaching them to read, write and understand written communication better.

For this to be true or useful, we would have to be able to demonstrate that this grouping of characteristics is really existent, and not only through the perception of

a group of workers who find them hard to deal with; that the key marker of this set of people is their insufficient literacy, rather than, for example, their long-term unemployment, other class characteristics, or particular histories in relation to recent industrial change; and we would have to eliminate any distortion introduced by the identifiers of the characteristics. It may be that the first and most productive outcome of this investigation is a training programme for employment service workers!

UK practice in adult literacy has signally failed to reduce the residual percentage of people who leave school with inadequate literacy or whose literacy deteriorates after school. We may, however, have some small insights to offer from 20 years of practice:


- a. Literacy difficulties tend to come as a shock to most literate people, and as a result they define imprecisely, load in to their definitions characteristics which are in fact independent and not intrinsic, and they tend to panic and stigmatize.
- b. Programmes based on social adjustment do not match the perceived learning needs of adult students and so are poorly attended and not persevered with.
- c. Changes in parallel competences do come with increased literacy, and at a surprising rate if the mode of literacy teaching includes the offer of responsibility, control, social and pedagogic contact with other learners and a chance to define both the problem and the solutions for oneself.
- d. Above all, it is useful to listen to the learners, who may have strong views about their own social exclusion and are not necessarily hampered in expressing them by their difficulty with the written medium.

It would be particularly dangerous, in the middle of all the other adjustments and explorations that go into devising new learning programmes for new times and new work and social roles, if we were to amass a set of negative characteristics and attribute them to people with literacy difficulties. A rapid consequence is likely to be acceptance that, in a society which sees its earning power attached to informatics and flexibility, this group is somehow naturally or inevitably excluded and that there is no gain in investing in their education and training.

"It is important to think through the relationship between adult basic skills education and the needs of a changing labour market. But the job of educationists is to draw attention back, both to what will work educationally and to the concept of basic skills as a minimum social entitlement. We are moving into an age of complex 'literacies' which include the notion of computer literacy. It would be tragic if the social changes affecting Slovenia, which must make it necessary to review both skill and training in a new and changing light, led to repeating old mistakes made elsewhere and defining one social group out of the new economy and society. If you are out of the economy, your risk of being out of society too is very great."



NEW BOOKS



Adult Education and the Labour Market Seminar Proceedings

Tanja Vilič Klenovšek, MSc, SAEC

An international ESREA seminar entitled "Adult Education and the Labour Market" was held in Ljubljana from 10 to 12 October 1993. ESREA stands for the European Society for Research on the Education of Adults and is seated in Leiden, the Netherlands. ESREA has organised a number of research networks, one of which is "Adult Education and the Labour Market." In October 1993 researchers working in this field held a meeting in Ljubljana.

Work at the seminar took place in 4 working groups. In order to make different and related experiences accessible to as many professionals as possible we decided to collect and publish the contributions in a book of proceedings. This task was assumed by the Slovene Adult Education Centre.

The 235-page volume *Adult Education and the Labour Market - Seminar Proceedings* has been published in English and is divided into the following chapters:

- I. Introductory Presentations
- II. Final report and contributions of the 1st Working Group:
 QUALIFICATION AND WORK PROCESS RESEARCH
- III. Final report and contributions of the 2nd Working Group:
 LABOUR MARKET POLICY, (UN)EMPLOYMENT AND ADULT EDUCATION
- IV. Final report and contributions of the 3rd Working Group:
 **INSTRUCTION METHODS, CONCEPTS OF TEACHING AND TEACHER
 QUALIFICATION**
- V. Final report and contributions of the 4th Working Group:
 PROFESSIONALISM AND CAREER STUDIES
- VI Addresses of the authors of papers

The Proceedings are priced at 30 German marks plus postage. Please send your order to: **Andragoški center Slovenije (Slovene Adult Education Centre), Šmartinska 134a, 61000 Ljubljana, Slovenia.**



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Exclusive Information

This book will also provide you with special information on Eastern European countries. A presentation of all countries according to a single scheme ensures quick reference.

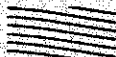
Authentic Insider Knowledge

The book includes details contributed by experts from various countries. This way you will be able to obtain first-hand expert insights.

All in One

The European Manual of Continuing Education presents:

- A: A chapter of country-by-country descriptions, profiling continuing education systems in all the countries of Europe according to a single set of criteria.
- B: European Union. Exhaustive descriptions of all EU activities in the field of continuing education.
- C: International organisations. Individual descriptions of the main European international institutions concerned with the progress and organisation of continuing education and exchanges.
- D: Addresses. A list of the most important addresses to help you establish international contacts.

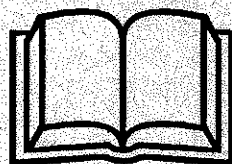


The European Manual of Continuing Education (Europahandbuch Weiterbildung/Manuel Européen de la Formation Continue) was edited by Prof. Dr Arnim Kaiser, Jörg E. Feuchtofen and Rainer Güttler. You can order it through your bookdealer or directly from the publisher, **Luchterhand Verlag, Postfach 2352, 56513 Neuwied, Germany**, priced 78 German marks per copy.

(summarised from promotional literature)



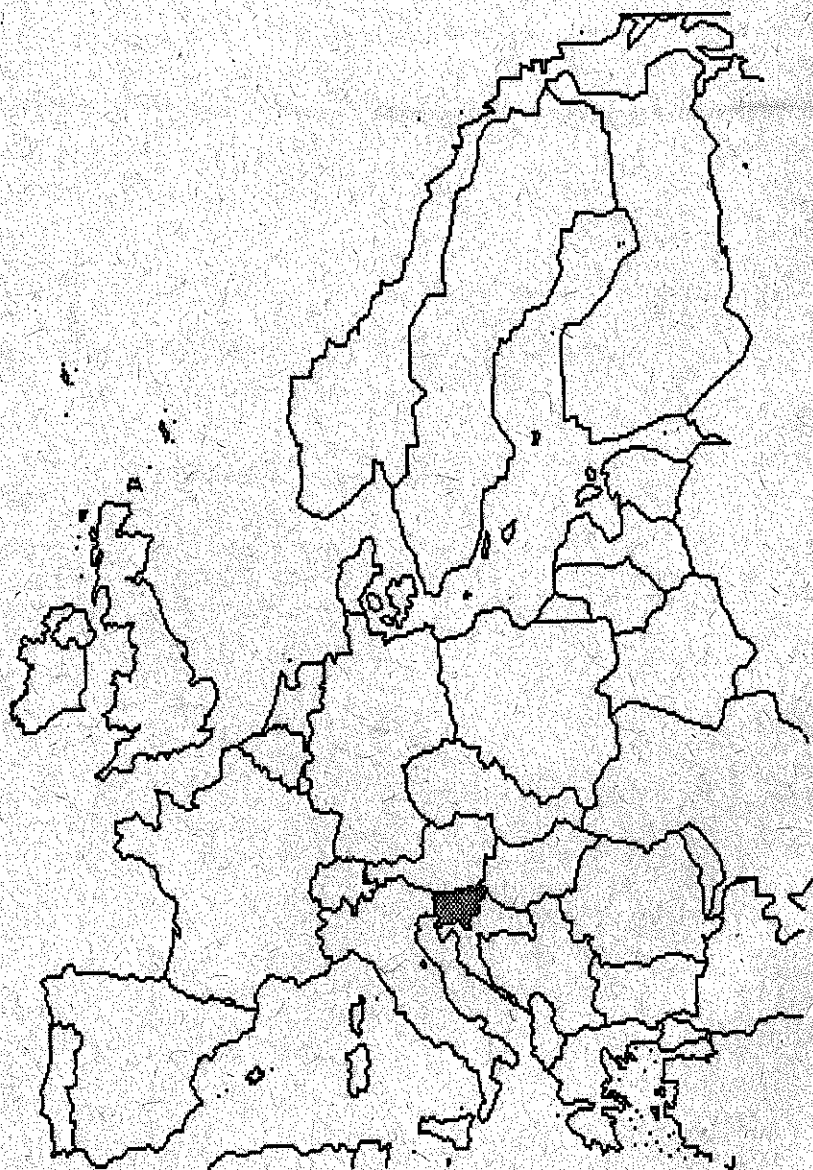
A Note of Thanks to Mrs Carol E. Kasworm



Peter Monetti, Librarian, SAEC

Once more I have the pleasant duty of expressing my gratitude on behalf of our library for a gift of a parcel of books. This time our sincere thanks go to Mrs Carol E. Kasworm of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, for enhancing our collection.





svetovanje, raziskovanje, razvoj, informacijsko središče, izobraževanje
consulting, research, development, info-centre, education