

# novičke

## Winter 2002

Opportunities for Adult Education and Learning \* The Study Circles Caravan – a caravan of culture, co-operation, creation and mutual understanding completes its route \* Training mentors and study circle leaders using the Internet \* LLW 2002 opening ceremony \* Motivation in Adult Education

How to gain the competitive edge in employment? \* Operating successfully for one year

Improving open learning and distance learning online \* Study visit to Romania \* Study visit to Denmark \* Škofja Loka Folk University joins European project

Declining interest in vocational and professional education \* Laws in the area of education and science and research activities

SIAE EVENTS

SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

SLOVENIA FROM NOVIČKE TO NOVIČKE



**10 years together**

Andragoški center Republike Slovenije  
Slovenian Institute for Adult Education



## 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:

- 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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*In charge of the publication are: Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, M. Sc., head of the Information Unit, and Nevenka Kocijančič, editor.*

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## Christmas Greetings

*It is a great privilege to be able to wish you Merry Christmas and the very best in the coming year for the tenth time in Novičke. We are proud of the time we have spent together with you and are hoping that our being together, learning together and learning from each other will continue in the years to come.*

*Colleagues from Slovenia would like to wish you success and happiness in the coming year. May the new year see the fulfilment of your wishes and desires regarding either your personal or professional life, and let's all work together towards a better future for adult education as a whole.*



*Dr Vida A. Mostorčić Špolar, directress  
Lvonka Pangerc Bakernik, MSc, head of Information Unit  
on behalf of your friends from the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education*



## SIAE EVENTS

### Review only on the web site Opportunities for Adult Education and Learning

Once again this year the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education published on its web site a review of opportunities for adult education and learning in the 2002/2003 school year. The review, available at <http://www.acs.si/pregled>, allows searches by basic data on individual providers and by education programme. Searches can be limited to publicly recognised programmes or to programmes providing a formal education. In addition to data on providers and their programmes, the Review also provides information on opportunities for independent learning in independent learning centres, on the knowledge exchange and guidance centres operating across Slovenia, and we have also listed a number of web addresses about further Slovenian adult education opportunities.

We can conclude with satisfaction that providers are increasingly interested in presenting their education services in the Review. Despite the relatively short time available this year to collect data, 290 providers from all over Slovenia responded to our invitation, the largest number so far. The greatest response was recorded among private organisations and private schools, secondary schools and adult units in secondary schools, and folk universities, while we are noticing increased interest on the part of societies, libraries, museums and galleries. The range of programmes on offer is also extensive, with providers supplying data on more than 4,400 programmes. You can search among programmes of formal education, training, additional training and specialisation for work, or among programmes of general non-formal education for leisure. Once again, the latter are the most numerous and diverse – you can choose among programmes to learn foreign languages, computing, handicrafts, communication, art and culture, personal development, education, business, environmental protection, health and various other content.

We will update the data in the Review throughout the year, and so we have asked providers to continually report any changes. Only in this way can we get close to the real state of adult education provision in Slovenia.

Erika Brenk, SIAE



## Study Circles

### **The Study Circles Caravan**

**– a caravan of culture, co-operation, creation and mutual understanding completes its route**

In our summer issue we wrote how, on their tenth anniversary, the Study Circles succeeded in moving beyond their limited environments. On our caravan route around Slovenia – from the Prešeren house in Kranj, to the mountain village of Remšnik near the Austrian border and Prem Castle near the Croatian border, to the final event at different venues in Gornja Radgona – we found ourselves in the very midst of “ordinary” people that are usually neglected; people whose supposed lower level of competence in resolving contemporary issues at the local, regional and national levels excludes them from primary decision-making processes.

The idea of the Study Circle Caravans – caravans of culture, learning and co-existence – encouraged active exhibitions by more than 250 people from local environments and an additional 500 participants and visitors. Local authorities were always present at these events, and the attendance impressed them because the “specific gravity” of study circles in local environments remains relatively low in Slovenia. Consequently, the caravans reawakened openness to differences, creativity, co-operation, learning, an open and democratic approach to knowledge, and other cultural values required for the comprehensive development of each individual to (again) become an independent actor (e.g. at the age of 60), avoiding introversion into narrow personal interests.

The caravans also allowed sufficient space and time to articulate pride and fears, as well as to initiate an autonomous dialogue in various forms of communication, including performances, guided tours of the areas, visits to the houses of renowned poets, exhibitions, bazaars, reading events and open dialogues by performers with the public. Notably, a special spirit emerged, one that has motivated and has linked together the interests of people from diverse backgrounds and environments. We see this as a very important step because the audience primarily consisted of people with less democratic historical experience, in particular women.

Free admission for all visitors to all the events was made possible by financial support from the Ministry of Culture of the RS and the Slovenian Association of Publishers and Booksellers.

Nevenka Bogataj, MSc, SIAE



## Mentor's impressions

### Training mentors and study circle leaders using the Internet

This year for the first time we trained a group of mentors and study circle leaders with the help of the Internet – in a pilot programme. The group consisted of just under 20 participants from various parts of Slovenia. Training applied the principles of cooperative work. Participants used a special application First Class. A customised desktop (web browser) of this application contains several columns (electronic mail, library of materials, calendar of activities, notices, questions and suggestions, café, cooperative work, personal presentations) used (with certain restrictions) by all participants. The mentor monitored events on the desktop every day.

For daily communication, a special **electronic mail** was available with the addresses of all participants and the address of the whole group; this simplified sending mail to all participants. Multimedia learning material, prepared in advance and applying the principles of independent learning or distance learning, was compiled in the so-called **library of materials**. Participants could read them on-screen or print them. The materials are divided into eight themed units. Participants studied two units together. They had two weeks – one week to study the materials and one week for an email discussion. After this time, they had to prepare a paper. All papers were collected on the desktop, since all participants had to comment on or supplement them. After all of this, the mentor also sent combined comments. A special icon on the desktop marked the **calendar of activities**, in which the mentor recorded all events on the desktop each day. The **notices** column was intended for important messages, a column of **questions and suggestions** for duties – a form of homework. Training participants met in the **café** – a chatroom; the mentor did not have access to the forum. Once a week, interested participants would meet together on the desktop. The purpose of these meetings was to clarify any parts of the materials which were unclear or to establish contact with the mentor or other participants to make participants feel better. Such contacts are normally highly advisable when a person studies alone.

At the end of the training, all participants prepared a seminar paper which they took from their “homework” tasks. They later underwent oral assessment, which operated under the principles of modern assessment for adults (role playing, simulation, discussion etc.). Having successfully completed all of this, they received a licence to conduct mentor work in study circles.

Evaluation of training was also conducted after completion of the programme<sup>1</sup>. This took place on three levels:

<sup>1</sup> Andreja Istenič Starčič: Evaluation of study-circle mentor education. Ljubljana : SI&E, 2002



- On the level of an adapted educational programme  
We assessed the suitability of adaptation of the programme, and checked whether the combination of independent and cooperative work enabled quality learning while achieving the learning goals.
- On the participant level  
We examined whether training participants successfully learned and whether they had achieved the learning goals set. We assessed how the organisational concept suited them, and whether the indirect computer communication was of good quality.
- On the level of mentor and project leader  
We determined whether the mentor could successfully communicate, the extent to which she was able to manage educational activities using a computer, to what extent the organisational concept of the programme suited her and the obstacles (technical, learning) arising during study.

Summing up the results, I find that one general comment provided on all three levels was that the training was too short. Due to unforeseen objective difficulties, we had to reduce the training programme from three to two months, resulting in more intensive work both for the mentor and for participants. Considering that almost all participants were in full-time employment during their studies, that a number of them worked in schools and had additional duties for the *matura* examinations, and that part of the training coincided with the May Day holidays, we can conclude that participants completed their training in record time. Of course to a certain extent this fact reduced the quality of the cooperative work and the possibility of desktop meetings. We therefore decided that in future the programme will last at least three months, and if possible four.

Most participants were completely satisfied. A number of them wanted more personal meetings. The programme envisaged and provided only the introductory meeting bringing together the whole group. The purpose of this meeting was for group members to get to know each other, to meet the mentor and project leader, and to obtain basic instructions for training. Training participants were generally enthusiastic about the new approach to studying and about the possibility of individual contact with the mentor, albeit via computer (or telephone). They liked the simple submission of work by electronic mail, the clearly defined plan of activities on the calendar of events, the continuous option of communicating with one another (even at night), the possibility of looking at the work of other participants and desktop meetings. The chatroom was very useful for them – they quickly and effectively obtained information from one another and where required eased the feeling of loneliness while studying.

So much for the new programme. We feel that this innovation has made studying considerably easier for all employees seeking to expand their knowledge or enhance their education or training. Following our positive experience, we at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education intend to continue to transfer other training programmes to the Internet. A training programme for members of examination committees to assess vocational qualifications is already in preparation.

Nataša Elvira Jelenc, SIAE



### Commitment to the culture of lifelong learning LLW 2002 opening ceremony

During the Lifelong Learning Week, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education has two roles: it is the national coordinator, steering and coordinating the work of LLW friends all across the country; it also provides its own promotional and professional events.

By way of introduction to the Lifelong Learning Week, the SIAE organises the by-now traditional main ceremony, at which awards are presented for outstanding achievements in improving own knowledge and for professional and promotional achievements in improving the knowledge of others.

The event, which was held in the conference hall of the Hermes Softlab company on Monday 14 October at 11 a.m., brought together around 200 friends of the learning festival from all over Slovenia, as well as award winners and their proposers. They were joined by representatives of the Government of RS, the LLW sponsor, including Dr Lucija Čok, Minister of Education, Science and Sport, while Prime Minister of RS, Dr Janez Drnovšek, also honoured us with his presence, testament to his commitment to the culture of lifelong learning.

This year was the seventh time we have organised the Lifelong Learning Week. Indicators of the quality and scope of events lead to the conclusion that, thanks to the Week, learning has begun to become established as a value, even in the most remote places, while *Slovenia* – at least during the festival – is becoming a *learning country*. Dr Vida Mohorčič Špolar, SIAE director, addressed the audience with some thoughts regarding new steps along this path, while in his very direct speech, Dr Janez Drnovšek presented his own views of lifelong learning.



Many events all over Slovenia give a holiday dimension to the learning festival. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education opens its doors to celebrations, particularly by giving awards. 14 awards were given this year – the report of the selection committee was presented by Dr Stane Vlaj, vice-chairman.

The life stories or examples of award winners have a special place in establishing the culture of lifelong learning and finding new learning paths. Often the welcoming lights on the path to a new dawn open up new views on lifelong learning to many people hesitant in their initiative. For this reason, we have prepared and shown at the ceremony video portraits of the winners.

It is worth pointing out that we do not have a specific fund earmarked for *SIAE awards*, although with the help of Slovenian publishers we have nevertheless managed to prepare book prizes, beautiful and durable memories of the ceremony.

The joyful, ceremonial harmony of the event was this year enhanced by the cultural programme by the Prima Vista vocal trio from Jesenice, dedicated (in the style of lifelong learning) to reviving the musical heritage of the Italian renaissance, and the Folklore Group of the Romani Union from Murska Sobota, the best Roma folk group in Slovenia, which has received many awards at folk competitions. The Romani Union is led by this year's *SIAE* award winner, Jožek Horvat Muc, who in the closing part of the ceremony addressed the audience on behalf of all the award winners in Romani and Slovenian. We were thus able to hear a speech incorporating distant parts of the world, and to realise that the far-off can also come closer.

Part of the cultural programme to mark the formal opening of LLW was the exhibition of fired-clay sculpture and hand-worked died silk in the atrium. The exhibition, *Elements – fire, water, earth, air*, was a gift from *SIAE* award winners for 2001, Flora Otoničar, author of the sculpture, Nataša Sedej of the Gaja Ceramics Society of Postojna, and Gojka Pajagič Bregar of Ljubljana, curator and textile restorer, who decorated and designed the silk.

Life stories of awards winners 1997-2002 are posted on the LLW web site: <http://llw.acs.si/awards>.

Slavica Borka Kucler, *SIAE*



## Conclusions of the 6th Adult Education Colloquium

### Motivation in Adult Education

As part of the Lifelong Learning Week 2002, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education organised the 6<sup>th</sup> Adult Education Colloquium. This year's colloquium was on the theme of *Motivation in Adult Education*.

The purpose of the colloquium was to consider motivation from various aspects, a goal achieved with the selection of speakers. In addition to Slovenian guests, three speakers from other countries participated (two from the United Kingdom and one from Croatia), further enhancing the event.

Below I will summarise the main conclusions of this year's Adult Education Colloquium:

- The point was made on several occasions at the colloquium that the basic characteristic of learning is **change**. This is also the main characteristic of modern lifestyles and work. People increasingly face demands for rapid adjustment of their knowledge and skills to changes in work in order to improve their employability and competitiveness in the labour market. The ability and readiness to adapt quickly to changing conditions are therefore becoming increasingly important factors for individuals' to participation in education.
- The problem was raised of **identity**. The identity of an adult has a major influence on accepting the role of learner and the related feelings of competence and suitability, and therefore on the individual's motivation to learn. Research shows that adults who are educationally inactive typically value education highly but are not prepared to accept the role of learner.
- Another important aspect of motivation for learning are **goals**. The type of goals and the opinion of the individual that he or she can achieve these goals with the help of education and learning have a major influence on the readiness of the individual to invest their energy and spare time in this activity. The research results shown indicate that the goals of adults are mostly linked to improving or maintaining their own economic position. Also linked to this are the goals of the economy – the more an individual is educated and trained, the more he or she contributes to the competitiveness of the economy. Adults already in an advantageous position (younger, more educated, in management positions) have the most learning opportunities.

If I were to summarise the conclusions of this year's Adult Education Colloquium in a single sentence, I would say that adult motivation for learning and education depends primarily on meeting personal goals and the identity of the individual on the one hand, and an environment which encourages him or her to realise these goals on the other. Unfortunately, such "meetings" are still least favourable for individuals who participate less in education.

Marko Radovan, SIAE



## SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE

### Joining Europe

### How to gain the competitive edge in employment?

Answer: with ECDL. Much has been written and said about this, although most people still don't actually know what it is, what it can do for us and what we need to do for it. Let's start at the obvious place – the beginning.

### What is ECDL?

ECDL is the short name for a programme providing a publicly valid European Computer Driving Licence, which confirms that you have passed 7 examinations in the area of information technology (IT) and demonstrates that you are able to use a personal computer and general computer applications at a level enabling you to effectively exploit the core functions of these applications. In other words, the certificate confirms that you have passed one theoretical examination of IT knowledge and six practical examinations evaluating your ability to operate a personal computer and general applications. Since in Slovenia we are mainly used to using software products from Microsoft, we can say that you have to demonstrate knowledge of the use of the Windows operating system and the Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access programs, the Internet and electronic mail. You have two options: pass all 7 exams and receive an ECDL certificate, or pass 4 exams of your choice and receive an ECDL Start certificate. The certificate you obtain gives you a special certificate of computer knowledge in addition to any certificates of completed education you already have, giving you a major competitive advantage in finding (better) employment. Why? The certificate obtained is also recognised by employers, since it simplifies the employment process and assures employers that applicants and employees alike have suitable knowledge for working with the most frequently used computer programmes.

You can take the exams in specially qualified test centres – more details are given below. The quality of knowledge assessment and examination materials is monitored by ECDL Foundation Ltd., which also ensures the comparability of the knowledge of certificate holders in Europe and around the world.

## **ECDL – condition for joining the European Union?**

What is the situation regarding ECDL in Europe? 25 European countries already have a licence conferring the right to conduct the ECDL programme. Each of these countries operates *test centres* – Italy for example has more than 2,200, while Hungary and Austria each have over 200. Due to the high quality and regular upgrading of the programme, the 1995 pilot project has grown into an international standard. As such, it has also begun to expand to countries outside of Europe, where it is becoming established under the name *International Computer Driving Licence – ICDL*. It is established for instance in Australia, New Zealand, the Americas, Africa and Fiji. More than 2,000,000 students have signed up to date, demonstrating that it is a very well established and important demonstration of knowledge. European Union members have been the main engines of such rapid growth, and in some cases have introduced the programme into the system of secondary and higher education. There are a number of reasons for this. One is certainly that such a certificate is a prerequisite for many jobs, such as state officials. It is also growing in importance in projects to requalify the unemployed.

### **ECDL in Slovenia**

Two years ago, the Slovenian Informatics Society (SDI), having recognised the importance of ECDL, obtained a licence to introduce the programme to Slovenia. As a member of the Council of European Professional Informatics Societies – CEPIS), it is the only organisation in Slovenia which had such an opportunity. This was followed by the establishment of test centres – initially three, although today we have (only) fifteen. And how successful have we been? For an answer, we asked chairman of SDI, Niko Schlamberger: *“To date 1369 ECDL students have signed up in Slovenia, and 743 have obtained part or full ECDL certificates. These figures are interesting, since alongside the relatively low level of enrolment (where Slovenia is among the lowest third of ECDL countries), the success of training is high, with Slovenia ranking in the top third. The main reason for this is probably that large business systems – and here we can include the administration – are reluctant to decide – perhaps because they have not realised that ECDL is not just another certificate, but is rather a guarantee of skills and knowledge for work with general computer programs. We can be even more satisfied with the results, since they demonstrate the high level of motivation of ECDL candidates. In the future, we anticipate greater interest on the part of major systems, resulting probably from contacts with business partners from Europe and to a certain extent – at the risk of sounding a little sarcastic – the issue of our representatives in the pre-accession negotiations with the European Union. As regards test centres, I can state with pride that the first test*

*centre in Croatia was opened in July this year in Zagreb; it received its licence from SDI. It was established under an initiative from a local company which recognised in ECDL a tool for successful computer literacy education, as well as a business opportunity."*

The ECDL certificate is a powerful tool for each holder. It allows a better and more solid working future. Each of us has the opportunity to set out on the road to obtaining this certificate. At least 743 holders have already reached that goal. And each of them has an advantage over others.

Doris Kukovičič, Much, Education, d.o.o.



### Education Centre of Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana Operating successfully for one year

The Education Centre (PEC) of the Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana was established in October 2001 as the result of several years' activity by the Faculty to improve the quality of the education process. By establishing the Centre, which is intended to deal with education, adult education and guidance, by working with companies in the education process, and by establishing a total quality management system, the new management team under Dean Dr Maks Tajnikar and Pro-Dean Dr Marko Jaklič has formally confirmed its efforts to improve the quality of educational work.

The work of the Education Centre is divided in terms of content and organisation into three sub-units:

- The **Centre for Business Cases and Projects** (head: Dr Maja Makovec Brenčič) has been operating at the Faculty since 1997. The primary objective is to improve the quality of the educational process through closer co-operation with companies and institutions. The purpose of the activities of the Centre is to foster co-operation with companies in the form of project work, writing business case studies, hosting lecturers from business, student visits and implementation of projects in companies and institutions within the context of the educational process.

Part of the activity focuses on the area of business case studies. To this end, the Centre organises workshops on the theme of business case studies and the development of



case studies for use in the educational process, assisting teachers and colleagues to find suitable business case studies, commissioning them and publishing them abroad. A handbook by Maja Zaman, *Poslovni študijski primeri* (Business Case Studies) was published at the start of November 2002 and is intended for writing case studies and their use in teaching.

One priority area for the work of the Centre is direct co-operation with companies and institutions in the education process; this is becoming of key importance in including the Faculty in the circle of internationally accredited higher-education institutions. Last academic year, the Centre conducted a survey on co-operation between teachers and assistants and companies in order to evaluate co-operation with companies in the education process. The data collected formed the starting point for further development of co-operation with companies, and this year the Faculty began concluding contracts on scientific, research and educational co-operation with companies and institutions. More than 20 contracts have already been signed with companies and institutions (e.g. Mercator business system, Trim Trebnje, Gorenje, Petrol and others) and with individuals who regularly participate in the implementation of the education process.

- **Centre for Teacher Education and Guidance** (head: Nadja Dobnik, MA) is involved in the planning of educational activities for Faculty teachers and outside colleagues involved in the implementation of the education process. The programme of educational activities is broadly set, and meets the highly diverse needs and interests of Faculty teachers. The positive responses and the high level of participation of over-burdened teachers and assistants confirm that teachers are aware of the importance of developing knowledge and skills in the area of higher-education teaching, and that the planned approach to teacher education is a prerequisite for ensuring the quality of educational work.

The workshops and seminars we have provided using our own or outside staff include an extensive range of computer workshops, a *Rhetoric* seminar, a workshop *A good teacher needs a good voice* and a workshop *Planning study materials*. Teachers and assistants also receive information about the educational services offered by other educational organisations (particularly the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, GV Education and the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana).

In planning educational activities, particular attention is paid to assistants, who are just setting out on their educational path and who generally do not receive the necessary teacher education in their prior studies. A module, *Introduction to Higher-Education Didactics*, and a two-day workshop given by Miran Morano, *Students need an effective teacher*, were prepared specifically for assistants.

A second important area of operation of the Centre for Teacher Education is distance learning and the relevant training for tutors and development of study materials. A joint



meeting was organised for tutors in September in Ljubljana, and was intended to allow tutors to get to know each other and to provide consultations with subject providers; at the same time, workshop participants examined in detail the role of the tutor in distance learning, and were trained to use the updated Tutor Forum web site. At the start of September 2002, a reprint of Nadja Dobnik's manual *The role of the tutor in distance learning*, was issued.

- **The Centre for the Quality of the Educational Process** (head: Dr Irena Vida) focussed its activities on the construction of an internal faculty system for assessment and monitoring of quality and evaluation of the education process, as well as on guidance activities for teachers to improve the quality of the educational process. An important part of the quality monitoring activities is linked to the implementation of student surveys, where the Centre works with the Quality Committee of the University of Ljubljana.

After a year of successful work by all concerned, we in the Education Centre realise that we have merely scratched the surface. It appears that the needs are great, a consequence of the lack of planned involvement in the quality of educational work in previous years, as well as the increasing challenges and pressures brought about by the development of new study programmes, new forms and methods of work and the development of information technology. At the same time we are convinced that academic excellence, which we wish to attain and establish on an international level, will not be achieved without planned investment in our own teacher education and without ties to the business environment.

Nadja Dobnik, MA, Education Centre of Faculty of Economics in Ljubljana