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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:

- 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

Ten years of the programme Project Learning for Young Adults

All the best, PLYA!

Its beginnings and the organisation of the first programme, which we called *Centres for Young Adults (Center za mlajše odrasle - CMO)* date back to 1993. The first version of the programme *Project Learning for Young Adults - PLYA (Projektno učenje za mlajše odrasle - PUM)* was accompanied by numerous problems. We learned a great deal from its evaluation – not just about young adults and the programme, but also about the other conditions that must be fulfilled in order for such a challenging programme to get going at all.

Over two years before the first programme was conducted, at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE), we started addressing the target group of adults which until then we had not dealt with in any special way: young unemployed adults. Many European countries started encountering this phenomenon, which accompanied industrial countries back in the early seventies. Particularly in the Scandinavian countries, such as Denmark, a large number of programmes and forms of study were developed for the involvement of young persons if they dropped out of education early or were unemployed. These kinds of programmes help young people to overcome personal and social hardships, encourage them and enable them to find their place in society, to acquire a vocation or education, and in this way become active and creative members of the community.

Young people leaving school and becoming unemployed is a major problem today in Europe and around the world, and governments are devoting increasing attention to it. They are also seeking some basis for a solution in international co-operation.

With the decline in birth rates and the consequent shrinking of generations enrolling in school, the problem of dropping out has become much more visible even in the general public in Slovenia. Without doubt, some time will still pass before we are able to get a comprehensive overview of how destructive and long-term the consequences of the large-scale dropping out recorded in this country (estimated at 25%) will be for the whole of Slovenian society and its position in the global society of knowledge.

Young people who find themselves in this position most often need help. We have found that solving the problem of an individual dropping out – especially at the beginning – is

left primarily to the individual and his/her family. Effective help would require a definition of the special position of young people who leave school early (the position of the unemployed person is not entirely appropriate), improvement of programmes on offer (including those within schools), establishing a network of organisations that would offer comprehensive and linked assistance, and enhancement of training programmes for teachers, other experts and laypersons working with young people.

Fortunately, the approach of professional circles is also gradually steering in this direction. One of the first indications of this was most certainly the PLYA, an education programme which through its working method offers participants an integrated treatment of their situation. With the help of mentors and the group, participants train themselves to deal with the problems they encounter. In various study projects – group and individual – by assuming various roles and dealing with tasks accompanied by group and self-reflection, they develop the key competences for themselves that people need in education and life in general.

In terms of the development of Slovenian adult education, and of other sectors dealing with young persons, PLYA is a small but important step. We know that young people on the margins of society are most at risk (suicidal tendencies, mental illness, addiction, crime and so forth). The task of various institutions – including educational – is to try to reduce this level of risk through various programmes. PLYA can be characterised as a **preventive programme**.

An evaluation study done in 2003 found that approximately 70% of PLYA participants achieve the programme objectives. Almost all the young people have found that they gain self-confidence; the majority of them successfully enrol in programmes to obtain an education, others gain employment, and some continue their education while employed. There are also encouraging data about participants whom the programme has helped in making important life decisions.

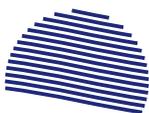
Since the first version of the programme and up to the present day, PLYA has continually evolved – not so much in its programme concept, but more in its continuously updated practice. Owing to its originality through project learning and the relationships it fosters among participants, it has become an important model of educational work, offering lessons or inspiration to increasing numbers of educators in formal education and other experts dealing with the problems of young people.

This challenging programme could not be carried out without the mentors who guide and moderate the work, and advise participants in their learning. Credit goes to their professionalism and creativity for the success of the programme, and thanks are due for their humanity, given that in many critical moments when there was not sufficient money, the programme kept going.

The most successful possible functioning of PLYA requires a synergy among all participants - from the state and local community to provider organisations, mentor groups and consequently also programme participants. Another very important element for the programme is the networks that are created through the linking of various institutions and individuals.

On the tenth anniversary of PLYA our desire is for all the main partners to ensure appropriate sources and other conditions for the excellent work of the young people and mentors in PLYA.

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



Conclusion of the subproject

Web portal on e-learning

The relentless development of technology in recent years and intensive social changes are giving increasing currency to modern, flexible and dynamic forms of study as an alternative to the traditional education model. *E-learning* is becoming increasingly established in the developed world and is expanding relentlessly. The development of e-learning is linked to new pedagogical approaches, more modern study aids, materials and tools for carrying out the teaching process, and in this an important place is being taken by **web portals**. They are becoming established as important informational support in the development of education, and their importance is increasing.

Development of a web portal on e-learning¹ was one of the objectives of the project *Distance Learning in Slovenia (Poučevanje in učenje na daljavo)*². The project was supported financially by the Ministry of Education and Sport, and coordinated by the Laboratory for Telecommunications at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering, University of Ljubljana. The content of the portal was prepared by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana, and the portal was set up technically by the Laboratory for Telecommunications at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering.

¹ Information in the portal relates both to distance learning and e-education. The two concepts overlap in many cases today.

² The project was concluded in October 2004. More information on the project is available on the project web page <http://www.ltfe.org/crp>.

The e-learning portal³ could be characterised as a networking portal with a strong component characteristic of a portal oriented towards educational resources. Given this orientation of the portal, its advantage has been in the development of content services. The aim of the portal is to offer access to a systematically arranged starting point for obtaining a variety of information in the field of e-learning. Some information items have been prepared especially for the needs of the portal, while others were collected from international sources, primarily from international associations and professional electronic networks in the field of e-learning. A database of information on the website of the Slovenian National Contact Point for Distance Education (Nacionalna projektna enota za študij na daljavo – NCP)⁴ was also integrated in the portal.

The content of the portal was selected and put together with the aim of meeting the needs of various target groups – be it institutions or individuals interested in various forms of e-learning (students, potential students, teachers, tutors, experts wishing to acquire new knowledge or to refresh their knowledge, management staff in educational institutions, those responsible for the development of education in Slovenia and so forth). The portal also enables the acquisition of information as the basis for more intensive research and development work in various fields of e-learning.

In planning the content of the portal we proceeded from a general definition of the term e-learning as learning whose essential component is the use of modern information and telecommunications technology. We tried to incorporate important sources in the area of e-learning into the portal, although this is perhaps not evident in the specific naming of the individual web address. For example - some institutions retain the original title connected to distance learning (DL) although they perform also e-learning. Information in the portal are categorised into several groups and sub-groups:

- providers: educational institutions offering e-learning in Slovenia and abroad;
- associations: international and national associations in the area of e-learning;
- publications (links to electronic publications and a list of printed publications);
- electronic magazines specialised in DL and with articles on DL;
- printed magazines specialised in DL and with articles on DL;
- articles (Slovenian and other);
- conferences associated with e-learning in 2003, 2004 and 2005;
- information sources: on e-learning on the Internet (portals, discussion groups);
- development: information necessary for the development of e-learning (interest-

³ The home page of the portal is <http://www.e-studij.net>.

⁴ National Contact Point for Distance Education (NCP) was the national co-ordinator in the field of distance education during the implementation of Phare Multi-country Programme for Distance Education in the nineties. NCP was located at the Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana until the end of 2001. In the year 2002 and 2003, some NCP's activities were performed within the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. In 2004, most of its activities stopped because they are not financially supported. The address of NCP's home page is <http://www.uni-lj.si/ncp>.

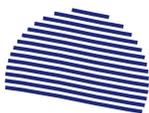
ing projects, demo versions of on-line courses and information on training opportunities in the field of e-learning, dictionaries and glossaries);

- specialised topics: links to specialised content areas such as development of e-learning courses, study support services, management, quality and more;
- national initiatives in the area of e-learning (involving for the most part various projects in the area of e-learning).

The portal now contains almost 600 web links or items of information, but this is still a long way from covering all the significant information in this area (not all domestic initiatives have been included). Moreover, new information are appearing continuously, and this would be ideal for posting on the portal, such as the release of new publications, the announcement of new conferences, new national and foreign projects, the appearance of new providers of e-learning courses and so forth. The portal was designed with the intention of being regularly maintained and updated with additional information. Maintenance of the portal requires continuous monitoring of the existing web links, since some links in time become no longer active, or their purpose changes.

Regular maintenance of the portal requires certain financial resources, which for the moment have not yet been provided to continue the work of the portal. The future of the portal depends to a great extent on an agreement between the relevant partners on the need for such a portal in Slovenia and on the regular provision of financial resources, which would enable ongoing maintenance of the portal and technical refinements.

Margerita Zagmajster, MSc, (margerita.zagmajster@acs.si), SIAE
Dr Lea Bregar (lea.bregar@ef.uni-lj.si),
Faculty of Economics, University of Ljubljana



SIAE awards for exceptional achievement in adult learning

2005 SIAE award winners are known

This year's annual call of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education to collect proposals for SIAE awards for exceptional achievements in adult learning is now behind us. At a session on 24 May 2005 the members of the awards commission examined 25 valid proposals that arrived within the deadline. They concluded that they would make awards to 13 candidates as follows:

- two awards in category I,
- three awards in category II,
- eight awards in category III (4 individuals, 2 groups, 1 society and 2 companies).

Awards to individuals for outstanding achievements in learning and enriching their own knowledge go to:

- **Pavla Hudorovac** of Črnomelj (Nominator: Črnomelj Institute for Education and Culture)
- **Primož Bizjan** of Horjul (Nominator: Petra Buh).

Awards to groups for outstanding learning achievement and enriching of their own knowledge go to:

- **The group Vrtačarji** of Lesce, headed by Majda Dobrila Žan (Nominator: Radovljica Adult Education Centre)
- **Ivan Grbec Cultural Society** of Trieste, headed by Luisa Primossi Primožič (Nominator: Beseda slovenske Istre cultural society)
- **Tišina Study Circle**, headed by Mihaela Flisar (Nominator: Murska Sobota Adult Education Centre).

Awards to individuals, groups, societies, institutions, companies or local communities for outstanding professional or promotional achievements in enriching the knowledge of go to:

INDIVIDUALS

- **Silvo Šinkovec MA** of Ljubljana, specialist educator, BA in theology, MA in psychology (Nominator: Society of Catholic Educators of Slovenia)
- **Boris Bregant** of Hrušica, BSc in mechanical engineering (Nominator: Community Jesenice)
- **Tanja Vilič Klenovšek MA** of Ljubljana, MA in educational science, adult education course (Nominator: Koper Adult Education Centre on behalf of the Network of Guidance Centres for Adult Education)
- **Igo Gruden** of Ljubljana, BA in English (Nominator: Section for the promotion of Danish Folk High Schools)

GROUP

- **Mentor group for PLYA at the private institution TIN Ljubljana**, headed by Vera Nuhijev Galičič (Nominator: Dr Sabina Jelenc Krašovec)

SOCIETY

- **Mladinski ceh society for the Youth Academy project**, Ljubljana, head of group: Andrej Burja (Nominator: Urška Novak)

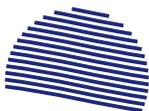
COMPANIES

- **Radio 94 and NTR Postojna**, managing director: Sandi Curk (Nominator: Vitra, Centre for Sustainable Development, Cerknica)

- **Komunalno podjetje Vrhnika (municipal services)**, managing director: Stojan Jakin (Nominator: Group of Citizens of the Municipality of Vrhnika - Miša Strban, Simona Jelovšek, Darijan Kocijančič).

The main **ceremony** for the opening of the Lifelong Learning Week 2005, at which we will present the **SIAE awards for 2005**, will be in Ljubljana, at the congress centre of the Hotel Mons, Pot za Brodom 55, **on Friday 14 October 2005**, at 11 am.

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



Eleven plenary speakers to deliberate on active citizenship

Committee confirms programme of this year's Adult Education Colloquium

*»Human rights, culture and a democratic culture do not spread like the flu! It is not in our nature to hold human beings as equal and to believe that everyone must co-operate in the implementation of laws, that freedom is the most important asset of humanity and that openness to others is a special condition for its existence. All this has to be learned, and that requires the dedication of citizens, educators and those who train«.*¹

Thus begins the concluding part of the report from one of the three sub-studies of the far-reaching project Education for Active Citizenship, which dealt with the creation of terminological frameworks in education for democratic citizenship and attempted to identify the basic skills needed for democratic practices in European societies.

As we have already indicated, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education has joined the effort to focus in more detail and promote the spread of new theoretical and empirical awareness in this field. As part of the Lifelong Learning Week 2005 we are organising what is now the ninth Adult Education Colloquium entitled *Effective Education and Learning for Active Citizenship*, which will be held on **14 and 15 October** at the **Hotel Mons in Ljubljana**. This will be preceded in the morning at the same location by the special celebratory opening of the 10th Lifelong Learning Week.

¹ Augigier, F. (2000): Basic concepts and key competences of education for democratic citizenship. Osnovni pojmi in ključne kompetence izobraževanja za demokratično državljanstvo. Education for Democratic Citizenship project, DGIV/EDU/CIT (2000) 23, Slovenian, Strasbourg, 26 June 2000, p. 30

Participation at the Colloquium will be especially enriched by the good number of invited domestic and foreign experts, and we are also organising workshops aimed at further immersion in the issues presented, shedding light on them from the aspect of everyday practice, and formulating conclusions and proposals.

The Programme Committee, composed of Dr Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar, Dr Angela Ivančič, Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik MSc, Mitja Sardoč MA, Dr Andreja Barle Lakota, Dr Peter Jarvis and Dr Agnieszka Bron has deliberated over and adopted this year's Colloquium programme.

On the **first day of the Colloquium**, on Friday, **14 October**, participants will be greeted by *Dr Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar*, directress of the SIAE, and she will also later moderate the meeting. The introductory **welcoming part** will also feature other speakers: *Dr Angela Ivančič*, chair of the Programme Committee of the colloquium; *Dr Slavica Černoša*, coordinator of the EU process *Education and Training 2010*, who will present the implementation of its working programme; *Matjaž Hanžek*, Slovenia's Human Rights Ombudsman, who will draw special attention to the fulfilment of the right to be different in Slovenia; and *Mitja Sardoč*, national coordinator of the European Year of Citizenship through Education, who will present this project.

The presentation of six **plenary papers**, which will last until approximately 6 pm, will be followed by a discussion and conclusion of the first day with a social evening over dinner. The first plenary paper will be given by *Dr Peter Jarvis*, whose deliberation will link lifelong learning, social capital and active citizenship. *Dr Ruud Veldhuis* will speak about knowledge and competence for active citizenship. This area will be highlighted from another aspect by the third speaker, *Dr Matej Makarovič*, who will compare the classical and innovative forms of social participation in post-transition countries. Following the discussion that will conclude the first session of papers, *Dr Ramon Fletcha* will focus on one of the most salient areas: participatory democracy and marginal groups. The speaker from neighbouring Croatia, *Dr Vedrana Spajič Vrkaš*, will concentrate on the area of promotion for teaching active citizenship, and *Dr Keith P. Forrester* will present the area where citizenship, democracy and trade unions meet.

The second day of the Colloquium, on Saturday, **15 October**, will be devoted to both plenary sessions and workshop presentations. It will be moderated by *Dr Peter Jarvis* and *Dr Angela Ivančič*. The morning and afternoon sessions of plenary speakers will be followed by workshops in three groups, where a total of 13 participants will introduce themselves. The **plenary part** will open with a lecture on active citizenship in everyday concepts by *Dr Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar*, while *Nick Walters* will bring us up to date on the subject of school between the education of "good" and "active" citizens, and *Dr Alenka Janko* will complete the first session with a consideration of identity and active citizenship as they appear through the participation in society of ethnic minorities. The second, afternoon session will be started with two plenary papers: *Dr Julia Preece* will outline gender determinateness of active citizenship, and *Dr Kari E. Nurmi* will unveil new features in the area of e-democracy and learning active citizenship.

In the **workshop part** of the Colloquium on Saturday morning, papers grouped into three sections will be presented by the following participants, who will thereby offer an interesting illustration of the main themes of the plenary papers: *Silvo Šinkovec MA* on the social dimension of the individual; *Mitja Sardoč MA* and *Dr Justina Erčulj* on citizenship education; *Dr Teréz Kleisz* and *Dr Valéria Pavluska* on knowledge, skills and competence for active citizenship in Hungary; *Dr Bogomir Novak* on certain aspects of developing active citizenship in Slovenia's political culture; *Darka Podmenik MA* on resources for successful active citizenship; *Dr Pierre Hebrard* of France on recognising and confirming previous learning as a strategy of open access to lifelong learning for all; *Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik MA* on new features in Slovenia – the learner's forum as a new challenge in adult education; and *Rosanna Barros* of Portugal on the system of recognising, evaluating and certifying key competences as a new method of promoting active citizenship.

In the afternoon workshop session, papers will be given by: *Maja Mezgec* from Trieste on the knowledge, skills and competence necessary to enact active citizenship from the aspect of neighbouring countries; *Darja Zorko Mencin MA* on Swedish efforts for active participation; *Toni Vrana* on social responsibility and active citizenship as two sides of the same coin; *Magdalene Motsi* on Kenyan experiences with education as a strategy for universality; *Kristjan Zemljič* on promotion that contributes to education and learning for active citizenship, and relevant activities that support it; and *Darijan Novak* will present the possibilities for active citizenship in study circles.

At the conclusion of the Colloquium, the moderators will sum up the main messages and findings from this meeting, which might serve as a pointer and recommendation for further action for the various participants in their efforts to make active citizenship become truly more active.

We invite you once again to take part in this year's 9th Adult Education Colloquium. You can register at the web address <http://llw.acs.si/ac/09/registration/> or by ordinary mail at: Andragoški center Slovenije, Šmartinska 134a, 1000 Ljubljana, marked *For the 9th Adult Education Colloquium*. There is no participation fee. The working language of the Colloquium will be English.

Important dates:

- **30 August** registration for the colloquium (without paper)
- **12 September** for submission of the entire paper (deadline for registration with paper was 20 June)
- **22 September** final deadline for confirmation of attendance.

All information on the Colloquium can be found at <http://llw.acs.si/ac/09/>.

Petra Javrh (petra.javrh@acs.si), external associate of SIAE



SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE

Presentation of the national survey

Participation of adults in education – 2004

In 2004 the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education carried out a national survey on the participation of adults in education. We defined participation, as in the international survey of 1998, as the involvement of adults in one or more organised learning events lasting more than five hours a year in any field of education. We conducted the survey on a representative sample of Slovenia's inhabitants (2,457) aged between 16 and 65 years. The questions relating to participation in education derive from the survey on literacy and participation of adults in Slovenia in 1998. The survey was financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. The survey also enjoyed the collaboration of the CATI centre, which carried out the telephone research.

We set out the national survey so that it enables comparison with surveys on adult participation in education in 1987 and 1998. We sought to determine the state of affairs and characteristics of adult participation in education in Slovenia, changes in their involvement in education and the characteristics of those involved compared to 1998, and to compare the results of the 2004 survey with the earlier national and international surveys.

The survey of participation relative to the entire population aged 16 to 65 years (we gathered data on participation for a period of one year) indicates that 37% are active in education (in 1987 – 27.6%, and in 1998 – 31.1%). This therefore shows an increase of approximately 20% in the participation of adults in education compared to 1987. Those who would enrol in education if certain conditions were fulfilled¹ (would-be-participants) represented 20.3% (in 1998 – 27.5%, and in 1987 – 10.5%). The proportion of those who regardless of any other conditions would not enrol in education (non-participants) is still relatively large – at 42.7% (in 1998 – 41.5%, and in 1987 – 62.4%). Compared to 1998 this increased by 1.2 percentage points, or by almost 3%. Despite the improved situation in individual categories expressed by level of activity in education (participants, would-be-participants, non-participants) compared to 1998, the fact still remains that after six years, and in spite of the major emphasis given to the urgent need to invest in human resources, more than half of the population (63%) are

¹ Conditions included: more time, less job commitment, larger selection of courses, more relevant courses, more appropriate time for education, and guidance.

not involved in educational activities. While in comparison with 1998 a shift has been achieved towards lifelong learning, for Slovenia this remains a goal for the future. According to the international definition from the 1998 survey, lifelong learning will be a reality when more than 50% of the population are involved in learning and education, in other words when we attain the proportions reached by the Scandinavian countries in 1998.² If we try to predict when we might achieve this, given the speed of change (5.9 percentage points in six years, investment in adult education at the current level), without taking into account the influx of new and better educated generations, we could say that in 2023 Slovenia will attain the level that Sweden enjoyed in 1998! This fact points out to us how the Resolution on the Adult Education Master Plan, adopted in 2004, needs to be taken very seriously, otherwise we will lag behind irredeemably. And without this, the ambitious goals of the draft Strategy of Development for Slovenia³ will be unfulfilled.

Data from the research indicate that in 2004 the non-participants (43.7%, in 1998 - 41.3%) and would-be-participants (21.2%, in 1998 - 29%) were dominated by women, and the participants by men (38.8%, in 1998 - 32.3%). Women accounted for 35.1% of those active in education (in 1998 a little less than 30%). Most active were those aged between 20 and 49, the average of these age groups exceeding 40%.

According to the patterns that were already evident in 1998, educational level is an undisputed indicator of activity in education. The fact is confirmed once again: the higher the person's initial education, the more that person becomes active in various learning and educational activities. The highest percentage of non-participants have finished some grades of primary schooling, while the most active are those with diplomas from universities, faculties or academies. The four- or five-year upper secondary school represents the threshold to greater participation in education. In this category the percentage of activity is 47.8%, while those with lower levels of schooling demonstrate a lower participation in education. This ranges between almost 80% for those with some grades of primary schooling and 46% for people with three years of vocational education and training.

The highest participation in education is seen among those who work on their own farms, in their own companies or in independent professions (57.4% and 56.5%), and the lowest among pensioners and housewives.

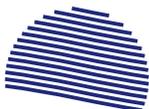
Barely 8% of the observed population is involved in formal education, and less than a third in informal education. Data indicate that the majority of those involved in formal education programmes cover their own costs of education, while employers cover the

² Finland - 57%, Denmark - 56%, Sweden - 53%

³ »By fulfilling this strategy, Slovenia will become one of the most advanced countries of the European Union...«

costs of the majority involved in non-formal education programmes. This shows that adult education and learning are becoming increasingly a matter of the individual, or putting it another way: the financial responsibility for education and training, which in 1998 was still assumed in three-quarters of the cases by employers, is being transferred to the shoulders of the individual.

Dr Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar (vida.mohorcic.spolar@acs.si), SIAE



Round table at DOBA

Adult education in Slovenia – reality and perspectives

This year at DOBA, a private educational organisation, we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of activities in the area of developing and providing education for children, youth and adults. We marked this special year in May with a round table entitled *Adult education in Slovenia – reality and perspectives*, since adult education and training represents an important part of our activity, and most importantly this is the area for which we would like greater attention and support from the state, both in the Podravje region and throughout Slovenia.

Our invitation to talk together about the situation in the field of adult education and training in Slovenia, and about the priorities in this area in the coming years, was taken up by representatives of all the key institutions in Slovenia. The round table was moderated by *Franci Pivec MA*. Those present were first welcomed by the director of DOBA, *Ms Jasna Dominko Baloh*; she presented the indicators of the social impact of DOBA in the 15 years of its activities to date.

The discussion was opened with an introductory address by the Minister for Education and Sport, *Dr Milan Zver*, who pointed out that lifelong learning, and along with it adult education, was becoming increasingly important, especially from the aspect of raising the employability of the population. The state is allocating increasing funds for adult education, and for this purpose Slovenia also has access to means from the European Social Fund (ESF) that unfortunately remain untapped.

The fact that better educated people pursue more education was pointed out by *Dr Janko Muršak*, chair of the Expert Council for Adult Education. He stressed that greater attention needs to be devoted to those less educated, or to the "deprived portion" of the population. In the words of *Dr Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar*, directress of the

Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, the proportion of those enrolled in adult education has grown by just six percentage points. This is not of course anything with which Slovenia could be satisfied. If we wish to increase the number of those involved in education, we must seek answers to numerous questions such as: how to motivate less-educated persons to gain education, how to encourage employers to make greater investments in education and training, and how to encourage the unions to recognise the importance of learning and education and to be committed to greater investment in them.

A survey conducted three years ago by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia - CCIS (*Gospodarska zbornica Slovenije* - GZS) showed that companies investing more in employee education generate higher value added. Yet in the words of *Janez Dekleva*, head of the education service at CCIS, this is primarily a feature of large companies; in the future, small and medium-sized enterprises will have to allocate more funds and time to employee education and training if they want to keep up with technological development.

In Slovenia we can be proud of the well-developed network of adult education providers, which includes secondary schools, professional colleges and folk high schools as private organisations. The range of different provider organisations represents invaluable potential for further development of adult education and training. The papers by *Jelica Pegan Štemberger*, president of the association of private educational organisations, *Andrej Sotošek MA*, secretary-general of the Association of Slovenian Adult Education Centres, *Ida Srebotnik* from the Society of Secondary Schools of Slovenia and *Alojz Razpeta* of the Association of Colleges clearly indicated that educational organisations are not just providers, but also the creators of policy in this field. Provider organisations are also important partners in the area of educating and training unemployed persons, something emphasised by *Miša Horvath Derganc* from the Employment Service of Slovenia.

The series of problems, unresolved issues and challenges facing us in this area can only be resolved in a constructive way if the provider organisations - both public and private - become partners with the state in the further development of this area, in drawing up new programmes and programme ranges, in enhancing the existing system of recognising and acknowledging informally acquired knowledge and skills, in introducing quality, and also in introducing and ensuring standards, regulations and financing in this area. *Dušanka Lužar* from the Fund for Development and Training of Human Resources in Maribor pointed out that local communities do not have sufficient funds for adult education relative to the existing need and developmental goals, so it is essential for a system to be set up to enable the channelling of ESF finance. If we wish to use these European Union funds successfully and effectively, then we must immediately begin training those who manage these instruments, as well as those who educate.

The round table showed that adult education in Slovenia is a field with numerous open questions and problems that will need to be tackled immediately. The proposals and conclusions from the round table represent a good starting point for further activities and discussion in this field:

- More activity needs to be focused on promoting awareness among individuals, companies and local communities regarding investment in education and training, and equally on motivating adults for education and lifelong learning.
- If we wish to ensure greater access to education for different adult groups, there is a need to ensure balanced development and provision of formal and non-formal education, as well as informal learning.
- A contribution to the further development of adult education can be made by both the public network of institutions and private education institutions, so there is a need to ensure for the latter equal opportunities for co-operation in the development and provision of adult education programmes. More will need to be said in the near future about the role and importance of various educational institutions for the further development of adult education in Slovenia.
- We need to begin activities for drawing up a strategy of adult education and training in Slovenia, and this will be a cornerstone for development in this field.

Meri Lorenčič (meri.lorencic@doba.si), DOBA EPIS



Promoting lifelong learning

Establishing a culture of learning as one of the fundamental values of a free and personal life in society

We are attempting to establish a culture of learning here in Slovenia, not just through special promotional activities. An important part in the popularisation of knowledge and learning is played by our development projects, that is, learning, educational and other activities adapted to people's needs. The network of these projects is spread out across Slovenia, and is especially welcome outside the major education centres. It is important in designing new project forms that we begin with the specific needs of adults and with the requirements of the social and natural environment, since in this way the people for whom programmes are intended can more easily link the education/learning on offer to their personal life path, and above all to the values that give purpose to their lives. The strongest promotion is indeed performed by:

- providing easier access for people to education and providing them with high-quality information;

- supporting rationality and a sense of ability through the learning/education programme;
- where possible, linking the creativity (learning, work and imagination) of individuals into common efforts to raise the quality of life in the community (in family, society, the community).

By designing a network of learning centres and a range of possibilities for non-formal learning, in the nineties we made an important contribution to fulfilling the principles and tasks recorded in the documents of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (July 1997, Confintea V, Unesco). I am thinking primarily of **point 9 of the Action Plan for the Future**, which calls for »overcoming the traditional distinction between beginning and continuing education« through the concept of lifelong learning or the »**concept of the learning society**, where everything offers an opportunity for learning and where everyone fulfils their potential«.

SIAE projects as a form of promotion for lifelong learning

Among the most outstanding SIAE projects that promote the culture of learning are: study circles, the *Reading with Manca Košir* study circles, Learning for Enhanced Life Efficiency, Project Learning for Young Adults, Learning Exchange, Centres for Self-directed Learning, Guidance centres and the project Offering Quality Education to Adults.

Study circles - SC (študijski krožki - ŠK) encourage learning by interest groups in the local environment. They take into account all four pillars of the European document;¹ true, they are not intended as training for a vocation, but the knowledge obtained in the circles has brought an additional or even exclusive source of income to many people. Successful study circles are a strong factor in establishing learning as a value, and also in linking people - in efforts for the common good, especially in rural areas. Popularising learning in study circles has been the aim of presenting the fruits of the work of SCs in the local environment (exhibitions, folders, brochures, celebrating anniversaries, ethnographic events, reports in local media and so forth) and special activities going beyond the bounds of individual circles (such as in 2003 **The Study Circles Caravan**, which encouraged the exchange of experiences by circle participants from all over Slovenia and presented them to the public).

¹ Jacques Delors (in his role as president of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century) writes about **four pillars of education or lifelong learning: learning aimed at knowing** (involving the level of literacy, education etc), **learning to be able to work** (a way out of unemployment, new job prospects, mobility of labour force at home and in the wider European area...), **to be able to live together** (learning to respect difference, for quality of life in a multicultural community) and **to know how to be** (learning for greater awareness about one's own value, for self-development and so forth).

The kind of animation and linking power that study circles can have in the local environment can be more easily illustrated by looking at the activities of the *SC Preserving Heritage* from Piran, which received an SIAE 2004 award for its exceptional achievements: *»the premises in which our study circle now takes place are in the same street where I live. This is a street that is already half dead! I myself have often called it "graveyard" street ... My intention was to breathe life into at least one building, to get something happening in it, to change it into a location for socialising and learning ... Now we are extremely happy and proud because we succeeded, and we also gained some neighbours who are unwittingly helping us in this - on one side a studio has been opened by the painter and restorer Mira Ličen, and on the other is Mr Sašo with his antiques ... Now we can also exchange experiences! Our door is always open. The people of Piran like to come by, and these are welcome interruptions. It's mostly older women and tourists who stop in ... and they all have the impression that this place of ours, and the work we love, is such a treasure, a shift in the quality of life of our town. Their enthusiasm is a big support for us.«* (Natalija Planinc, mentor of SC Preserving Heritage)

Reading with Manca Košir study circles - RMK (študijski krožki Beremo z Manco Košir - BMK) - based on the model of learning in study circles - are making an important contribution especially towards popularising reading culture, Slovenian literature and reading and communication literacy. Major promotional impetus is given by the events of a broader character, such as meetings of RMK member readers with writers during the Slovenian Book Week, or the participation of reading circles at events such as the manifestation in the warehouse Nama in 2003 ***In Nama you're not alone, books are with you! (V Nami niste sami, knjige so z vami!)***, or in 2004 the very well-received event on the national level and in the electronic media, ***Readings on Trains (Branje na vlakih)***.

The promotional value of the programme ***Learning for Enhanced Life Efficiency - LELE (Usposabljanje za življenjsko uspešnost - UŽU)*** lies in its ability to adapt to the specific needs of people lacking social skills, with inadequate education and a low literacy level. The programme has already undergone several transformations. In the beginning the fundamental goals were motivational, educational and social, and then the programme was enhanced and adapted to persons with special needs. After 2001 the programme was overhauled, and is aimed primarily at developing writing skills (for adults with less than ten years of schooling, with insufficiently developed skills of reading, writing and calculating, and with weak communication and other skills that are essential for a high-quality public and private life). The programme has diversified content with a variety of emphasis: the family literacy programme ***Reading and Writing Together - LELE - RAWT (Beremo in pišemo skupaj - UŽU - BIPS)*** is oriented towards family literacy and helping parents become literate so they can help children in the first years of primary school, while ***Bridge to Education - LELE - BE (Most do izobrazbe - UŽU - MI)*** is aimed at adults with insufficient basic education who would like

to continue their schooling or who are already gaining a secondary school education. The programme has both national and European support, so this year has seen the involvement of as many as 15 new providers for the LELE - BE programme and 19 new ones for the LELE - RAWT programme.

Attending the LELE programme marked the start of the second, ten-year educational path taken by *Tina Horvat*, recipient of an SIAE 2004 award. She comes from a Roma background, which was not disposed towards education, especially of women, so she left school back in the sixth grade of the eight-year primary school. The teachers in the LELE programme determined that she wanted to stand on her own two feet, and that she was very happy working with textile products, so they encouraged her to enrol in the programme to acquire vocational education as a "salesperson", which she finished successfully. She even got her husband enthusiastic about further education.

Project Learning for Young Adults - PLYA (Projektno učenje za mlade - PUM) is aimed at young adults (15 - 25 years) who have abandoned full-time education and are not employed. This is an education programme which is set out in its essence as "animational", since it seeks to awaken in young people the joy of gaining new knowledge and skills, to reinforce confidence in their own abilities, and to help create their vision of a career path and plan steps to achieve their goals. The group work is set out in projects, with the young people having the final say in selecting the content, so the motivation to co-operate is as high as possible and each person can rely on their own talents, then build on this through the acquisition of new knowledge and skills (including team work) and improve their working and learning habits.

Katja, who discovered her desire to learn in PLYA, has this to say: *»From very early on I had a rather lax attitude towards school ... and in the second half of my senior year I simply couldn't go any further ... I was interested in other things (organising and going to concerts, helping in a club, cooking food for the homeless, arranging a squat and the rooms in it, life in the community, travelling around Europe...).* Today there still seems nothing wrong with this, but I didn't finish school ... this year the Employment Office told me about the PLYA programme and I went to check out what it was like ... now I'm 21. I've been in the PLYA for three months. During this time we've had two exhibitions for the photo group. I'm learning, getting ahead ... Soon I'm planning on taking exams for the fourth year and doing my matura (graduation baccalaureate) ... I've gained a little more self-confidence. I know it'll work out ... ***Like if you don't know which way to turn, if you're sad or happy, if your life is messed up, come and get yourself a kick-start!***«

Learning Exchange (Borza znanja) ranks as one of those projects designed at the SIAE and transplanted to target environments throughout Slovenia that have an especially clear promotional dimension. Using the learning exchange requires the fulfilment of no pre-conditions; the only important thing is that you want to learn something or

offer your knowledge to others. The exchange is a meeting point between those seeking and offering knowledge and skills that may be entirely ordinary, but in many cases very special or already forgotten. Meetings on the "exchange" can also be an inducement for people to get together for a particular purpose, and this can help many people emerge from loneliness and free them from the feeling that nobody needs them.

Mihaela Flisar attends the Learning Exchange in Murska Sobota. She is convinced: »Knowledge is the greatest wealth, and no one can take it away from me, and that's why I'm learning and will learn all my life. Through non-formal programmes and forms of learning I have gained plenty of new knowledge, and I've increased my sense of self-worth. Now I am aware of my wealth - knowledge, in personal, social and professional life.«

Centres for Self-directed Learning - CSL (Središča za samostojno učenje - SSU) are designed as the focal point of the lifelong learning culture in the local environment, so it's best for them to be presented by the users themselves!

Ms. Ljudmila Cafnik of Pesniški Dvor was drawn to the CSL at Doba in Maribor by the desire to learn how to use a computer. »I was encouraged to go the centre at Doba by my daughter, who had taken courses there. Now she works abroad and I wanted to surprise her by chatting on the computer ... And since I'm out of work, the learning centre gave me an incentive for something new. I was right! I'm very familiar with the computer now ... In fact I'm learning computing and a foreign language at the same time. I'm very pleased with the opportunity I found at Doba, and I can hardly wait for Wednesday, my day at the learning centre!«

Guidance centres (Svetovalna središča - SS) popularise learning by removing the primary obstacles in people's heads. When we are still uncertain and we ask ourselves what it actually is we want to do, how and at which educational institution, and whether we have adequate prior education, it is very important to encounter a well-trained information provider with databases who can help us select the right path and make the first steps towards the chosen goal. The guidance centres, which operate in the larger towns across Slovenia (Koper, Maribor, Murska Sobota, Novo Mesto, Žalec, Jesenice, Postojna, Trbovlje, the Zasavje Guidance Centre and Nova Gorica), offer adults personal advice and information, which they can also obtain via telephone and Internet (there is also a guidance corner on the SIAE website), via e-mail or in writing. In the local environment, guidance centres are also a factor in social partnership, since the guidance network links up various institutions so that together they can ensure more integrated and effective guidance adapted to people's needs.

A project aimed at promoting quality, **Offering Quality Education to Adults - OQEA (Ponudimo odraslim kakovostno izobraževanje - POKI)**, is expressly of a working nature, being based on self-evaluation and planned, long-term efforts by the educa-

tional institution to achieve a higher level of educational process aimed at adults. The promotional value of the project is therefore only consequential, but for that reason all the more powerful. We know that marks of quality have great animation power, and that in an environment where providers of programmes can be selected, everyone gives priority to those that ensure better quality services. The project enjoys the co-operation of 14 educational organisations with a total of 1,680 teachers and 2,640 adults enrolled. If we consider that there are over 300 institutions educating adults in Slovenia, then we must admit that this is just the beginning, but the quality of the first steps will ensure a solid foundation for future development.

What in fact does the educational organisation gain by co-operating in the OQEA project? *»By acquiring quality in adult education, the school as a whole gains. It is somehow the image that is improved. And that is huge! If people are offered better education, the reputation of the school improves ... and that's the biggest thing for us. That's why we are here,«* is the explanation at one of the participating school centres.

Of course the projects we have highlighted are not the only ones that have a promotional effect. The popularisation of knowledge and education embraces a whole range of current as well as completed projects in the field of developing human resources. I should mention just a few of them: Investing in the Development of Human Resources, Individual Education Plan, Individual Education Account, Women in Education and Work, Education of the Labour Force and Transformation in the Labour Market, Education of Commercial Sector Employees, and Education of the Unemployed. In order to make it easier for people to decide on re-entering education – be it owing to the changed nature of work or to improve employment prospects – a range of measures, incentives and programmes has been developed that can be of an educational or systemic nature. At the Institute for Adult Education we have collaborated in the establishment and initial implementation of the system Assessment and Accreditation of Prior Learning, which significantly eases the process of obtaining qualifications, since it regulates and ensures the recognition of previously obtained non-formal knowledge and skills necessary to perform an occupation or activity.

Slavica Borka Kucler (slavica.borka.kucler@acs.si), SIAE



INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Grundtvig 4 project

Meeting of the International adult learners forum in the UK and meeting of the project group in Iceland

Second meeting of the International adult learners forum

As part of the project International Adult Learners Week in Europe - IntALWinE¹ - a meeting was organised last October in the United Kingdom for representatives of participating countries, with the aim of familiarising participants with the role of the adult learners forums, so that they could set up similar forms of linking learners in their own countries. Slovenia was represented by *Ms Dušica Kunaver*, recipient of the SIAE award in 2002, and I myself attended the forum to obtain information about the procedure for starting up a forum and about its method of operation. At SIAE, we plan to facilitate the setting up of the first Slovenian forum as part of the Lifelong Learning Week in September 2005.

The same participants as last year gathered once again for a study visit to the UK Adult Learners Week - ALW 2005. We attended the official opening in London, and then split up into two groups, one heading to Cardiff and one to Manchester, for a tour of the ALW events there, and then we met up again in London at the second meeting of the International adult learners forum.

In the article below, Ms Kunaver talks about the impressions from both groups of events, whereas here we devote a few words to the meeting of the International forum. In the **first part** of the meeting, participants exchanged information on how our efforts to set up forums were progressing. We established that it was easiest in those countries where the system of giving awards and prizes for exceptional learning achievements was already up and running, but the support given to the idea of the forum on the national level was also important. The **second part** of the meeting was led by *Winifred Hignell*, a former prize winner for exceptional learning success and member of the British National Forum of Adult Learners. She spoke to us about her experiences and advised us on how to tackle setting up forums in our own environments, since her current assignment is setting up forum net-

¹ The IntALWinE project, which we have already presented in Novičke, is coordinated by the Unesco Institute for Education in Hamburg, and involves the co-operation of 16 national coordinators of learning festivals in Europe.

works in Britain on the local and regional level. In the **final part** of the meeting we talked about the future of our group. Money for the IntALWinE project has run out, and new sources of funding will need to be found. In addition, we will need to define the substance of our common work on the international level. A smaller working group has been formed, and will strive to maintain contact and continue the work in the future. The project coordinator also informed us that *John Gates*, a former award recipient from Cardiff (in co-operation with the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education - NIACE Wales) intends to apply for a Grundtvig 1 project with the aim of continuing to set up national forums and to operate the international forum. All partner countries will be invited to participate.

We should also mention that the occasion was marked by the publication of *I Did it My Way: Journeys of Learning in Europe*, which presents 29 life stories of adult learners from 14 countries. In principle, there are two stories per country, one of them presents the participant in the International forum.² This publication is the result of efforts by the core project group, which focused its action on spreading the word about adult learners. In many countries they are among the main actors of learning festivals, since their stories advocate most convincingly the importance and transformational role of education in an individual's life.

Meeting of the IntALWinE project group in Iceland

The meeting was attended by national coordinators of learning festivals from 16 countries, and for the first time from Italy. This penultimate meeting of the project group was hosted by the institution Educate Iceland or Mennt of Reykjavik. Mennt is a unit of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training - CEDEFOP in Iceland, and at the same time it functions as a forum that ensures the participation of the education sector, the social partners, local authorities and others who work in the field of education and training. It was set up in 1998 as a response to current events in the area of lifelong learning, and its work covers four areas:

- an IT system in the area of vocational education and training
- European projects (e.g. Europass)
- national projects - including the lifelong learning festival (first one in 2000)
- co-operation and dialogue with partners.

After a presentation of Iceland, its education system and the concept of the festival of learning, our work focused on the substance of three basic working groups:

- Learners voices: with the production of the aforementioned publication and organisation of two International adult learners forum meetings, the first group has completed its work.

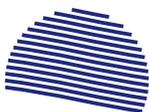
² Of the five Slovenian contributions, the life stories of Dušica Kunaver and Marina Kačič were chosen for publication.

- Operational improvements to the festivals of learning (examples of good practices, models of co-operation, methods of evaluation): in the coming period the group will collect contributions from all participating countries.
- Instruments for mobilisation and advocacy: members of the third group will study innovative aspects of lobbying and advocacy.

We also discussed the preparation of a final publication, which will present the activities of the IntALWinE network, the results of work of all working groups, the festivals of learning from partner countries, recommendations to politicians and recommendations from learners.

The final meeting of the project group will be at the end of April 2006 in Lithuania.

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



International adult learners forum

Highlights of the meeting

On my second trip to Britain – the first meeting was in September last year – it was nice to meet the same people – a motley group of 16 participants from all corners of Europe. And we became true friends. Before our gathering we read about each other in the articles in *I Did it My Way: Journeys of Learning in Europe*. And how close we became with this!

Last year Jan from Norway seemed to me reserved and silent, while this year, when I read about how dedicated he is to his work with disabled persons, I listened with silent respect to his stories of the happiness enjoyed by the young blind boys and girls that Jan, a mountain rescuer and guide, takes to mountain peaks, some over 2,000 m high. From him I have learned about the whole range of small but incredible skills that blind people have mastered. For instance, before they cross a road, they make a little smacking noise with their mouth, and then they can deduce from the echo of their voice how wide the road is.

The sweet, tiny young Romanian *Ioana* enchanted me once again with her cleverness and beautiful drawings. In the group part she and the Scotsman *Chris*, who managed to extricate himself both from drugs and serious hardship, put together such a great poster and speech on the issues of learning that their presentation should be heard by the European Parliament! Through learning and work we overcome all difficulties. We always need to learn, even learn how to live!

It was also interesting to compare the programmes of our first and second meetings. Last October the objectives of our meeting were motivation for lifelong learning, setting up learners forums in individual countries and so forth, while this year the British showed us chiefly their achievements in this area. We heard how some enthusiasts had succeeded in attracting a BBC television station. They started off with some interesting educational programmes, and in this way touched all strata of society, especially those at the bottom. *Don't give me fish, teach me how to fish!* goes the old Chinese saying. Inside I was wishing that some representative of Slovenian television could hear the lecture on educational TV programmes.

This was followed by the giving of prizes and awards as part of the British ALW. In an extremely august location in the centre of London, in a hall bearing the name of Queen Elizabeth that looks out over the entrance to Westminster Abbey, we attended the award ceremony. Here we were convinced that through their efforts for lifelong learning, the British are indeed trying to draw people in, primarily from the streets. It was truly moving to see former addicts, homeless and despairing people, white, black, brown or yellow, receiving awards and being photographed formally on the stage with the director of the *National Institute for Continuing Adult Education - NIACE* to the enthusiastic applause of the international gathering assembled in the hall. For many award recipients, who through learning had succeeded in extricating themselves from the grip of the streets, this event was most certainly the greatest honour of their lives. But above all it was an exceptional incentive not just for them, but also for thousands of others who might follow their example and point their life paths upwards.

It is good to know that we are on the same path in Slovenia. Efforts for lifelong learning do indeed raise the quality of life in our country. In my opinion, as for the presentation of award winners in the Lifelong Learning Week, our Institute for Adult Education uses an even more appealing approach: short film presentations on the lives of our recipients of course say a lot more than mere words. In particular it is right that efforts are made to find among recipients those who make the greatest effort for some goal. Here we need sometimes to move away from the framework »*best, most beautiful, fastest, best this and best that*«. How much fairer it is sometimes to look at the other end of this scale of superlatives!

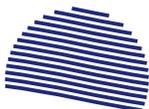
During our meeting we visited one of the award recipients from the British Adult Learners Week – an education centre that received a group prize for improving the quality of life in Moss Side, a Manchester suburb. This district is just over a kilometre from the world famous university campus! In a classroom at the centre we were first shown photographs of the streets in this area, before the award winners presented their work. We saw dirty streets rendered inaccessible by heaps of garbage. Then we were taken on a tour of this same street by a proud old black man. In place of the piles of garbage, we saw nicely arranged little blooming gardens, and at the end of the street where the photo showed a mountain of refuse,

there is now a building site where a children's playground is being set up. *»It's not actually as simple as it looks,«* pointed out a representative of the centre, *»we have to work very hard. In this community there are English, Jewish, Irish, Kenyan, Polish and Somali people ... nevertheless, we set out a common path and now it's nicer for all of us.«*

Four days full of impressions pass quickly. In the train heading for the airport, I'm thinking: London is so big, it just never ends. Greater London has sixteen million inhabitants. We Slovenians number no more than two million. Not even enough to make up a London suburb, but still with our two million we can produce world-class sports people, scientists of world standing and exceptional individuals who achieve successes worthy of every respect. And are we aware of this? Must we still learn this self-confidence? With lifelong learning it is never too late! And above all we should learn mutual co-operation!

At Brnik the airplane descends onto a tiny green piece of paradise, surrounded by shining mountains. Experiencing the beauty of one's homeland - that is another thing that we must learn!

Dušica Kunaver (dušica.kunaver@siol.net), Ljubljana



International project

Adult Education, Work and Achieving the Lisbon Goals

On 1 July, the United Kingdom assumed the presidency of the European Union for its term of six months. As part of its "new" assignments, the British government will be focusing on the area of education and training, whereby it wishes to contribute to fulfilling the Lisbon goals for the EU to become *»the most competitive, dynamic and knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.«*¹

One of the many tasks on this path will be the international project entitled *Adult Education, Work and Achieving the Lisbon Goals*, headed and co-ordinated by the UK's *National Institute for Continuing Adult Education - NIACE*. Partners in the project are the *Slovenian Institute for Adult Education*, the *European Association for Education of Adults - EAEA* from Belgium and the *German Institute for Adult Education - DIE*.

¹ Education and Training in Europe: different systems, common goals for 2010. CMEPIUS, Ljubljana, 2003, p. 6

The **purpose** of the project is:

- to present Grundtvig projects and highlight the results contributed by these projects in the areas of work, in the community and in personal development;
- to link adult education and employment policy and to exchange experiences and samples of good practices;
- to explore the impact of Europe's changing demography in adult education;
- to seek out tasks that new generations of Socrates Programmes can apply in linking learning and work in order to achieve the best possible;
- to associate the conference with Norwich², a learning city, and local adult learning organisations (learning fairs, events for the international of Adult Learners Week (ALW)³ and awareness raising campaign *Sign Up Now*⁴).

The project seeks to enhance the links between different forms of adult learning and to maintain these links in the long term. It also seeks to achieve better co-operation between institutions, better project work and effects of learning in the vocational area and other areas of adult education.

The **aim** of the project is to organise a European conference entitled *Adult Education, Work and Achieving the Lisbon Goals*, which will be held on **16 and 17 September 2005** at the University of East Anglia in Norwich. The conference will therefore be a place where it will be possible to present how general adult education can contribute to the development of skills and knowledge in the community, and how vocational knowledge can enable the individual to function better – not just in the working area, but also in the role of citizen, parent and active participant in their community.

The **target group** is the policy makers, practitioners and managers in the area of adult education from the European Union Member States.

The two-day conference will be opened with an introductory welcome address by Alan Tuckett, director of NIACE. The plenary session will feature:

- *Charles Clarke* (United Kingdom), who will present UK Government Policy in the area of citizenship.
- *Tom Schuller* (France) will touch upon the topic of *Demography and migration* from the aspect of the OECD.
- *Phil Hope* (United Kingdom) will speak about the broad UK policy in Adult Education.
- *Ekkehard Nuissl* (Germany) will speak about didactic structures of learning.
- *Anders Franzén* (Sweden) will present the Swedish Adult Education Initiative.

² More at: http://www.norwich.gov.uk/webapps/atoz/service_page.asp?id=1379.

³ See: <http://www.niace.org.uk/ALW/2005/Default.htm>.

⁴ Sign Up Now is a two-year event, organised by the NIACE. The campaign strives to develop and increase access to learning and education with the support of local authorities. More at <http://www.niace.org.uk/signupnow/January2003/Default.htm> and <http://www.niace.org.uk/signupnow/September2005/Default.htm>.

- *Pam Vaughan* (United Kingdom) will speak about the role of the UK Unions Learning Fund.
- *Alan Smith* (EU) will familiarise the participants with European programmes on the mobility of disadvantaged people.
- *Lars Birch Andreassen* (Denmark) will talk about ICT in participation and motivation.
- *Wendy Jones* and *Ian Nash* (United Kingdom) will highlight the role of broadcast media and print media and their influence on participation and motivation.

In the afternoon sessions, the participants will be able to join the discussions in twelve workshops. On the **first day**, there will be six workshops on the subject of *Workplace Learning and Active Citizenship*, focusing on the following specifics: learning regions, study circles, total government approach, learning with trade unions and workplace learning. On the **second day** the workshops in the thematic area of *Motivation and participation* will be devoted to the role of information and communication technology, the methods of promotion and increasing participation and motivation in adult education.

The organisers will also take care of the informal learning: participants will visit the City Hall, where they will be welcomed by the mayor of Norwich, and the *Norwich Origins Visitor Centre*, where they will be acquainted with the history of Norfolk with an interactive exhibition and panoramic film.

Neda Dordević (neda.dordevic@acs.si), SIAE



Study circles

Mentors of study circles in Norway

The ten years and more of *Study circles – SC (študijski krožki – ŠK)* were marked last year in various ways – through the national initiative *Readings on Trains*, by overhauling the teaching material for leaders and mentors of study circles, and by obtaining funds for supplementing domestic experiences with those from abroad.

European Leonardo da Vinci project funds, which through persistence and the help of an invitation from Norwegian partners were successfully obtained by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, have enabled us to carry out the project *Participative learning in various vocational practices*. In this way ten mentors of study circles got to know a part of Norway and exchanged experiences with representatives of three key institutions for adult education in Norway.

We wished to evaluate and compare the functioning, results and strategies of our circles with the model that has been already operating for a century in a small and mainly rural country. The team of mentors was selected through objective criteria, whereby out of more than a hundred qualified mentors we chose those who had been actively developing study circles for the longest time, documenting them regularly and clearly, achieving outstanding results and thereby succeeding in drawing into education a large number and diverse structure of very different people. We were also aiming for a balanced representation of all parts of the country and for the representation of the widest variety of professions and types of institutions offering study circles. For these we organised the experience of getting to know the Scandinavian model of study circles.

The partner institutions VOX and VOFO, which made the visit possible, are vital in Norway to the development of informal education. The National Institute for Adult Learning – VOX develops, coordinates and documents adult education projects, promotes co-operation between their actors, spreads knowledge about the development of adult education on the national and international level and is involved in research. The Norwegian Association for Adult Education (Voksenopplæringsforbundet – VOFO) brings together 21 members and a number of voluntary non-governmental organisations. Its main role is linking the interests of associations and their members and the government, and working to promote informal adult education. It also offers information centres, guidance in the area of the education legal system, theoretical and practical knowledge on education, and plans and coordinates various adult education projects. Both institutions are in Oslo. We also visited the Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim (Norges teknisk-naturvitenskapelige universitet - NTNU), which carries out research on adult education, and we were given several valuable materials besides presentations on the issue.

It should be stressed that the Norwegians ascribe great importance to non-formal adult education. The traditional favourable disposition of the state towards education has contributed greatly to the development of a culture of learning among people. For this reason participation in non-formal adult education is still high, and this is very important for the social stability of the country. Alongside attention to immigrants, prisoners and other more vulnerable groups, primary attention is now focused on vocational education and developing competence for greater competitiveness and efficiency in the labour market. We were impressed with the system of linking non-formal and formal adult education, which brings education closer to people and makes it useful: every formal education course contains elements of academic and practical knowledge which people can also acquire through non-formal education.

As mentors of study circles we were of course especially interested in the functioning of study circles in Norway. We were surprised to learn that (at this time) it was

not possible to visit any and that they are the primary method, while in Slovenia they represent the actual form of learning and work. In the almost century-old tradition of SCs, for various reasons (economic, political, etc.) what were once entirely democratic groups without a teacher and with previously determined learning content became (partly paying) courses separated into »study circles with teachers« and »study circles without teachers«. The proportion of classical SCs as we know them in Slovenia was comparable to that in Slovenia in terms of the population number, and most common for educating immigrants. The hosts explained this surprising situation with the appearance of labour freedom and the stagnation of this kind of non-formal education. However, the latter started to regain recognition and attention only a few years ago.

The presentation of the research findings covered the results of participation in education (in the past year more than 50% of adults were enrolled in education, of which 20% were those who wished through education to obtain qualifications, and approximately 30% were enhancing their knowledge). In Norway the retirement age is 67, and thereafter participation in education falls sharply. It is interesting that men and women are almost equally represented in education courses. As for the employment situation, they have found that 30% of participants in these programmes are unemployed and 50% are employed. The research also showed that participation in education involves for the most part (65%) participants with university education.

The exchange of experiences and opinions in both directions was an extremely important part of study visit. Since it was the most outstanding mentors who were selected by the key criteria of quality in leading the circles, and they represented nine different environments and professions, our talks were very fruitful, especially when we considered the possibility of setting up a "Slovenian VOFO" as the coordinator or an Association of Study Circles. We will be able to pass on the results of this exchange to various professions, institutions and environments, and we have also envisaged a jointly planned public presentation during the Open Door Days at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in the Lifelong Learning Week, on 13 October 2005.

It should be pointed out that we all spent the week being very active. Our Norwegian partners, and especially the three hosts, *Ms Ellen Stavlund* (VOFO), *Ms Graciela Sbertoli* (VOX), and *Dr Sigvart Tosse* (NTNU), painstakingly organised all the meetings, furnished us with materials and gave us a comprehensive presentation of the work and role of their institutions, for which we are sincerely grateful. Through their unspoken hospitality they completely dispelled the myth that northerners are closed and inaccessible people. I should also pointed out that the Slovenian study circle mentors are practically unstoppable – on this trip the SIAE tested them in a foreign environment, crossing the national border, leaving the EU, depriving them of sleep in the midnight sun, but ultimately sharing with them a profound learning experience, which

spoke to each of us individually and unexpectedly joined us together very strongly. We believe that our individual and common gratitude outweighed the imposition we presented for our hosts and the substantial costs that were covered by the European Union and the central institutions.

Damjana Nagode (damjana.nagode@acs.si), external associate of SIAE

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

F. Prešeren: The Toast
Slovenian national anthem

