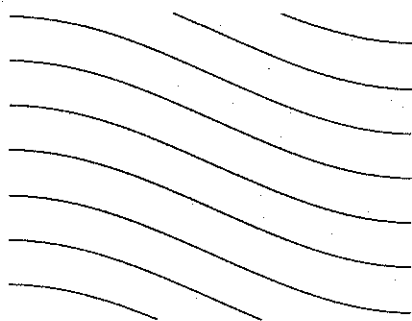




Andragoški center Republike Slovenije  
Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

# NOVIČKE



SUMMER 99/Vol. VII

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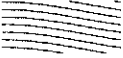


## PROGRAMME BASIS OF NOVIČKE

- 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.
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## SIAE EVENTS



### History of Adult Education in Central European Countries

The fifth Symposium on the History of Adult Education in Central European Countries, which dealt with the 1990's, drew to a close in Rogla on 3 July 1999. Some 42 experts from Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Korea, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia participated in the symposium, which was opened by Janez Podobnik, the president of the National Assembly.

The papers and presentations discussed the history of adult education in the recent period known in Slovenia as the transition. The problems facing adult education (e.g. a lack of public interest in such education, the decline of adult education programmes that entail personal growth and development, the absence of education programmes for democratic citizenship) in Central and East European countries were mainly presented, while approaches that experts see as a possible way out of the unfavourable situation were also pointed to. There were also contributions that identified new trends and programmes in individual countries (e.g. the University of the Third Age in Slovakia, Slovenia's national adult education programme, post-graduate teacher training, innovations and continuity in adult education) and that analysed new developments (e.g. the social goals of childcare and education, the effect of the internet on education, the state's influence on research and development work).

The fifth symposium on adult education should see the end of discussions on subjects from the recent era. However it would be a pity if this were really the case. In the path taken from the first symposium in 1995 to this year's meeting, all of us involved in adult education have had the opportunity, either at the symposiums themselves or through the proceedings, to study in detail both the history of adult education in our own countries and the history of this field in other Central European lands.

Of course there were not enough symposiums for anybody to uncover the wealth of any nation in the field of adult education and studying. Many more are needed. Let us say that the first steps have been taken, at least in Slovenia, towards better knowledge of what has happened in the field of adult education throughout the centuries. But this is not enough. The field needs to be delved into further, both for reason of our historical memory, and so that we can get to know one another better, inside and outside Europe. Perhaps it is time to take a more detailed look at developments in adult education in particular periods and in

particular areas. Symposiums are one of the forms we have at our disposal. It will be even better when we have research that will allow at least us to discover the past of adult education and preserve our findings for future generations. Needless to say, contributions on this subject at international meetings are also a unique calling card from a particular nation.

Dr Vida A. Mohorčič-Špolar, SIAE



## Preparing for the fourth Lifelong Learning Week

Having organised it three times, we at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education can conclude with satisfaction that the Lifelong Learning Week justifies the resolution of the Government of Slovenia stating that it is a project of national importance linking diverse providers of education and learning in Slovenia and participants of all generations, and that it makes an important contribution to the implementation of the strategy of lifelong learning in our society. The encouraging figures - 59 providers and around 500 events in 1996, 129 providers and nearly 1,000 providers in 1997, and over 260 providers and around 1,500 events in 1998 - show that institutions and individuals, municipal authorities and the state all support this form of promotion of learning and education, and wish to continue to do so in the future.

The fourth Lifelong Learning Week (LLW or Week) will be held from **18th to 24th October this year**; for the first time, it will have a common theme, since some of the events will mark the international year of the elderly.

Once again this year, the prime mover and coordinator of the Week is the Slovenian institute for adult education, while the National LLW Committee at the Ministry of Education and Sport, which brings together representatives from various ministries and other areas of public life, has a guiding, umbrella role. The numerous national and local providers and participants, of which there are more every year, give the week real substance and diversity. Providers include formal and non-formal organisations, groups and individuals. Together they plan, organise, implement, support and promote learning and education in their environments, whether this be their main or secondary activity, professional, voluntary or amateur. By presenting their activities, including those requiring visitor participation, and through numerous formal, social and cultural events, they inform the broadest possible public of the importance and ubiquity of, and opportunities for, learning.

The vast majority of those who have previously been involved in the Week will also take part this year. We concluded from last year's survey that they will not so much extend their activities as improve quality, adapting them to specific target groups and increasing the



scope of events involving visitor participation and expression of creativity; also, they will organise themed days, and to a greater extent tie into, and seek support and coordination from, their local communities. The Slovenian institute for adult education will play a certain coordinating role, and will also invest a great deal of effort in preparing joint promotional materials.

The SIAE has formed a number of working groups for LLW. The renewed SIAE working group for LLW 99 has already started work, and consists of:

- *group for SIAE awards for outstanding achievements in adult education*; this group consists of Zdenka Birman Forjanič, Melanija Končina, Olga Varl, Maja Korošak MA, and Darko Mali as the group leader. The basic task of the group is to encourage individuals, groups and organisations to report their own or others' learning achievements, through which they have succeeded in changing themselves, achieved personal growth or made positive changes in their surroundings. The group performs all the required professional work for decisions in the SIAE Awards Committee and every year ensures promotion of award-winners.
- *group for work with local community providers*; this group brings together Erika Brenk, Maja Korošak MA, Olga Drogenik and Zvonka Pahernik Pangerc MSc as the group leader, as well as external data processing and design staff. The basic task of the group is to encourage and coordinate individuals, institutions and local and national authorities to participate in the organisation of events concerning learning and education which illustrate the lifelong nature of the learning process: they present learning activities of population groups of different ages, for different purposes and with diverse contents. The numerous providers (last year there were over 260) organised around 1,500 events, through which in their local environments they help to break the deeply rooted conviction in Slovenia that learning and education are primarily a matter for schools and the young and in part an obligation linked to professions and jobs. The group's work has an important influence on the realisation of the concept and strategy of lifelong learning: learning and education at all stages of life, for all social roles and with all the contents which a person needs for the physical, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and spiritual aspects of their personality. The preparation of the report on and plan for the Week for discussion and adoption by the Government of RS involves a great deal of work.
- *group for opening ceremonies*; this group brings together Ester Možina MA, Tone Lenarčič MA, Melanija Končina, Maja Korošak MA and Nataša Elvira Jelenc as the group leader; outside members are also expected. The group is responsible for the creative, artistic and organisational aspects of ensuring that the LLW opening ceremonies provide adult education with a splendour appropriate to its mission, and draw the attention of the professional and general public to the recipients of awards for outstanding achievements in adult education.

- *group for SIAE professional events*: this involves Dr Angelca Ivančič, Tanja Vilič Klenovšek MA, Metka Svetina, Ester Možina MA and Sonja Klemenčič as group leader; the basic task of the group is the planning and implementation of SIAE professional events during LLW, which contribute to recognition of innovations and achievements in adult education, both at home and abroad, as well as to the establishment of learning as a lifelong process in all areas of human activity and in all circumstances.

The basis for the groups' work is this year's work plan, as discussed by the National LLW Committee under the leadership of Dr Pavle Zgaga, state secretary at the Ministry of Education and Sport and published in the first issue of LLW-News. All groups have already prepared plans for this year.

The awards group has of course already completed more than half of its task, since the deadline for the registration and selection of award winners has already passed. Group members spent a great deal of time encouraging and advising proposers of awards, preparing materials for the sessions of the SIAE awards committee and preparing materials to be used this year to promote the work of award winners.

The group for work with local community providers prepared the publication of the first issue of LLW News, was responsible for the first promotion of this year's LLW events at the Slovene Education Days in March this year, prepared the LLW brochure and other promotional materials, and worked with the Naša Žena women's magazine to publish a special supplement about LLW 99. Quite a few of their tasks this year are innovations and will be introduced by the time of LLW 2000 (issuing of a commemorative postage stamp, re-design of the LLW corporate image; selection of partners responsible on the regional level for the promotion and coordination of events during LLW).

This year, the group for the organisation of professional events will once again ensure the operation of the telephone hotline at the Slovenian institute for adult education during the LLW. Last year, this was a very significant activity, with some 60 people calling in the first three days; every day, SIAE staff and outside workers provided answers, a process which over the three days lasted almost nine hours. Again this year, the group will prepare an adult education colloquium. The title will be *Adult education for active citizenship: necessity or utopia?* This is also an area defined in the professional basis for the national programme of adult education as a priority area in the next decade.

The opening ceremonies group has also begun work; it is preparing everything required to ensure that the opening day is an unforgettable experience for all visitors, especially for award winners.

Olga Drogenik and Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, SIAE



## Announcement: Slovene Adult Education Centre has a New Name

Slovene Adult Education Centre has been renamed. The new name is: Slovenian Institute for Adult Education.

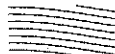


## The *Comparative Adult Education 1998* Anthology has been issued

A review of the history of adult education thought points to the importance of international cooperation in its development, either in the form of indirect transfers of knowledge and information and the exchange of experience, or in the form of direct meetings, communication and the formation of new knowledge. In the context of globalisation and the internationalisation of findings, many names, such as Freire (Brazil) and Grundtvig (Denmark) have become internationally established, while certain theories, trends and forms of education have become generally accepted and remain very current and frequently used guidelines and models in adult education. Let me mention just a few examples: the Canadian *Antagonist movement*, the Danish *Folk high schools*, or the Swedish *Study circles*. Comparisons between these models, theories and forms, and their implementation in different spaces (environments) and times are undoubtedly an important adult-education challenge. It is thus no coincidence that many international conferences, scientific meetings and world congresses, such as the International Conference of Comparative Adult Education in Ghana, the World Congress of Comparative Adult Education in Prague, the Unesco conference in Hamburg and the international conferences on comparative studies of adult education in Bamberg and Radovljica, devoted to the study of comparative problems, have been and continue to be organised.

The last two of these conferences, in Bamberg and Radovljica, which this article will discuss further, the anthology *Comparative Adult Education 1998*, which was recently issued, stressed those aspects of adult education which study and compare the approaches to adult education in two or more countries or regions. Such comparison, on the basis of certain methodological standards, should shed light on the similarities and differences and should contribute to providing an explanation for them.

The *Comparative Adult Education 1998* anthology comprises selected papers from the last two conferences, in Bamberg in 1995 and in Radovljica in 1998; these conferences were organised by the International Society for Comparative Adult Education, ISCAE, in conjunction with the University of Bamberg and the Slovenian institute for adult education.



The anthology was edited by Dr Jost Reischmann, Dr Michal Bron Jr and Dr Zoran Jelenc, and contains 23 papers by authors from nine countries. The anthology has five themed chapters.

The introduction by the president of the ISCAE Jost Reischmann, which discusses the characteristics of international and comparative adult education, is followed by the first part, **Philosophical and theoretical bases**. This chapter contains the following papers: *Development and basic principles of international and comparative adult education research*, Joachim H Knoll; *Comparative adult education: some reflections on the process*, Colin J Titmus; *Standards for studies of comparative adult education*, Alexander N Charters; *Comparative thinking and the structure of adult cognition: epistemological and methodological challenges of comparative adult education*, Marcie Boucouvalas; and *The end of the ideological and historical debate: influence on the philosophy of continuous adult education*, Dilnawaz Siddiqi. This chapter discusses some fundamental questions of comparative adult education studies and touches on the standards, principles and methods of research for comparative studies. However, this primary theoretical problem masks practical issues which are common to the daily work of researchers and providers of this type of education, and which can only be solved through a joint and holistic approach. In this context and in the discussion of norms, standards and approaches for comparison, M. Boucouvalas discusses models of thought which derive from the cognitive development of adults. In the author's opinion, these models are of key importance in the conceptualisation and planning of comparison, and are also important in the further formation of the methodological approach. Starting from the nature, history, causes, goals and principles of adult education, C. Titmus attempts to determine the common and divergent contents of comparative education. In this, he did not so much study concrete methods of research as discuss the theoretical assumptions, which in his opinion are of fundamental importance.

In the second part of **International Comparative Studies**, the authors provided some international analyses: *Understanding adult education in Europe and America: similarities and differences*, Dušan Savičević, *Topics of study circles in Slovenia and Sweden*, Nevenka Bogataj, *Policies (guidelines) of adult education and the credit-bank system of participation by adults in South Korean and American higher education*, Eun-Soo Choi, *National strategies of adult education*, Zoran Jelenc, *Effects of the methodology of intercultural studies of the value systems of adults: with emphasis on comparison between South Korea and Australia*, Kwan Chun Lee and *Adult education week. Australia and Slovenia: first attempt at comparison*, Roger Morris. These papers differ in their fields of comparison and their extent, indicate differing outcomes and similarities, and also draw attention to the difficulties and limitations of this type of study. On the basis of historical comparative analysis and the method of study of contents, D. Savičević pointed out that comparative guidelines always derive from certain frameworks and social conditions. Even the role of state determination and conditioning of adult education varies considerably in



different contexts. In this context, the paper of Z. Jelenc is fairly indicative, as it considered the problem of the existence of national programmes of adult education in certain countries and attempted to identify some of their common contents.

The third part, **Problems and traps of international comparison**, addresses the barriers to this type of comparison. The issue is given substance in the following papers: *Global prospects and milestones in adult education: a critical reanalysis*, Jost Reischmann; *Problems and traps of comparative adult education: some comments on the research process and on comparative historical studies*, Barry J Hake; *Indicators of "The learning society": Methodological aspects of the international research project*, Wolfgang Jutte; *Some questions concerning international partnership and the area of international adult education research*, Zoran Jelenc; *Experiencing the dialogue approach*, Madeleine Blais, and *Translation problems and the importance of terminology work in comparative adult education*, Wolfgang Jutte. The papers point out that research work not only reveals problems but also offers solutions and provides certain development guidelines.

The fourth section, **International associations**, presents the operation, characteristics and initiatives of certain associations which consider comparative problems: the International Society of Comparative Adult Education ISCAE, the European Society for Research into Adult Education ESREA, and the Unesco conference on adult education and on the prospects for lifelong learning CONFITEA. These were described by Jost Reischmann, Barry J. Hake and Paul Bélanger.

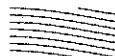
The fifth chapter documents the 1995 and 1998 ISCAE conferences. Both reports, prepared by Margaret Charters, provide impressions of the research, quality, cooperation and atmosphere of the two academic meetings.

The appendix contains the two Unesco documents which opened up the field and which gave certain guidelines to the whole area of adult education.

The *Comparative adult education 1998* anthology undoubtedly combined, expanded and deepened knowledge from the field of comparative studies. In the anthology, the authors presented some of the main goals of comparative studies, including learning "from each other", preserving diversity, understanding for people who think differently, encouraging intellectual curiosity and understanding systems and orientations of development models. At the same time, the anthology is an extensive publicity work which concentrates, documents, brings together and analyses the rich experience of the field. The anthology also raises new issues, thereby encouraging new comparative challenges.

The book can be ordered from the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, Šmartinska 134a, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia by fax, mail, E-mail or telephone, or by simply filling the form enclosed.

Jasmina Mirčeva, SIAE





## Evaluation of Adult Education Trials

In a spring issue of *Novičke*, we reported on the progress of work on the evaluation of trials of higher professional adult education programmes conducted by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and the Vocational Education Centre of RS. We briefly described the methodology which we will use to monitor the trial introduction of new higher professional education programmes into educational practice. Taking account of the specifics of the area of adult education and the requirements set by the economy in the area of vocational and professional education (or of the development of educational programmes in this field), we involved the following subjects in the monitoring of the trial introduction of educational programmes:

- teachers participating in the relevant educational programmes,
- educational programme leaders,
- practical education organisers,
- practical education tutors within companies,
- educational programme participants.

We will gather data on the suitability of higher professional education programmes, as well as their potential "weak points" and "deficiencies". Encountering and comparing the opinions of a range of subjects increases the objectivity of the results obtained and contributes to improving the quality of proposals for possible improvements to the educational programmes.

Progress of the evaluation of the Catering and Tourism higher professional education programme for adults

In line with the evaluation plan, which (on the basis of defined methodology) defines in detail the monitoring of trial higher professional education programmes involving adults, in the first half of 1999 we implemented the first two phases of the evaluation of the Catering and Tourism higher professional adult education programme provided by the Higher Professional Catering and Tourism School in Bled.

We conducted guided interviews with lecturers who have already completed classes (in their subjects) for the first generation of enrolled students. In the first phase of interviews, we also included the educational programme leaders and the organiser of practical education within these educational programmes. It emerged that it is very important for the educational organisation and the institutions performing the evaluation to work together in preparing and coordinating the evaluation. In cooperation with the educational programme leader at the Bled Higher Professional Catering and Tourism School (coordination in scheduling interviews with lecturers), we were able to conduct the first phase of interviews successfully and without disruption. We will hold the remaining interviews with lecturers in



November, once they too have finished their courses and are able to tell us of their experiences of the educational programme.

In the first few months of this year (March/April) and in line with the evaluation plan, we also performed an analysis of the documentation of the two educational programmes and prepared an interim report on the progress of monitoring and the initial results.

The analysis of the documentation of the Catering and Tourism educational programmes contained the following data:

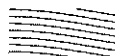
- data on education participants (previous education, employment status, age, work experience, etc.);
- data on practical education (recognised/non-recognised practical education, criteria for recognising practical education);
- data on lecturers (professional education, professional examinations, teacher training, etc.);
- data on material conditions and work premises.

The analysis of the documentation of the educational programme represents an important segment of the evaluation research for three main reasons:

- we can often obtain from the analysis of the documentation alone useful and valuable data which, given subsequent correct connections to the characteristics of the educational programme, can say much about the suitability of the educational programme and its implementation for specific target groups of participants, about the suitability of personnel conditions required for a particular educational programme on which to a large extent the educational effects are dependent, etc.
- We do not need to collect data (especially quantitative data such as success rate, drop-out rates, transitions between years, educational/demographic characteristics of participants) using other evaluation instruments. We can thus concentrate in the interviews we conduct with lecturers, participants and educational programme leaders on (more qualitative) data and information on the programme which could not otherwise be obtained.
- The initial analysis of the educational programme itself and the data on the programme represent the basis for decisions about which data we will collect using other evaluation instruments (questionnaires, interviews, observation, etc.).

Analysis of documentation as an important phase (introduction) of mechanisms of self-evaluation conducted by staff of the educational organisation

Documentation analysis is an important part of the preparation and implementation of extensive evaluation research. We can also apply it to the practice of adult education. It is very important for adult education leaders to collect (in addition to the programme itself) other data (on the characteristics of participants, their interests and desires; on the staff available, etc.) which will be of assistance in the preparation of the organisation of educa-



tion and the implemented curriculum, and also in the assessment of the quality of the educational programme. Likewise, teachers who, before the start of the educational programme, have access to a range of data on the "actual group of participants" involved in the educational programme will be able more readily and to a higher quality level to plan the implementation of education and to take account of the different characteristics of adults (previous education, different work experience, different social roles, etc.) before the start of education. This will in turn allow them to plan the education process more independently and attentively and to adapt it as required during the actual implementation to the prior knowledge, work experience, interests and motivations of participants.

This type of data collection represents the first level of "internal" monitoring or self-evaluation performed by the staff of the educational organisation for the purposes of their own development and to raise the quality of the educational programme and its implementation. As with external evaluation research (which is usually more complex and extensive), the process of self-evaluation can also lead to consideration of different procedures and methods for monitoring quality in the course of education and possible methods to involve participation in the evaluation of the educational programme and of the educational staff etc. (e.g. with the introduction of simple surveys, talks, etc.) with the aim of improving the quality of the programme itself and enhancing the quality and not least the image of the educational organisation. The usefulness of this type of self-evaluation procedure performed by the staff of the educational organisation (lecturers, leaders, participants) lies primarily in the idea that the organisation continually strives for professional development, thereby introducing the culture of a learning organisation and of continuous education into its own practice. In developed foreign countries, the combination of external evaluation and internal evaluation (self-evaluation) has been shown to be very successful in improving the quality of adult education.

Tanja Možina, SIAE



## **Ability to meet Future Challenges through Continuing Education in Europe**

During the German presidency of the European Union, the German education ministry organised from 16th to 18th May 1999 a workshop with the title above in the extremely pleasant environment of the Waldthausen banking educational centre, not far from the city of Mainz. It would seem that organising such workshops or conferences during European Union presidencies is becoming something of a tradition - the British organised a conference in Manchester devoted to presentation of the British government's vision of the Century of Learning; the

Austrians dedicated theirs to education for democracy; and the Germans to continuing education; while the Finns, who will next preside over the Union, plan in September to organise a conference of lifelong learning, general education and the civil society.

Given the number of participants, it is difficult to categorise this type of event as a "workshop". Around 220 participants attended from 28 European countries, with one from South Africa. The largest number of participants were from the host country, Germany (129), while other participants came from Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Rumania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

The event was conceived as a workshop, but the work showed that it was more of a conference, since plenary presentations were interwoven with plenary discussions. Given this format, discussions on the part of participants were minimal. The essence of the conference and the group work lay in the following themes: innovation, equality of opportunity, educational quality and the economics of education. After the working groups had met, the plenary closing session of the conference defined the following challenges which continuing education will have to face:

- growing inequality in the distribution of resources,
- social exclusion, racism and xenophobia,
- building a civil society and accumulation of social capital,
- motivation for learning and education and the preparation of long-term solutions in this area,
- the role of partnerships,
- the development of appropriate learning strategies.

In identifying these challenges, special emphasis was placed on the fact that overcoming them requires serious, long-term work, which needs time. Particular mention was made of European Union programmes which, given their funding system, make speedy solutions difficult and which do not require full verification or quality.

In the end, a declaration was adopted with recommendations for the European Union, its members and candidates for membership. The recommendations follow the emphasis and key points set for the whole work of the conference - innovation, equality of opportunity, quality education and the economics of education.

The declaration defines **innovation** as a long-term challenge for continuing education. Emphasis in this area should be placed primarily on the use of new information and communication technologies and on the development of a concept of learning which enables everyone to learn at work and elsewhere. Alongside this, new challenges arise linked to advice in continuing learning.



Continuing education is a factor which should make an important contribution to the **equality of educational opportunities** and is a condition of participation in the working and social environment. For this reason, this segment too should be further strengthened, including through forms of guided independent learning and by taking account of non-formal learning.

**Quality** is the most important condition of continuing education and, according to the declaration, will continue to increase in importance. Thus in the future perhaps less consideration should be given to ISO standards and more to work with participants in education, which should be aimed at what they need. Only in this way can we help the individual to feel and recognise that the responsibility for education and training is primarily theirs. At the same time, this also means less regulation on the part of the state and an increase in the competitiveness of the educational marketplace.

**Economics**, or rather financing, of continuing education should mainly be understood as an investment in the future which requires a division of responsibility for the financing of such education between participants, companies, public administration and providers. The role of governments in financing continuing education should primarily be focused on strengthening the system of support for individuals in continuing education.

At the end, the declaration expresses support for the continuation of the SOCRATES programme (SOCRATES II), in 2000 named GRUNDTVIG, which will be intended for adult education, with great emphasis placed on determining and consolidating knowledge. For the participant, this could be an alternative path to achieving a formal education.

Dr Vida A. Mohorčič-Špolar, SIAE



## Thirty Open Learning Centres in Slovenia: Going From Scratch to a Promising Future

Nobody could have imagined the exact path of development almost six years ago, when the SIAE started the project "The Development of Organised Autonomous Learning in Slovenia"\*. Based on the idea that interest is the strongest motivation for a person's successful development, we invited various institutions to join the project, from primary and secondary schools, universities, people's colleges and private educational institutions, to companies, libraries, societies, etc. After a feasibility study had been done, we offered our interested partners basic information on open and distance learning as well as training on how to envision and manage an open learning centre (the seminar was run by English experts in the field). Allowing them to develop a centre in their own way according to their

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\* Organised Autonomous Learning is about to be a synonym for Open and Distance Learning.



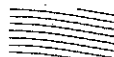
own needs and interests, the institutions were later offered mostly individual counselling. The concept of a self-study centre open to the public and offering mostly general education seemed to be the most suitable solution for most of the institutions.

The first such centres began operating in September 1995 in two private educational institutions, one in a small town near our capital Ljubljana and the second one in Maribor (the second largest city in Slovenia). Every year, about seven new centres open in different parts of Slovenia. They are mainly situated in folk highschools and private educational institutions for adults; two of the centres are located in public libraries. The first centres were funded entirely by the Ministry of Education. Since last year the institutions themselves have to provide the equipment, while the Ministry is financing the staff.

At the beginning of June the 30<sup>th</sup> self-study centre was opened in Ajdovščina, a small town in southwestern Slovenia. (The opening date fitted nicely into the timeframe of annual adult education summer schools.) A modest room with only two learning stations equipped with two multimedia computers and a few multimedia language learning materials, it is only the beginning for this particular centre. Some other centres also started very modestly and later developed according to their users' demands. Of the 30 centres opened thus far, 26 are still in operation. Their capacities are quite different. They have from one to six workstations, some of them very modestly furnished, while others have invested quite a lot of money. Some of them have only one multimedia computer; others have all the workstations very well equipped. All the centres have a special counsellor available, but the amount of support varies. The staff works mostly part-time; however, one of the centres employs two persons full time. The number of visitors varies considerably, as do the total learning hours. (The exact numbers will be available in late autumn when the results of the latest analysis have been tabulated.)

The first follow-up study was made from September 1995 to August 1997 in the first nine centres. It showed, among other things, what all the centres have in common. All offer general education, mostly foreign languages and computing. The learners mostly use multimedia programmes off the shelves. Having very few self-study materials in our own language, the offer is not surprising. With a little tutorial support, language multimedia programmes can be easily used by anyone despite the language barriers. With the exception of one centre (where users pay a moderate fee), all offered their services free of charge. The user demographic is rather young (the majority is under 30), distributed among both sexes (women slightly predominating) and educated (usually, they have finished secondary school). It is also obvious that the unemployed have made great use of the centres, and are represented in about 50 per cent of them. Also, all users have declared that this type of learning is more interesting than the traditional form.

A briefer analysis was later made of the next ten centres. The results were very similar. It is difficult to say why some centres have a large number of visitors while others are not able to attract many "clients". There is an evident correlation between the size of the town and the



number of users; however, some exceptions show just the opposite. It seems that a qualified and devoted staff plays the most important role, so the task of greatest priority seems to be further staff training.

Six years after the project began, we can make the following conclusions:

- Although equal opportunities were given to all sorts of institutions at the beginning of the project, it is obvious that the philosophy of Open Learning (Organized Autonomous Learning) has been very positively accepted, particularly in the adult education field (folk highschools, private educational settings for adults, public libraries), but not in the formal school system and in industry.
- One of our future tasks is to implement open and distance learning within companies. Some promotional actions have already been taken (with little result), but further efforts should be made. It is now obvious that educators within companies have accepted the idea very positively, but it seems that management is hesitating to give the green light.
- So far, the greatest development has been made in infrastructure. Thirty centres have opened to date, while 20 more are expected to open in the very near future, thus forming a national network (equally distributed geographically) of about 50 centres offering general education and open to any citizen free of charge. As the Ministry of Education has funded development up to now, we expect their generous contribution to continue in the future. However, it being a considerable financial burden, we also expect the Ministry of Labour to contribute, as this is also part of their unemployment programmes.
- The self-study centres have been established not only as premises where people can come and learn on their own, using the multimedia products off the shelves, but also as a source of further development. In the next stage we expect the centres' staff to start developing courses (with the expert help of SIAE) for traditional open and distance learning as well as online use. Quite a number of people have already been trained for the production of self-study materials, while further training in the use of online technologies is about to be prepared.
- One of our tasks in the near future is the preparing of good self-study materials in the Slovene language, because the "off the shelf" offer definitely does not cover the Slovene users' demands. However, it is also true that preparing such materials, particularly multimedia, is an expensive and time-consuming task. With a small market (less than two million Slovene-speaking inhabitants) it also does not hold much commercial interest.
- When we started this project we were not able to foresee such an extremely rapid development of online technologies, and particularly not its mass use. We are thus faced with a new reality which forces us always to seek new computer knowledge (new educational software) and also demands new didactic approaches. Although not planned explicitly, self-study centres as an infrastructure can be of great use in the further development of online learning in Slovenia.

Irena Benedik, SIAE





## **Directress of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education becomes Member of the Governing Board of the Unesco Institute for Education**

Dr Vida A. Mohorčič-Špolar, directress of the SIAE, became a member of the Governing Board of the Unesco Institute for Education (UIE). In this capacity, between 14th and 18th April, she attended the annual session of the management board of the Institute in Hamburg.

Members of the management board, usually consisting of leading experts in adult education from different regions of the world, spent most of their time holding talks with candidates for the post of director; three were selected, with the final choice being confirmed by the general director of Unesco. The successful candidate will be given a mandate of four years with the possibility of a one-off re-appointment; the choice is thus important, since it will mark the next eight years of operation of this international institution. To date, the job has been done by Paul Bélanger, and under his leadership the Institute paid a great deal of attention to literacy, and in particular to female literacy. Paul Bélanger particularly distinguished himself as the secretary-general and leader of the organising committee of the Fifth Unesco International Conference (CONFITEA V) in Hamburg in 1997.

The session amongst other things discussed the annual report on the work of the Institute in the previous year, the work plan for 1999 (working and financial), the report of the editorial committee of the International Review of Education, the proposal for an international prize for literacy research for 1998.

Let us use this opportunity to provide some information on the operation of this international organisation. The UIE is a non-profit international centre for research, training, information, documentation and publicity activities. It is one of three Unesco educational institutions and focuses on adult and continuing education, literacy and non-formal basic education within the context of lifelong education. At its session, the Governing Board also discussed a proposed resolution on the Institute to be adopted by the general conference of Unesco in September 1999. The proposed resolution narrows the field of operation of the institute to adult education alone.

UIE was founded in 1951, operates in Hamburg and has 24 employees - researchers, librarians and document specialists, and the staff of the publicity centre.

In their work, the staff of the Institute link three fields which are often separated - research, political decisions and educational practice - since they feel that only thus can research influence development. The Institute's research reports always include recommendations for political activities and recommendations to educators or responsible institutions. The tasks of the Institute are formulated in accordance with the resolutions of the Unesco ge-



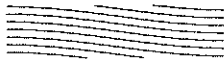
neral conference and the annual meetings of the Governing Board. Project ideas likewise come from a number of other sources, in particular with the help of the formal and informal network of individuals, universities, research institutes, government bodies and non-governmental organisations in the area of education.

The influence of the UIE is considerable, especially through adult education institutions and non-governmental organisations in member states. The Hamburg Conference in 1997 (CONFINTEA V) - at which the Hamburg declaration and the Action Plan for the Future were adopted - had a particularly great influence. In Slovenia, the Adult Education Society of Slovenia organised a meeting in January, the first day of which was devoted to a review of the resolutions from the conference and to implementing these resolutions. Considerably more attention is given to this in other countries, and the Institute itself devotes a large part of its activities to reporting on the results of the continuation of CONFINTEA V in individual regions and to monitoring the implementation of the action plan.

The Institute co-finances certain research projects in member states. These include co-financing of the research project *The role of adult education in countries in transition*, which will run in 16 countries and will be led by the Slovenian institute for adult education.

At the session, the board also adopted a proposal for an UN Adult Learners' Week, which should begin on 8th September 2000, although it has yet to be confirmed by the general assembly. If confirmed, it will coincide with World 2000 Expo in Hannover.

M. K., SIAE



## **SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE**



### **The Specific Role of Education for Elderly Adults in Slovenia**

In our conception any kind of education for elderly adults is meant to help the society of all ages come into being. Namely, who would venture searching for adult learners among those who have lost touch with institutions? Among those who have found themselves cut off from the circle of colleagues at work, and who, as a result of it can be reached only at their home address? Who else if not an individual who is eager to help the elderly to fully reintegrate in the

society. An educator who wants them to go on with their life, who believes that notwithstanding their old age and the so called involution induced by it, they can go on developing. An educator of adults who inevitably feels that the elderly are valuable for him and his generation?

### **The Slovenian Third Age University - how it was founded and developed**

In the eighties culture was very poorly represented in the programmes of formal education. On the other hand, we were aware that traditionally the elderly were interpreters of culture. Thus, it is not surprising, indeed, that in 1984 at the onset of the education of elderly adults in Ljubljana (the first, unfortunately short-lived attempt in this field were the Open Days at the Faculty for Educational Sciences in Rijeka) one of our major objectives was to bring culture back into educational programmes. Programmes for the elderly seemed an appropriate way to do it.

This well-founded though simple desire, followed by in-depth studies, a lot of research and volunteer work, the search for the right people (Prof Dr Ana Krajnc, Prof Dr Bojan Accetto, Prof Dr Bogdan Leskovic, Mirjam Belič) and for the right institutions (Centre for Foreign Languages, Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana, Andragogic Society of Slovenia), to support the idea, all these contributed to launching what today has become the largest Slovenian educational movement of adults. In spite of its 8000 members, this carefully induced movement has even nowadays no official umbrella organisation; new universities grow spontaneously learning from the existing ones and inspired by them, especially by the one based in Ljubljana, to which they mostly turn in need of professional and moral support. Behind this type of organisation lies a thesis: when freed from institutional ties people are more creative and even more so if they are elderly.

Between the first, experimental French study circle, which I set up in the Centre for Foreign Languages in Ljubljana, the first 6 elderly students who helped me undertake the initial steps and the today's 18 third age universities in Slovenia one in Croatia and one in Yugoslavia, lie many successes, hopes and also defeats.

### **Successes, hopes and defeats accompany all new undertakings**

One undoubted success lies in the fact that education of the elderly adults in Slovenia was so much of a breakthrough for the development of a different kind of adult education in this country that in the eyes of many, the two have become synonyms. So, it was not unusual that this education opened up other independent ways for a more liberal development of adult education in Slovenia. Furthermore, success is in the fact that an extensive public campaign accompanying the Third Age University has slowly changed the attitude of the public space towards the learning elderly people and their role in society. The main success, however, lies first in the increased mutual understanding between generations and



their collaboration, second in the ties created among the elderly themselves and finally in the transformation of the lives of many elderly people and their families.

The hopes are great. So far, all of them have been associated with tasks we have already set out to put into practice, our immediate plans being : creating an Exchange Link for the elderly at the Third Age University who would like to go on working, starting a publication of a newspaper for the elderly printed with large letters, providing recordings of individual issues of newspapers on audio cassettes to be sent to old people and other people with poor sight or distorted perception. Moreover, there are plans about education of the elderly at home, the establishment of a phone line to provide the elderly with information on problems which concern them, and psychological advice; obtaining a frequency on the national radio for programmes run by the elderly themselves which would present the activities of various non-governmental organisations; creating ties between youth institutions and institutions for the elderly, introducing demographic issues like ageing population etc. into school programmes, providing more health promotion programmes... For these and many other ideas to come into being a great deal of education, not just of the elderly but also of their social environment and local authorities is needed.

Some of the tasks we are planning ahead are as follows:

- the development of pre-retirement education, a joint task shared with the Gerontologic Society of Slovenia (supported by Open Society Fund and The Netherlands' National Institute for Social Care),
- education of the elderly for establishing, organising and running voluntary programmes, activities of the elderly for caring communities, with the help of the Open Society Fund and the Ministry of Education and Sport,
- education for national and international political activities of the elderly,
- education for technological literacy of the elderly and for its spread to other generations (with co-operation with the international union of universities of the third age at ZAWiW at the University of Ulm in Germany),
- development of Internet-based educational programmes for the elderly and the introduction of Internet services in the homes of the elderly or disabled people,
- creating a resource centre dealing with educational and other issues of the elderly.

Setbacks have included the fact that the national, regional and local authorities have been changing too slowly and that there are still not enough mechanisms in place to support the endeavours of the civil society. Yet another difficulty is that, due to negative stereotyping, even in our professional circles, we tend to forget that *lifelong education can not exist without the development of education for elderly workers to maintain their employability, pre-retirement education, education for the third age and education for the fourth age*; if we remained oblivious in this field, the lifelong nature of education would be no more but a meaningless word. Moreover, the education of the elderly has always been

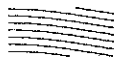
approved of when the question of its value was raised. Nevertheless, it has been skipped in the preparation of the National Adult Education Plan and of other papers reflecting values of professionals and of the society as a whole. Like other services which society provides for different age groups also educational services are unevenly distributed among different age groups. Another defeat yet is the fact that the elderly are still largely a part of the social-welfare policy and not of the development policy in different areas.

### **Education of the elderly reflects the level of social development**

Unfortunately, so far, third age universities in individual countries have only rarely been founded by the elderly themselves. Namely, the establishment of the first Third Age University in a country most of the times requires that the founders have social status, personal conviction, strong will and an idea of better human relations between generations and social groups. Thus, most of the times, such universities are created by an institution or a group of experts. This was also the case in Slovenia. The first Third Age University was founded by a group of strong willed experts whereas legal framework was contributed by the Faculty of Art and The Andragogic Society of Slovenia.

The first University of the Third Age in former Yugoslavia was, as it has been said before, founded in Ljubljana as soon as 1986. 1984 saw the first pilot programme, born from a triple desire: to rehabilitate culture in education and to focus teaching and learning processes on an individual learner and to influence other educational environments, especially formal education. The preparation of the first programmes, the introduction of the first specific organisational forms to ensure the uninterrupted flow of such education, all of these led to the generalisation of experience and to the creation of our own concept of education for elderly adults. In doing so we intentionally avoided other models. We did not want to copy the American model of "free time consumption by the elderly and recreation for the elderly". Nor did we want to end up in some isolated educational attempts depending on our spare time and good will as in certain other countries. Equally, the fairly formal form of universities of the third age known in France did not suit us. Our objective was to develop an open and adaptable concept from what our experience had shown to be good: good for our climate, our cultural and social environment. We think we end up in some sort of cultural and educational movement intended to become a platform for collective "liberation" of the elderly and their integration in the society.

We did not, however limit our efforts to the third age universities. In 1994 in Ajdovščina, a country town in the West of Slovenia, we started the *Andragogic Summer School for Local Development* a school meant for adult educators, representatives of local authorities, social workers, etc. In 1994 local development was still not thought of in terms of the self-development of inhabitants and our previous experience with the education of the elderly helped us a lot in changing the attitude towards it. Later, we went on developing



*education for elderly volunteers* (1998), *intergenerational education in pairs* (1999), *education for mentors to animate local people for community development* (1986). The experience and findings thus gained were then used in the *education for the so-called local employment initiatives in regional development* (1998). In 1993, on the basis of findings concerning study circles of elderly adults. Nena Mijoč, the founder of the second Third Age University in Slovenia, developed for the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education *the concept of education for leaders and mentors of study circles to be later developed by the Centre into an important network*. What we have said so far indicates that education for the elderly adults is in any event a possible and recommended way towards the society of all ages.

One might say that the Department of Pedagogy and Andragogy of the Faculty of Art in Ljubljana chose well its way for the transformation of adult education in Slovenia when some of its members devoted their efforts to the education of the elderly. Precisely because it was meant for those "from the margins of society", such education could develop without institutional constraints, i.e. without help of institutions, or local or national authorities, but also without their supervision, which, at the time when Slovenia had only one political party, was almost impossible. To illustrate this point, at that time even adult education like school education was organised in a system, thus having been robbed to a certain extent of its most outstanding features: rapid awareness of social and individual needs and responsiveness to them.

### **Advantages of the education of the elderly adults**

The newly established Third Age Universities recruited mentors primarily from among professionals who appreciated above all freedom and creativity it was promising. Thus university professors, well known artists, the most innovative adult educators, journalists, young students and, what had previously been almost unknown, retired professionals, all of them joined in a team. What they liked and still like about the Third Age University was that its members could meet and exchange knowledge, experience and culture; they could learn from one another, take on responsibility for the development and progress of their education and for their colleagues in the study circle. This ended up in changing also the views of the public space on old age and education of adults in general.

Methods were developed to link different study circles at the University through joint activities and learning. The first inter-generational study groups and study circles, were set up, educational camps were introduced, joint study trips run as project learning were started. Special care was given to study groups composed of the unemployed and the elderly. Namely, relatively easily we discovered common features between those who are elderly and those who are unemployed. Both retire, both withdraw from active life and at the same time from living. Because living also means living socially. So we thought: Why shouldn't we

