

novivičke

Spring 2007

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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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In charge of the publication are: Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc, head of cluster, and Nevenka Kocijančič, editor.

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SIAE CELEBRATES

15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

Introduction

In the life of a child, 15 years is a long time, while from birth to his teenage years he will live through a very exciting as well as turbulent period of maturing and becoming actively involved in the world of adults, and also of becoming fully formed in those areas that will be of fundamental importance for his future life. In the life of an individual country, however, this is not a long time – on the contrary, one could assert that this is an exceptionally short time in which it is not possible to create all the elements of democracy and the foundations for state-building. In both cases, however, it is possible in this time to do a lot, to remove many obstacles and sometimes even to put some obstacles in place, albeit unintentionally or even with good intent. In the life of an institution this is a period in which the philosophy, image and role of that institution is formed, the fundamental guidelines for its operation are set out and relations are established with all interested partners; the content and fields of operation are formulated so that the institution can enrich the society and contribute its modest share to the mosaic of social and economic reality.

This was the case with the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE). It was founded in 1991, and started up in January 1992, so this year it is celebrating its 15th anniversary.

The Foundation charter of the SIAE (Official Gazette of the Republic of Slovenia No 18/1991) lays down that this is a public institute for performing expert tasks serving the needs of educating adults in Slovenia. This was very well received in professional spheres, and adult educators in particular awaited it impatiently, since we had virtually no professional support, especially with regard to organisational and certain content aspects of adult education. In this initial period there were major expectations in professional spheres and also among all those that expected more from education, so the tasks set out for the SIAE were accordingly large-scale. It was necessary to harmonize terminology, prepare the expert basis for the legal regulation in this area and to place this in the system, while at the same time keeping up with the latest professional trends and involving them appropriately in the Slovenian environment. The original group of enthusiasts, headed by the director, *Dr Zoran Jelenc*, and also involving *Dr Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar*, the later director, did a great deal of pioneering, and in certain areas even visionary, work. That group established the foundations for the modern conceptualisation of adult education as a segment of the broader and all-embracing field of lifelong learning. SIAE saw its

mission in the synergetic development of research, developmental, educational, consultative, information and promotion work, and in the critical monitoring of events, the encouragement of innovation and opening up into the international sphere.

In the research and developmental working groups SIAE involved experts from the universities, practitioners and other partners, and formed a rich collection of professional literature, trained up numerous adult educators, introduced new models for adult learning and education and worked particularly zealously to ensure non-formal forms of education and learning that are not attractive commercially but which are essential promoters of learning and personal growth.

The SIAE also made himself valued and gained recognition in the international sphere, and in certain milieus it has been a leading formulator of adult education and learning policy and a desired partner in international projects.

The comparative and clear advantages of the SIAE might be set out as follows:

- it is the first public institute to have successfully linked together the private and public sectors into a joint network of adult education providers;
- it is the first public institute for research and development in the field of adult education to have successfully merged several interests into a common interest in terms of lifelong learning, ever since 1995;
- it is the first public institute to have concertedly and systematically promoted learning and education and to have linked together providers and users in terms of identifying needs;
- it is a very good education structure of its employees, with broad general social science education and with research and development experience;
- it is an exceptional advantage in that it is capable itself of researching, developing, implementing, monitoring and changing newly formulated models;
- it is excellent models for evaluating programmes and projects, since it has evaluation instrumentation for monitoring the implementation of programmes and projects.

The SIAE has been able to make good use of its comparative advantages, yet in doing so it has somewhat forgotten its own promotion in the general public.

After 15 years, a great deal has changed both on the international and national level. Slovenia became a Member State of the European Union and Nato, and it is also active in other international integrations and associations. Slovenia is characterised by similar developmental changes and challenges to those in the majority of other Member States, meaning that the population is getting older, the nature of the market is changing rapidly, IT and other technology is also rapidly changing, and the process of globalisation is continuously changing the conditions of work and life. It is also possible to discern greater social stratification, yet these differences can be reduced precisely through education and training, for specifically in this way we can afford the individual personal

growth, employment, prosperity and greater social security, and for society this provides development, progress and social cohesion.



Open Day at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, 13 October 2005

Learning cannot and should not end upon one's departure from full-time initial education, in other words, learning should accompany each individual through their lives and work and should thus ensure that they maintain their competitiveness on the labour market and also in the social sphere. For this reason access to learning and to high-quality and adequately formulated programmes must be provided, along with properly trained providers in the later stages of life, too.

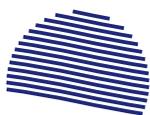
It is these new facts and challenges that place the SIAE in a new role, since it must formulate an expert basis for improving the possibilities for learning especially among adults in the population, and particularly for those who are disadvantaged and have difficulty accessing knowledge. It is important to bring this closer to such people through new approaches and working methods, and through evaluating already acquired knowledge, and above all to make them aware of the possibilities available to them. Here, however, there is a need to collaborate with all partners at home and in the wider environment, and to use the already achieved developmental potentials, adapt them and use them appropriately, for access to information was never as unlimited as it is today, although this also means greater responsibility in using this information and in its inclusion in life and work.

For this very reason I regard the SIAE as the leading national institute in the area of development and research of adult education and as a partner in implementing the strategy of lifelong learning, and it will be able to respond rapidly, flexibly and effectively to the challenges of social reality.

Its fundamental mission is to ensure access to and the quality of education and learning for all inhabitants of Slovenia in line with the principles of free choice and equal opportunities. In this way we are contributing to the development of human, cultural and social capital, since Slovenia's greatest comparative advantage is its self-confident, educated and learning citizens who are capable of facing up to changes and who are determined to change their living and working environment - locally and globally.

All this will require considerable effort, but effort that will pay off. Of course we cannot do this work on our own and without the cooperation and support of all those who shared with us the reality to date and who helped to create the common future. We thank everyone most sincerely and commend ourselves to you for the future, for only in this way will we be able to fulfil our vision and carry out our mission. Of those indispensable strategic partners who have supported and enabled our work right from our founding, I would like especially to thank the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs. We are indeed very pleased with our long-term cooperation with them, and of course we trust that - in the spirit of the lifelong learning strategy - successful partnerships will also be established with other sectors.

Dr Slavica Černoša (slavica.cernosa@acs.si),
acting manager of the SIAE



15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education **The tasks of the SIAE on its founding, today and in the future**

Below we publish an interview with *Dr Zoran Jelenc*, first director of the SIAE (1991-1996).

SIAE: In the middle of the eighties Slovenia became aware of the need to open up new paths, forms, methods, sources and possibilities for learning in all stages of life, and in all circumstances, irrespective of previous knowledge. Based on new findings and guidelines, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education was founded in 1991.



Opening of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, 14 January 1992

Dr Zoran Jelenc: *»I think that at that time Slovenia was still not sufficiently aware of what you are asserting. At that time or even earlier, this was being pointed out mainly (or exclusively) by the most broad-minded and enthusiastic adult educators working at the Faculty of Arts (Ana Krajnc), the Association of Slovenian Folk High Schools (Tilka Blaha, Jože Valentinčič) and in the Adult Education Society of Slovenia - ADS (in addition to those already mentioned, Štefan Huzjan), to whom we may ascribe a pioneering role in developing adult education in Slovenia. At that time, Slovenian education policy was in something of a blind alley, symbolised most clearly by the failed attempt to establish what was termed 'oriented education'.*

*Since the focal point of this interview is the SIAE anniversary, I can say that alongside other demands, we set out the need for this kind of centre in the long-term programme of developing adult education in Slovenia, which we adopted at the professional meeting of Slovenian adult educators in Bled in 1984. I was in charge of formulating this programme, which was published in 1985 with the title *Adult Education in the Long-term Plan of Development of Slovenia*¹, and I proposed it as candidate for president of the Adult Education Society of Slovenia (ADS). As a president of the ADS, I had up until 1988*

¹ Izobraževanje odraslih v dolgoročnem razvoju Slovenije : gradivo s posveta Andragoškega društva Slovenije, ki je bil 19. in 20. oktobra 1984 na Bledu. Ljubljana : Delavska enotnost, 1985

the opportunity to try implementing the components of the long-term programme. Through intensive and mostly voluntary work, we were able to influence Slovenian education policy. In order to establish the adult education institute, we had to struggle with great persistence and determination, not just with the politicians, but also with those adult education practitioners who were still in the dark about this and who had not seen the need for it and feared the possible competition from a new institution.»

SIAE: The range of activities of this new research and development institution provided a major incentive to the young Slovenian state on its path to a 'learning society'. How, therefore, would you assess the path taken by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in the past 15 years and its contribution to the development of the profession and practices of adult education and lifelong learning? Have the fruits of your and our work at the SIAE fulfilled your expectations upon the founding of the institute?

Dr Zoran Jelenc: *»When you say path to a 'learning society', that also brings certain things to mind. Attention has been drawn to this primarily by adult educators, but the Slovenian government has shown and still today shows little awareness of this need. Minister Dr Peter Vencelj, who may take credit for founding the SIAE, expected it primarily to help eliminate the greatest difficulties facing education policy at that time, and these were in particular the unfavourable education structure of the population and the education of unemployed people. I decisively rejected such a conceptualisation of SIAE activities as too narrow, and I proposed a concept that placed in the forefront the development of a culture of learning among adults in Slovenia (the 'learning society' is its logical consequence), while the resolving of current issues pointed out by the minister (I labelled this 'putting out fires') should be ensured by the broadly set out programme orientation of the Institute. In the years that followed, we put this orientation into practice through successful SIAE projects such as study circles, the learning exchange, centres for self-directed learning, Assessment and Accreditation of Prior Learning - APL, literacy programmes, Lifelong Learning Week - LLW and through the conceptual plan of the project Slovenia - a learning country. It is interesting to note that this project aroused greater attention abroad than at home, for instance at the Second World Conference on Lifelong Learning in Ottawa (Canada, 1997), and through the publication of achievements in the monograph *The Learning Society*.²«*

SIAE: Tasks in the area of the lifelong learning culture are also a part of the strategy of adapting Slovenia to processes in the European Union, of which we have in the meantime become an integral part. Do the EU initiatives (aimed at strengthening competition in the European economy, promoting active citizens, developing the mobility and quality of coexistence in multicultural communities; every European should have an equally open path

² Dunne, E.: *The learning society : international perspectives on core skills in higher education*. London : Kogan Page, 1999

to the development of their capacities, and so forth) seem to you a sufficiently strong basis for further development of the profession and the culture of lifelong learning?

Dr Zoran Jelenc: *»This seems to me a good basis for further deliberation. Yet we do need to be careful not to allow the predominance of the vulgar economist concept of developing lifelong learning (economic success, competitiveness) and to create a balance between that and humanist goals. The needs of the EU and the money it provides for this from its funds are those things that have a decisive influence on the decision-making in the Slovenian government and on its education policies. And this for me is a reliable sign that the idea of lifelong learning has made the transition into a mature stage of development and has become a subject over which politicians are making an effort. Here, however, I must say with pride that in our concept of operation for the SIAE 15 years ago we already based our thinking on such assumptions. For the majority of politicians, however, we were jumping the gun. Right now in Slovenia – on the initiative of the Ministry of Education and Sport – we are adopting a Strategy of Lifelong Learning into which are built the European goals in the area of lifelong learning and training in the period 2007-2013.«*

SIAE: And where in your opinion does the biggest development challenge for the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education lie?

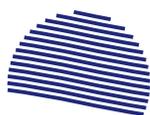
Dr Zoran Jelenc: *»Things are relatively clear now. The SIAE will play a decisive part in implementing the Strategy of Lifelong Learning and the Adult Education Master Plan. Proceeding from the Strategy of Lifelong Learning, we should strive to adopt and implement a complementary strategy of adult education. I was in charge of research on the systemic arrangement of adult education from 1989 to 1998, and I contributed several research reports to this, plus in 2000 the synthesis material Strategy and Concept of Adult Education. In previous years the SIAE has still made insufficient use of all this.«*

SIAE: Recently, and especially in the years since you were director, in which time you have been able to view in an entirely new way events at the institution that you set up, has your vision of the tasks and mission of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in any way changed?

Dr Zoran Jelenc: *»Since 1996, when the Organisation and Financing of Education Act (OFEA) provided that the SIAE should perform development and consultative work in education for the needs of the Government, meaning that like other public institutes (the National Education Institute and the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training) it implements policies determined by the Government, events have indeed shown that the SIAE must adapt appropriately to this new role. It can only do this by being restructured organisationally and in this way on the one hand satisfying the current needs of the Government, and on the other hand – and equally importantly – maintaining its role of an autonomous research and development institution for the*

field of adult education. Yet since the SIAE has not performed this restructuring in time, in the years since the adoption of the OFEA it has developed in a one-sided way – it has enhanced its activities for the needs of the Government (and here it also carried out some additional projects for its survival, for which people at the ministry even held a grudge), but it has neglected autonomous research activities. The fact that it has not yet sufficiently accommodated the requirements of the Government has triggered some consideration on the part of the education minister about closing the SIAE or attaching it to some other public institute. Fortunately reason prevailed, although this does not mean that the storm has passed. The SIAE will therefore have to take another critical look at its operation and adopt appropriate organisational and substantive solutions.“

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



15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education

Fifteen fruitful years at the SIAE

The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education was established as the fruit of long standing efforts of adult educators and workers in this field, who observed that Slovenia needed an institution to be involved in the research and promotion of the development of adult education.

In its 15 years of existence the Institute has justified its founding. Slovenia needed such an institution and still needs it. Adult education cannot be marginalised. It is far too important to be left to its own devices, as was also recognised by the European Union, which noted this in the Communication on Adult Learning.

What is it that distinguishes the Institute from other, similar institutions? The work of the Institute for Adult Education has been based consistently on studies and research, since it is impossible to imagine development in any other way. Right from the outset, the Institute delved into areas representing a basis for promoting adult education. Without studying legislation and the organisation of adult education at home and abroad, Slovenia would not have the Adult Education Act or the National Vocational Qualifications Act. Equally, we would not have the National Programme of Adult Education, which should be held up for other European Union countries as an example of good practice.

Without the study and research work of the SIAE, Slovenia would not have organised study circles, learning exchanges, centres for self-directed learning, *Project Learning for*

Young Adults (PLYA) and the Lifelong Learning Week (LLW). Without research on literacy we would not have recognised that even in a country with a well established school system, people can have difficulty understanding and using information from written sources. Without study and research work, we could not have introduced guidance into adult education as a constituent part of the (pre-)education process, and we would not have developed tools to determine and ensure quality. Without study and research work and involvement in practical work, we would not have identified the needs of adult educators and workers in adult education field, nor would we have developed a modular plan of professional enhancement adapted to the needs of the profession and users.



European language award for 2004 for the project ALLEGRO – Enabling the learning of foreign languages for marginalised groups, 7 December 2004

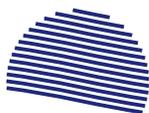
Involvement in international research networks, presentations of Slovenian adult education experiences at conferences abroad and articles published in foreign magazines have all established the SIAE as a sought-after partner in European Union research and development projects, including Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes as well as the Fifth and Sixth Framework Programmes, the latter supported by the research directorate in the European Union.

Nowadays we speak of the linking of research and development work with professional practice. The work of the Institute for Adult Education is based on this and this is also our great advantage, which thus far we have been able to exploit for the progress and promotion of adult education in our own country. In this way we have also been able to influence the international development of this field.

Yet with the constant rush and demands for 'measurable data on the results of work' there is continually less time for in-depth expert work. Although the founding decision includes development and research work among the tasks of the SIAE, this has become virtually impossible in an institution known as such in the EU. Without agreement on the fact that this is a constituent part of the SIAE's work, for which funds, people and time are allocated, this will no longer be possible. Seeking additional sources owing to the limited funds in this field takes up a great deal of precious time which could be put into disseminating results.

On the other hand we are encountering the fact that the area of social sciences, which includes adult education, is being allocated continually less funds, since the greater part is reallocated to the technical and natural science fields, which take precedence in the European Union and also in Slovenia. The SIAE is thus caught in a vicious circle - there is an increasing need for research results from specific fields (less educated persons, non-participants in education, motivation, consistency of policies in this area, education for employees, women in education and work, evaluating work experience and so forth), while at the same time there are dwindling funds for such research. An agreement will therefore be needed for the future, if we wish to preserve what we have achieved in these years.

Dr Vida A. Mohorčič Špolar (vida.mohorcic.spolar@acs.si),
directress of the SIAE 1996-2006, SIAE



15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult
Education

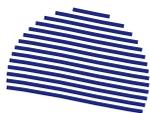
Some thoughts on quality in adult education

When we started eight or nine years ago at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education to systematically study issues of quality in (adult) education and approaches which should ensure that we achieve internationally comparable standards of quality, this topic was still not as much in the forefront of attention as it is today. Now, however, it would be hard to find a Slovenian or international development document that does not touch on the issue of quality of knowledge, and it is even harder to avoid this issue in expert debates. We are being forced into this by globalisation processes, which do not allow us to be convinced of our own excellence without making comparative evaluations. But we are being forced into this primarily by the need, in the conditions of the global economy, to ensure through knowledge the conditions for social prosperity and development, wherein what is extremely important is the nature of that knowledge, how useful and lasting it is, and also how transferable it is into different working and living environments.

When we look back, we can be relatively pleased with the results: a third of the educational organisations in which adults are educated perform self-evaluation. Many of them have defined their own standards of quality that have been confirmed by their management bodies. Some of them have through their work earned the right to use the green sign of quality, and this year for the first time, awards for quality were presented – to those that are leading the way in the culture of quality adult education in their local environments. We have tools developed for carrying out self-evaluation, and there is a fair amount of professional literature available as well as training programmes for management and expert workers and teachers. In this way we have contributed to the development of quality of work in adult education: in educational organisations much more attention is paid to the knowledge of educators and there is therefore increasing investment in their additional enhancement. We are seeing the development of new approaches to learning and forms of assistance to adults on their path to knowledge, so that they can achieve – including in external verification of knowledge – results comparable to other participants. We have created a network of advisers (experts) for quality, who will transfer knowledge and stimulate systematic work for the development of quality.

Nevertheless, are we really achieving greater quality of knowledge, are we keeping up adequately with the needs of the environment, and are we training innovative individuals committed to the idea of lifelong learning? Difficult questions with even more difficult answers. A few years ago someone asked us: *»When will this project of quality of yours be finished?«* Our answer would still be the same today: *»Still not very soon – there are many who have not yet even started on the path to higher quality, and we will try to get them involved in the coming years. Together with those that have already done a great deal, we will be seeking new approaches and avenues, and introducing new methods. We will be weighing up the demands of the time and seeking new solutions.«*

Sonja Klemenčič (sonja.klemencic@acs.si), SIAE



15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult
Education

Our contribution to developing the provision of information and guidance in adult education

Throughout its period of operation, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education has provided information and guidance to individuals, professionals and institutions on new

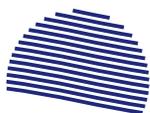
features of education and learning for adults, on new possibilities of learning for various groups of adults, on national and European tenders for adult education and much more. Each year we provide more than 1,500 hours of information and guidance – be it in person, over the telephone, via e-mail or in the Guidance Corner on the SIAE website.

Over the past 15 years we have used a systematic and integrated expert approach to develop and put into practice a network of 14 guidance centres for adult education. The guidance centres have two goals: they provide guidance support free of charge to all adults equally for their education and learning, and they link together organisations from the local environment into the guidance network with the aim of ensuring high-quality, complementary and integrated services and contributing to the development of adult education in their environment.

In recent years SIAE experts have promoted and themselves developed new tools for higher quality guidance work in adult education. We also see our mission for the future in this area. Alongside professional support for the continuous development of guidance centres, we will promote and develop new approaches, tools and other activities that will contribute to more effective and higher quality guidance work in adult education in various fields of operation.

The fundamental guideline is: by providing information and guidance in adult education, increase access for adults to lifelong learning and contribute to greater inclusion and success in the processes of education and learning.

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



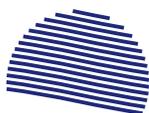
15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult
Education

More visible achievements in the area of literacy

For a number of years the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education has been the leading institution in the area of researching and developing adult literacy. One of our more visible research achievements is without doubt the national research on adult literacy, which the SIAE carried out in 1998 in cooperation with the OECD as a part of international research. The results of this research radically changed public opinion on the basic skills and competences of adults in Slovenia, and promoted lively ensuing research and development work in the field of literacy education – of adults as well as children and young people. The SIAE plays a key role in raising the level of literacy among adults, since we have developed and put into practice a new concept of educa-

tion programmes for target groups of less educated adults. The SIAE also collaborated in creating the proposal of National Strategy for the development of literacy for children, adolescents and adults, which is the first such document in Slovenia for the integrated and lifelong development of literacy. At the SIAE we are developing and implementing innovative programmes for and approaches to the training of teachers and other experts in the area of literacy. We are also preparing and implementing promotional, television or multi-media supported programmes to promote the development of literacy.

Ester Možina MA (ester.mozina@acs.si), SIAE



15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult
Education

Why does the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education focus on the development of different forms of non-formal learning?

Non-formal learning focuses on the individual, it is more adapted to the individual than formal methods and is therefore usually more accessible. Since it includes socialisation, meetings and communication, it is often regarded as less effective, easier and simpler than formal forms of learning. The SIAE's experiences with study circles (in which around 3,000 participants learn each year), centres for organized self-directed learning (6,000 participants a year), the learning exchange (1,200 participants) and with other forms of non-formal learning indicate that free choice and in this way the adoption of one's own responsibility for the fruits of learning are a harder but sought-after route.

The mass and growing response to projects which have been now for 15 years facilitated primarily by the Ministry of Education and Sport, indicate that events and organised education motivate many people who are (predominantly) not interested in learning and in establishing social contacts. This of course contributes also to the more favourable results of indicators comparable on a European scale relating to adult education in Slovenia, since we are ranked in a relatively high place, for instance, in terms of the participation of adults in education.

In programmes of non-formal learning, everything is focused on the learning individual, which is in line with the concept of lifelong learning, and at the same time account is taken of the fundamental message in the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning and the latest European Commission Communication entitled Adult Learning: It's never too late to learn. This last document places non-formal learning among the priority areas of

adult education, so the 16,000 participants of these projects documented thus far represent merely the opening movement in establishing the accessibility of individual education while at the same time placing the individual in his local environment.



Mentors of study circles presented and enhanced the Slovenian experiences of participatory learning in Norway, 30 May – 5 June 2005.

Centres for organized self-directed learning, study and reading circles and the learning exchange enable a balance of interests and knowledge and a relinquishing of prejudices and negative learning experiences through a range of learning possibilities that is not merely supplementary but also alternative. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education promotes and motivates individuals, institutions and local environments towards learning in non-formal forms of education and monitors their response as well as its characteristics and effects. In this way it provides a national database for the state, an insight into the diversity and changeability of learning motives among adults and their educational participation, and at the same time facilitates referential results for Slovenia in international comparisons.

Dr Nevenka Bogataj (nevenka.bogataj@acs.si) and
Jasmina Orešnik (jasmina.oresnik@acs.si), SIAE



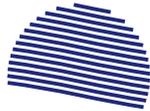
15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult
Education

Investing in education is a major investment with rich returns

The best companies and organisations can be distinguished from each other chiefly by their new and innovative products and services. Yet these cannot be simply achieved overnight. They require knowledge, which can be attained only through an excellent system of education and through constant learning and training. Each individual in an institution must contribute his own share to quality and must pursue the goals of the enterprise to which he belongs. Achieving the best results requires great motivation, professional training and concern for continuous personal development. Successful organisations and institutions are therefore well aware that investing in education for employees is a major investment, which apart from anything else contributes to the individual's growing awareness of his abilities and sense of acquiring added value.

At the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education we are striving to play the part of promoter of success for target organisations and companies - of course through the promotion of new training programmes, by developing new didactic aids and methods for teaching adults, and also by organising education meetings, expert colloquiums, workshops and presentations of scientific achievements. Right from our founding we have been formulating and designing education programmes for various target groups, many of them together with representatives of organisations and companies, and adapted to their needs, since we are convinced that only in this way can we be successful in paving new ways in adult education.

Zdenka Birman Forjanič (zdenka.birman.forjanic@acs.si), SIAE



15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult
Education

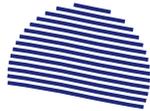
Developing validation of knowledge gained through differing routes, including non-formal

The concept of lifelong learning, which has been gaining currency in the past ten years, places the validation of previously, including non-formally, acquired knowledge among the priority areas of developing adult education, especially from the aspect of the need for higher levels of training among job seekers and exploiting knowledge for greater competitiveness on the labour market in general. From the lifelong aspect there has also been increasing recognition of the equal value of different routes leading to knowledge and sources of learning. This is the message contained in the fundamental European documents and all the national strategies in line with them, including the *Strategy of Lifelong Learning in Slovenia*. This ranks the validation of knowledge among the fundamental strategic cores. Looking back, we can see that right from its founding the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education has made an important contribution to the development of this area: firstly through its efforts for including this in strategic development documents and systemic regulatory instruments, which in the 1990s significantly marked the further development of education in Slovenia, and later through the formulation and implementation of specific development tasks.

Among the more prominent expert achievements in this field I would like to stress the results of the projects *Development and Creation of a Network of Centres for Accreditation of Prior Learning in Slovenia* and *the Development of the Certificate System*. Although the centres started up in autumn 1996 not in the manner they were envisaged, the expert foundations were nevertheless laid and new procedures and tools were developed (for instance the portfolio: a folder of achievements or evidence of achievements, knowledge and skills), and these first underwent expert confirmation and later were built upon through the project Modernising education programmes, development of the certificate system and verifying quality in vocational education for youth and adults, and in regulatory terms through the adoption of the National Vocational Qualifications Act.

Now at the Institute we focus primarily on developing training programmes for the providers of procedures for recognising qualifications, and we see our mission primarily as cooperating in the further expert development and promotion of models and methods for validating various forms of and achievements in learning.

Metka Svetina (metka.svetina@acs.si), SIAE

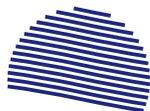


15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult
Education

Challenges of the SIAE in the area of IT support for adult education in Slovenia

With the *Lisbon Strategy* and the *Communication on Adult Learning*, the efforts to establish information technology support for monitoring and evaluating the achievement of political and expert goals in the area of adult education have taken on new weight. Since in adult education this involves a system which is distinctly open to a wider socio-economic environment, it is hard to delineate and precisely define its components (inputs, processes, outputs and impacts). It is therefore consequently a complex process to create a model that should take into account all the necessary data and information, available and new data sources and – in connection with establishing goals – enable us to obtain indicators and benchmarks. Furthermore, in addition to quantity these indicators must take into account the dimensions of quality, which in the area of education is at least equally – if not more – important for overall assessments and decision-making. For the experts at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, all this represents priority tasks for the future, through which we will build upon our achievements thus far in the IT field.

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



15 years of the Slovenian Institute for Adult
Education

The contribution of the SIAE to establishing the culture of lifelong learning in Slovenia and beyond our borders

At the SIAE we began in 1996 through the *Lifelong Learning Week (LLW) project* systematically to develop the promotion of lifelong learning – a field which upon our founding was not explicitly envisaged and whose indispensable role in fulfilling the policy and practice of education and learning has become recognised only in recent years. The purpose of these activities was not just to present or promote events, but in fact more ambitious, since we wish to promote a broadening of awareness about the need for learning in all stages of life and its presence in all life circumstances. We wish to contribute to the broad-

est understanding of lifelong learning, which is not limited simply to occupational education and training, but also recognises the importance of and paths for attaining other values, such as personal growth and high-quality coexistence in multicultural communities. We wish to encourage a desire for knowledge and a positive attitude to learning, and also to change established notions about its accessibility or otherwise. We are also striving to make the voice of learners increasingly audible and influential. A key factor in fulfilling the established goals is the SIAE's partnership with circles at all levels - from the widest political, academic and professional circles to the general public and media.



Knowledge parade in Zvezda Park, Ljubljana, 20 October 2005

Our synergetic operation has now for more than a decade established, enhanced and achieved encouraging results. We are also hoping for this in the future, and in the same way we intend to continue transferring our experience and knowledge to the international sphere. It is there that we are recognised as one of the first, and tirelessly development-oriented members of the international movement to promote adult education and lifelong learning.

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



SIAE EVENTS

Focused on quality in the European Year of
Workers' Mobility

This year's national awards given for quality in mobility projects

The Estates Hall of Ljubljana Castle was the setting on Wednesday 15 November 2006 for the handing out of the national awards for quality in mobility projects, carried out as part of the *Leonardo da Vinci programme*. The Apple for Quality in mobility projects was awarded - in cooperation with the director of CMEPIUS, *Majda Širok MA* - by *Dr Milan Zver*, the Slovenian Minister of Education and Sport. In three categories (Mobility of Pupils, Mobility of Students and Young Workers and Mobility of Mentors) a total of nine prizes were awarded, each category offering one gold, one silver and one bronze 'apple of quality'. In the mobility of pupils category, prizes were received by the Višnja Gora Education Institute (gold), the Celje Catering and Tourism Secondary School (silver) and the Ljubljana Electrotechnical and Computing Secondary School (bronze). In the category mobility of students/young workers, the Škofja Loka Secondary Woodworking School received gold, the Maribor Professional Catering and Tourism College won silver and the University of Maribor won the bronze apple of quality. In the mobility of mentors category, the gold apple was earned by the Ljubljana Institute for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, the silver apple was picked up by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and the bronze by the Oton Župančič Library in Ljubljana.

The awards and projects are harmonised with the fundamental message of the European Year of Workers' Mobility, since people with experience of educational or employment mobility are generally better equipped to handle change. Education or working practices abroad can help to develop new skills and knowledge, enhance the feeling of capability and is a precious added value that contributes to job satisfaction and increases employability and competitiveness on the labour market. In terms of the culture of lifelong learning we are especially pleased with the achievements in the third category, in which mentors and leaders participated in non-formal programmes of adult education. Amongst the mass of excellent projects for mentors, there was a particularly outstanding project entitled *Across the sea to the deaf*, carried out by the Ljubljana Institute for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired. The mobility participants were a deaf teacher of Slovenian sign language at primary and secondary school, a secondary school teacher of Slovenian and social sciences and one of the best Slovenian interpreters. The project, which was carried out in the UK, had the objective of linking together the two institutions from both environments that deal with educating deaf people, comparing the two sign languages, identify-

ing new methods for learning sign languages and more. Throughout the period of the exchange, Slovenian sign language was used, so that deaf participants could participate equally in the project. This project of the Ljubljana Institute for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired was coordinated by *Živa Peljhan*, who steered it to a gold apple of quality.

The silver apple of quality was the this year's windfall for the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, and was won through the *Leonardo project Participative learning in diverse vocational practices*, coordinated by *Dr Nevenka Bogataj*. The aim of the project was to exchange mentors of study circles. The participants, who come from various regions, were selected from among the most ground-breaking and highest quality mentors of study circles in Slovenia. They come from various regions and various professions, since this ensures the broadest possible dissemination of the fruits of international exchange. In Norway (Oslo and Trondheim) they were familiarised with the Scandinavian model of learning in study circles, they exchanged skills of leading guidance learning in individual vocational fields and enhanced their own knowledge. By means of new international experiences, participants improved the quality of their work and increased the connection of work in circles to other forms of learning. International exchange is a logical supplement to the national project, which introduced in an innovative way the form of non-formal learning into the Slovenian environment on the basis of Scandinavian experiences. The decade-long establishing of participative learning in study circles in the widest variety of vocations throughout the country led to unresolved issues and new needs, which demanded responses and solutions – owing to the remoteness of the models – on a 'distance' basis. Practical international experiences, which are specific for individual vocations, could not be obtained by this route, so the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education sought to enable Slovenian mentors of study circles from various institutions to gain experience learning through familiarisation with the Scandinavian model of study circles and organisational motivation approaches for participative learning within individual target groups. The purpose of the project was therefore to enrich experiences and to exchange skills of leading participative learning in individual vocational fields, to perfect methods of determining the quality and effects of participative learning – primarily among younger adults – and to observe the practical implementation of study circles in a rural environment from the point of view of identifying the prospects for new employment.

The hosts gave the following assessments of the study visit:

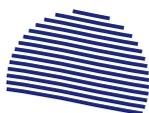
- *»VOX was very proud to host the visit of our Slovenian colleagues. We greatly benefited from a closer contact with the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education and we have continued our cooperation with them until the present day.«* (Graciela Sbertoli, VOX, Norwegian Institute for Adult Learning)
- *»The study visit was well prepared and organized, excellently accomplished and had a well considered aim of learning exchange. All the participants seemed to be enthusiastically involved and focused on two-way communication and reciprocal benefits of the meetings. As a host I was personally (and the rest of the staff you met) enriched*

by the eagerness and engagement of the visitors, the interest in acquiring and sharing of knowledge and the friendship we developed during the stay. Moreover it was a learning experience of the Slovenian culture and adult education efforts.«

They are certain that the mobility programmes are also important for the future: *»Research visits to other countries and international cooperation are high on the contemporary University agenda and mobility programmes will continue to be interesting and valuable.«* (Sigvart Tøsse, Lifelong Learning Research Centre, Norwegian University of Technology and Science, Trondheim, Norway)

We are also delighted with the bronze apple for the project *New approaches in flexible learning for the 3rd millennium*, which was received by the project leader, the Oton Župančič Library (OŽL) in Ljubljana. The project was designed and coordinated by *Emma Perme*, an external development associate of the SIAE, *Jasmina Orešnik* (formerly OŽL, now SIAE) and *Erika Pečnik* (OŽL). This is a project that included 12 guidance and information providers and heads of centres for self-directed learning from 11 education organisations throughout Slovenia. They took part in a professional exchange in the UK (Torquay and Birmingham), where they acquired a great deal of new knowledge, ideas and experience in leading and organising learning centres, they were familiarised with the British approaches and compared working methods. During visits to learning centres operating within eight different organisations, they were acquainted with various forms of centre for (self-directed) adult learning, they exchanged professional experiences in the area of guiding adults in learning, they were familiarised with networks of links between various providers of (self-directed) learning and the content and methods of training for professional workers at centres for self-directed learning. In addition to new knowledge and experiences, they established new contacts for further cooperation and projects.

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



First SIAE awards presented for developing
quality in adult education

Two institutions and three individuals among recipients

In March 2007 the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education presented for the first time awards to individuals and institutions *for exceptional efforts in developing quality in adult education*. Efforts for the flourishing of a culture of quality in adult education is nothing new at the SIAE. We see spreading the culture of quality as developing new

knowledge, and assistance for the providers of adult education in achieving a higher level of quality and in introducing changes that open doors to more demanding standards in this field. We established the foundations in this area through the project *Offering quality education to adults - OQEA*, (<http://poki.acs.si/en/>) with which we introduced into Slovenia self evaluation as a method of assessing the quality of processes and results of education. The introduction of this model was supported through an extensive programme of education and guidance. The fact is, concern for quality must be concerted – it must become part of both the strategy of management and employee efforts. It must be based on a responsibility towards participants in education, to the users of services, financiers, the local environment and the profession.

In order for efforts aimed at raising quality to be systematic and lasting, we had to ensure high-quality guidance for employees at educational institutions (17 trained quality advisers are working on this) and the promotion of quality. This is planned as a system of motivational steps on various levels. On the basic level we have established the awarding of the right to use the green mark of quality (to date this right has been acquired by 39 providers: 9 secondary schools, 4 school centres, 20 adult education centres and 6 private educational institutions). In order to express recognition for those among them that have particularly distinguished themselves through concerted concern for raising quality, we decided to establish a special category of recognition – recognition for individuals and organisations for exceptional efforts in developing quality in adult education. We presented these awards for the first time this year. This recognition can be given to an institution with a clearly defined quality policy. Work to develop quality must be envisaged in the strategic and annual plans of the institution. On this level, quality is assessed through self-evaluation, which involves all employees, while the recipients of the education and partners from the commercial sector and the local environment must also have a say. Recognition for individuals is aimed at those experts who distinguish themselves in participating in the aforementioned processes and invest greatly in their own enhancement in this field.

Committed to quality

The first SIAE awards of recognition for developing quality presented to the educational institutions Doba, Maribor and the Institute for Education and Culture – ZIK Črnomelj, as well as to the individuals Jasna Kržin Stepišnik, Ida Srebotnik and Nada Žagar MA.

Doba, Maribor

Doba was established at the beginning of the nineties in an environment that was hugely taxed by the changes in the economic and political system. It was able to heed the needs of



the local population and to offer educational programmes for unemployed and less educated people. They now provide more complex programmes of professional education on the secondary, tertiary and higher levels. Independent, rapid and high-quality responses to the needs of the environment are its primary orientation. They are pioneers in establishing e-learning. The third key to Doba's quality is concern for adult education and training; adults are provided with learning aids, mentorship, guidance and modern learning approaches.

In 2002 Doba acquired the ISO quality certificate. It cooperated in the OQEA quality project and gained the right to use the green mark of quality. Since last year Doba has also employed an adviser for quality in adult education. Investment in the development of employees, promoting innovation and efforts towards excellence represent the strategic approaches that have made Doba what it is today.

Institute for Education and Culture – ZIK Črnomelj

The activities of the Črnomelj Institute for Education and Culture prove that perseverance and the ability to cooperate open the doors to education and learning in all environments. In the remote and undeveloped region of Bela Krajina, new forms of adult education have been introduced: study circles, education for the unemployed, a centre for self-directed learning, a university for the third age and more. Since 1993, ZIK Črnomelj has been a study centre of the Economics Faculty of the University of Ljubljana, and since last year a remote unit of the Ljubljana Faculty of Education. The institute's range of education courses is truly rich, and its other distinction is investment in the development and quality of education for



vulnerable target groups such as the unemployed, persons with special needs, the elderly and Roma. Here special attention is paid to various aspects of quality. Education is often provided in the field, in Roma settlements, in villages and in family homes.

They themselves say that the monitoring and developing of quality is in fact a key element of the institute's vision, since only high-quality education ensures the applicability of knowledge and the satisfaction of participants.

Jasna Kržin Stepišnik



Jasna Kržin Stepišnik is the principal of the Centre for Adult Education at the Biotechnology Education Centre in Ljubljana. She gained her first experience of system-

atic quality development upon inclusion in the OQEA project. She has assembled around her a group of committed teachers, and with them she has tested out in practice the applicability of the methods of self-evaluation. They soon noticed the first results: there was an improvement in the quality of learning material, and they began to observe the satisfaction of participants in courses. This recipient of recognition has been trained to offer quality guidance and is therefore a person who can turn her attention to all activities to develop quality at the school.

Jasna Kržin Stepišnik also works to enhance quality outside the school. From 2004-2006 she participated in the project of the Consortium of Biotechnology Schools *Biotechnology field, the best learning environment* in the area of developing the quality of cooperation between schools and their local environment. The desire for knowledge led her to the Faculty of Management at the University of Primorska. Since 2006 she has worked in the external evaluation group of the National Committee for the Quality of Higher Education.

Ida Srebotnik



Ida Srebotnik works at the School Centre for Post, Economy and Telecommunications in Ljubljana, where she began as a coordinator in preparing new courses. She provided the initiative in establishing the group for quality in schools, since 2004 she has been chair of the committee for assessing and developing the quality of study at professional colleges, and since 2006 she has also been an adviser for quality in adult education. She has made important contributions towards assessing the quality of teacher and professional worker training, and she has consistently strived to link teachers with experts in commercial companies. Her more recent achievements include most importantly the adoption of a statement on quality in the school council, upon which she succeeded in setting in motion in the collective weighty discussions on the commitment to quality standards.

Ida Srebotnik also strives for greater quality in adult education on the national level, as a member of the Expert Council for Adult Education and a member of the Programme Council for Permanent Professional Teacher Training.

Nada Žagar MA

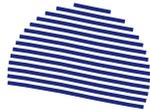


Nada Žagar is director of the Črnomelj Institute for Education and Culture and is one of those leaders in the adult education network in Slovenia who has left a major mark both on the development of her own educational organisation and on the environment in which she works. One of her distinctions is promoting partner cooperation with various organisations in dealing with development issues in the local environment.

In recent years she has directed much of her professional strength towards issues of education for Roma, since she is convinced that a culture of learning is a fundamental condition for improving the quality of their lives. She has headed up several international, national and local projects aimed at developing learning possibilities and identifying the need for education among the Roma of Bela Krajina.

As director she works to ensure that quality and innovation are the values guiding the work of all employees. She provides important professional support for the quality group, which has operated at the institution since 2004, but more important is her cooperation in planning and implementing the development of quality.

Marija Velikonja MA, external associate of SIAE,
Tanja Možina MA (tanja.mozina@acs.si), SIAE,
Sonja Klemenčič (sonja.klemencic@acs.si), SIAE,
edited by: Slavica Borka Kucler (borka.kucler@acs.si), SIAE



Summary of the report

Review of adult education on offer in Slovenia in 2006/2007

Various national and international documents are paying increasing attention to the provision of information and promotion regarding education and lifelong learning available. Today, when lifelong learning represents one of the main sources for enhancing human capital and has a significant influence in terms of economic and social development, the provision of high-quality information on the possibilities of education and learning for all adult groups in all environments has become indispensable.

At the SIAE, this academic year we have again gathered together information on adult education providers and their programmes on offer, and have published them on the website <http://www.acs.si/pregled> (only in Slovenian). The website *Review of adult education and learning* on offer enables the searching of data on providers and courses by various criteria, while additional information is available in the field of adult education (calls for applications, national vocational qualifications, publicly valid courses for adults and so forth).

Interest in free publication of courses on offer in the Review was also very high this year. A total of 90.5% of providers who were featured in last year's review responded again this year. Here we should point out that publication in the Review of courses on offer is not obligatory for providers, so the Review does not cover all adult education on offer in Slovenia. Nevertheless we believe that the majority has been covered. Each year, through various promotional campaigns, we strive to include the widest possible circle of adult education providers, and in this way to come close to the real situation in adult education and learning on offer in Slovenia. Indeed the Review is an important source of information both for professional circles dealing with information and guidance activities in the area of education, employment and regional development, and for the general public seeking education and training for improving their employment prospects on the labour market or for personal and social enhancement.

This year a total of 326 providers presented their courses on offer, and this included 31 new providers. For those providers that had already presented their courses in last year's review, we made it possible to send information via the Internet – providers could check their information from last year and add possible changes and updates for the new academic year. New providers could send information via the Internet, e-mail or using printed questionnaires. As much as 98% of providers sent their information on courses to us via e-forms, while others sent completed questionnaires to us in the mail or by e-mail.

The Review is dominated by private organisations (101), secondary schools and adult units at secondary schools (79) and adult education centres (37), followed by professional colleges (18), public institutes (24) and independent training centres at companies (10) and company training departments (9), while attractive courses are also offered by libraries, societies and associations of societies (8), universities of the third age (7), which function for the most part within adult education centres, museums and galleries (6), general libraries (5) and other providers from twelve Slovenian regions.

This academic year providers intend to run a total of 6,242 programmes of education, training and enhancement covering an extremely wide range of content. The major portion of courses offered are aimed at general, non-formal, adult education (70.5%), and a smaller portion of the programmes is intended for acquiring formal education (16.7%) and for training and enhancement to acquire vocational and professional knowledge, plus skills and training in the work place (12.9%). The programmes of general, non-formal, education are dominated by language (33.4%) and computer courses (14.6%), with these two areas accounting for the majority of courses offered in the entire Review. Within the formal education on offer, programmes of secondary vocational education represent the largest share (6.3%), while within vocational training and advanced training, programmes of vocational and technical training not leading to a publicly recognised qualification, which enable the acquisition of basic and professional knowledge and skills important for pursuing a vocation, account for a significant percentage (7.8%). Here we should point out that distinguishing general, non-formal, education from training for work needs is often very difficult, if not impossible, since general, non-formal, education is closely involved in further vocational education and training. Less than a third of the entire range of courses offered are accounted for by publicly recognised education programmes through which a publicly recognised education can be obtained, plus other courses for adults enabling the acquisition of publicly recognised certificates but not publicly recognised education. The majority of the programmes do not lead to a publicly recognised qualification - the greater part of these programmes are programmes of general, non-formal, education and programmes of training and advanced training for work.

The range of courses on offer for adults is again large this year. We have observed, however, that the possibilities for adult education and learning in the local environment are limited, with the majority of courses on offer being centralised in the larger, more developed locations, where there is a wider variety of providers. In numerous regions around the country, the possibilities for education are meagre; adults do not have such possibilities in their immediate vicinity.

Although the range of adult education available is varied and extends to all areas of human activity, we are finding that specific contents predominate, for which there is usually the greatest demand, while the range of other contents on offer is more modest. We have classified the courses according to the existing classification of educational

contents and the international ISCED classification. Using the existing classification has shown that this year is also dominated by content covering languages (33.4%) and computing (14.6%), followed by content on communication (3.7%), psychology, education and adult education (2.9%), processing and working of metals (2.8%), the areas and catering and tourism, cooking and baking (2.5%) and so forth.

Similar results have been observed in the analysis of the programmes classified according to the ISCED classification. Most prominent here is the area of the humanities and art, which is dominated by foreign-language content (31.7%). A large percentage of the entire range of programmes available is also taken up by the subject area of science, mathematics and computing, which brings together content from computing and applied computing (14.4%). A prominent place is also occupied by content relating to personal development (6.6%), mechanical engineering and metalworking (3.5%), business management and administration (3%), crafts (2.6%) and economics (2.2%).

We will continue to devote considerable attention to monitoring the range of adult education and learning available, and to informing the public about education and learning opportunities, since this is also important in monitoring fulfilment of the objectives that Slovenia set itself in the *Resolution on the Adult Education Master Plan up to 2010*.

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



SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE

Presentation of consultation Slovenian Adult Education Centre Days 2006

On 4 and 5 December the Association of Slovenian Adult Education Centres (ZLUS) held at the Congress Centre of the Hotel Mons in Ljubljana the now traditional - tenth - meeting with the working title of *Strategy of Lifelong Learning and Public Service in the field of Adult Education in Slovenia 2007-2013*. This year, too, the consultation was supported financially by the Ministry of Education and Sport (MES).

All the line ministries and services - the MES, Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MLFSA), the Ministry of Local Self-Government (MLS), the Government Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy and the Mission of the European Commission to the Republic of Slovenia - accepted our invitation and provided the participation of their own experts. We were also joined by colleagues from national institutes, institutions and associations, various expert circles, and representatives of municipal authorities and regional development agencies. The theme of the consultation was interesting and highly topical, as was demonstrated by the participation of 180 experts, practitioners and invited guests.

We designed the programme in such a way as to interweave plenary papers, presentations of good practices and group work, which addressed numerous current professional or systemic topics.

On the first day, five invited guests spoke in the **plenary session**:

- those present were greeted on behalf of the MES by *Dr Alenka Šverc*, state secretary at the ministry; she stressed the importance and necessity of such events, which contribute to promoting lifelong learning and adult education, and encourage links and synergy between all partners who can and should contribute to the successful achievement of the goals and strategies of lifelong learning in the next development perspective;
- speaking on behalf of the MLFSA was the head of the Labour Market and Employment Directorate, *Mr Robert Drobnič*; he presented the advantages and goals of lifelong learning and adult education in the area of the labour market and employment in the new development period 2007-2013;
- the head of the Adult Education Section at the MES, *Mr Elido Bandež*, spoke about key areas and the goals of lifelong learning and adult education in the new development period;

- *Maja Žabjek MA* from the Mission of the European Commission in Slovenia presented the European framework and developmental possibilities, the priority areas and EU targets as well as the prospects for including providers and project partners in securing European funds in the defined fields;
- the head of the Lifelong Learning and Grants Section at the MLFSA, *Ms Elizabeta Skuber*, presented the amendments and supplements to the National Vocational Qualifications Act;
- *Andrej Sotošek MA*, secretary general of the ZLUS, concluded the plenary session with a presentation of the state of affairs and the results of providing a public service on the part of the adult education centres; he proposed measures and activities to maintain and improve the situation and provision of the public service in the area of adult education at all levels.

The programme continued with work in **six different working groups** (*the Annual Programme of Adult Education 2007*, the Issue of drawing ESF funds, Public service in the area of adult education in the local environment, Analysis of the situation in implementing *the Adult Education Act*, Unresolved systemic and professional issues in the area of adult education, Accreditation of prior learning of adults). The topics were aimed at key systemic and professional issues. Assisted by those presenting introductory papers, the coordinators of the working groups exposed subjects, key issues and proposals for debate, and then steered debates towards formulating unified views and proposals for further work.

The group work was enlivened up by a **presentation of three examples of good practices**:

- Public-private partnership in a project to revitalise the area of the old ironworks in Jesenice in the form of a lifelong learning centre and technology park,
- The project of successful and original promotion of Koper guidance centre in the local environment,
- The PISR project - Professional information and guidance for Roma in the municipality of Črnomelj.

On the second day the plenary part of the consultation

- was started by the minister in charge of local self-government and regional policy, *Dr Ivan Žagar*, with a very optimistic prediction of the new financial perspective; he presented encouraging developmental and financial starting points for the future development period. The funds that Slovenia will be able to draw from various European sources in the new development period will be four times greater. The government and the service headed by the minister are aware of all the obstacles, problems and traps that await us in implementing projects and drawing funds. The Office for Local Self-Government and Regional Policy is preparing a catalogue of eligible costs and the necessary measures for standardisation and simplification of all activities of heading and monitoring projects. Minister Žagar is aware of the importance of coop-

erating with provider organisations; he regards adult education centres as important providers of projects and activities of a public service and the public interest of the state in the new development perspective. New legislation in the area of regional development and creation of regions should additionally decentralise the management of the country. Certain developmental competences in the area of lifelong learning and development of human resources will be taken over by the regions. As important provider organisations, adult education centres can help in the preparation and implementation of development projects in the area of lifelong learning and development of human resources in the local and regional environment;

- the deputy director for the Area of Regional Development at the Local Self-Government Office, *Igor Strmšnik MA*, presented the national development programme of Slovenia 2007-2013 from the aspect of regional policy and the involvement of lifelong learning in the area of developing human resources;
- the acting manager of the SIAE, *Dr Slavica Černoša*, spoke about the European Commission guidelines in the area of adult learning in the future, with an emphasis on the Communication of the European Commission for the area of adult learning in the new development perspective. This document requires in all EU Member States the preparation of an appropriate action plan for achieving the development goals in the area of adult learning in the period up to 2013;
- *Dr Zoran Jelenc* concluded with a presentation of the proposed Strategy of Lifelong Learning in Slovenia, which had already been presented in Brussels; it was also deliberated by the advisory council of the Minister of Education and Sport.

This was followed by **three presentations of projects** which are examples of good practices on the regional level:

- The project of the Savinja Statistical Region - Tehnopolis Celje,
- The project Phare 2003 - IT literacy of adults in Pomurje,
- The project of the Dolenjska regional centre for lifelong learning - the service centre for Roma.

In conclusion we offered participants cooperation in three different professional areas: the Systemic position of adult education in the *Strategy of Lifelong Learning in Slovenia*, Quality in the area of adult education - teacher self-evaluation (QUTE project) and Public-private partnership in projects in the area of lifelong learning and adult education.

We will present the proposals and initiatives formulated at the consultation to the relevant institutions and government departments. This will serve us as a basis and guideline for further work.

Andrej Sotošek MA (andrej.sotosek@quest.arnes.si), ZLUS



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

International cooperation in the field of learning festivals

Activities concluded in the IntALWinE project

Within the lifetime of the *IntALWinE*¹ project (2003-2006) we wrote a few times in *Novičke* about meetings held by the working group, study visits and other tangible results of our cooperation. At the end of September 2006, however, with a meeting in Rome activities were concluded, so it is now time to round up the picture of the project and present its results. To this end we invite readers to use this occasion to visit the project website, by going to the site <http://www.ALWinEurope.net>. Here we will just provide some condensed information.

This is the third extensive example of international cooperation by SIAE in the area of festivals of learning², this time as part of the *Grundtvig 4 programme*, meaning that monetary support was ensured particularly for holding working meetings. Nevertheless the partners, as a rule the national coordinators of festivals of learning from 16 European countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Lithuania, Hungary, Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland and the United Kingdom) and the coordinator, the Unesco Institute for Education (now 'for Lifelong Learning' - UIL, Germany) performed considerable work during the meetings.

The aim of the project cooperation was to exchange experience and obtain further incentives for the development of national festivals of learning in three thematic areas:

- the voice of participants in education,
- operational improvements in organising festivals of learning and
- the instrumental importance of festivals of learning: tools for mobilising and advocacy.

The SIAE cooperated most intensively in the first thematic group, whose strategic goal was to present and implement the concept of the 'learners forum'. The representatives of participating countries (in principle the recipients of awards for exceptional achievements in adult education) took part in the International Learners' Forum in the United

¹ International Adult Learners' Week in Europe - IntALWinE

² The other two projects are the Lifelong Learning Week in South East Europe (2000-2003) and the Widening and strengthening of the European dimension of the Lifelong Learning Week movement (2002-2004). More information on the later is available at <http://www.llw5.org/>.

Kingdom in October 2004. There they were familiarised with this form of advocacy, which has already been functioning successfully in England and Scotland, in Catalonia and certain African countries as well as in Canada, and it is also being introduced in Australia and New Zealand. The group met again on a study visit to the Adult Learners' Week in the UK in May 2005, and came to the conclusion that the implementation of forums required the securing of expert, financial and moral support on the national and international level. There was also a similar realisation among participations of the first Slovenian learners' forum, held in September 2005 as part of the tenth anniversary of Lifelong Learning Week (LLW)³.

Within the framework of this thematic group the partners also compiled the international publication *I did it my way: Journeys of Learning in Europe*⁴, which features the life stories of adults from participating countries who through learning have significantly enhanced their quality of life and have had a major influence on their environments. The publication was printed in several languages; it is available in English, French and German at UIL, Hamburg, and in Slovenian from the author of this article.

The results of participation in the second thematic area are presented on the website, in the column Tools and products. This presents completely real examples of good practices (festival events, promotional measures, forms of cooperation with the media and sponsors, and recognition for learners), models of cooperation and methods of evaluating festivals of learning in participating countries.

The third thematic area yielded recommendations for a network of partners aimed at organisers of festivals of learning and politicians on the national, regional and local level. Where the occasion arises we will present this document in greater detail, since we will be able to exploit it to underline the role and importance of the LLW. The recommendations formulated in part by learners representing the International Forum highlight aspects of participants in (adult) education and lifelong learning. In declarative terms⁵ these aspects are a basis for formulating policy and practices, but in real life they are generally not adequately observed.

Alongside the complex and substantively rich website and the aforementioned publication, the IntALWinE also yielded a promotional leaflet, and just recently, the final publication *Beating the Drums for Attention* (also available at UIL, Hamburg). Last but not least, the in-depth personal contacts between experts in this field are invaluable. The project is and has been without doubt an excellent opportunity to promote our festival of learning, to present and recognise our examples of established practices and at the

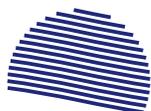
³ See <http://llw.acs.si/learnersforum/>.

⁴ Publishers: NIACE, United Kingdom and Unesco's Institute for Education, Germany (2005)

⁵ This approach is also advocated by the famous Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000).

same time an opportunity for learning from and following the model of others. Let us use this when we plan the Lifelong Learning Week 2007!

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



Inter-generational learning **Twinning the Elderly Disadvantaged and Disabled with the Young by Encouraging Active Reminiscence**

In the last, third, year the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education joined the project *Twinning the Elderly Disadvantaged and Disabled with the Young by Encouraging Active Reminiscence (Teddy Bear)*, which is provided as part of the *Grundtvig 2 programme*.

This inter-generational project attempts to encourage the entire local community to care for the elderly and in this way to improve the general quality of life. The basic idea is to twin marginalised and lonely people over 50 years old from selected rural environments with young people from primary schools. These two target groups then exchange knowledge and experiences with each other. The elderly relate their life stories to the younger people, and these are based on 'key topics' (such as food and drink, celebrations, the Second World War, local crafts, games, children's books, dialects and so forth), in this way expanding knowledge of the history of the local/regional environment and of the various social changes in their community. At the same time their stories serve to encourage young people towards creative artistic expression, be it theatrical, literary or visual. The children, meanwhile, offer the elderly help in familiarising with and using computer technology (Internet, e-mail and games).

The anticipated effects of the project will be noticeable on several levels: among the participants, in participating organisations and in local communities. Elderly participants will be more motivated, they will improve their self-image and self-confidence and will become familiar with the basics of computer use, while the younger participants will have a better understanding of the history and social changes in their local environment and will express themselves creatively. Through a better understanding of cultural diversity in society and the importance of inter-generational learning in local communities, we aim to contribute to greater respect between generations and in this way to increase social cohesion and reduce the isolation of the elderly. International visits and presentations of learning groups will contribute to better cultural awareness and greater knowledge of European cultures and languages.

Alongside the SIAE, there are partners in the project from Finland, Italy and the United Kingdom. The British are represented by the County of Herefordshire District Council, which is also the project coordinator. The organisation cooperates closely with the Women's Royal Voluntary Service, which has a network of day centres where elderly participants come together. The organisation has a wealth of experience in inter-generational and family learning. It regards this project as an expansion and enriching of its own curriculum.

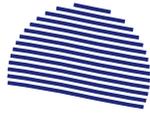
The Itaca Cooperative of Italy operates in the fields of social, health and educational work. It provides care for the elderly, young people, individuals with special needs and psychiatric patients; it also offers them living space and help with household chores. It organises education for young people and those with special needs. It gets involved in projects to limit social exclusion, and promotes those that support the inclusion of elderly people who suffer from senility, dementia or Alzheimer's disease.

Sastamala Community College in Finland is an adult education centre that offers life-long learning to individuals who live in sparsely populated environments. Participants are aged between 4 and 90 years (around 45% of them are over 50). They offer various beginner's courses, distance learning on the university level and various forms of extracurricular education for children between 4 and 15 years old in the fields of music and art, dance, drama and creative writing.

These experienced partners are without doubt a good reference for the quality execution of the project in Slovenia, where inter-generational learning is rather the exception than the rule. *Teddy Bear* is a pilot project and has been set up quite loosely, so as not to interfere with the interests of the participants. Participants can decide independently about the subjects for learning, relative to their needs and capacities. The SIAE intends to establish learning groups with young adults involved in the *Project Learning for Young Adults project - PLYA*. Here there is also a need to involve professional organisations and all those who in one way or another deal with the aforementioned target groups, such as: pensioner centres, social work centres, the Red Cross and Caritas.

Since the project has tight financial limitations, some sober consideration will be needed about how the project can be approached and how we can achieve as much as possible of the high goals that have been set. In this light things are looking better for the future. Indeed the partners have already started preparing a new project, a continuation which we intend to announce in the coming period.

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



Intercultural learning for awareness and
preservation of cultural heritage

Participation at the international symposium *Cultural Corridors in SE Europe in Sofia*

During the days from 8 to 11 February 2007 Sofia presented a sullen face: there was a drizzle from the clouds, and the streets had been taken over by striking taxi drivers, but out on the edge of that metropolis we were taken without any hitches to the conference and hotel section of the government residence of Bojana, nestling in the shelter of a hill dominated by a chapel that stands as a jewel of medieval iconography, and recently renovated with Unesco funds.

This setting provided the meeting place for participants of the international symposium *Cultural Corridors in SE Europe - A Capacity Building Challenge* from 14 countries and the European Union¹. The organiser of the symposium was the Bulgarian Heritage National Association (BHNA) in cooperation with the Unesco European Centre for Higher Education (Unesco-CEPES) and the Council of Europe.

If we realise that in recent times under the aegis of Unesco more than three hundred monuments have been (or are still being) renovated throughout Bulgaria, we can more easily understand why the theme of the international symposium was actually establishing cultural corridors in SE Europe. Special emphasis was placed on learning for the preservation and marketing of cultural heritage on the one hand, and the familiarisation of Europe with the cultural treasures of Bulgaria and stimulating international circles for common projects and the transfer of good practices to Bulgaria on the other hand.

In the plenary session, where the introductory address was given by the actual highest figures in the state in the form of the president of Bulgaria, the foreign minister and the minister of culture, there was a presentation of the concept of cultural corridors, the purpose of which is dual:

- educating the Bulgarian population for planning and implementing the policy of cultural tourism, which will enable not just the conservation but also the international establishment and marketing of Bulgaria's rich cultural heritage,

¹ In addition to the 19 participants from abroad, the symposium was attended by more than a hundred Bulgarian experts from various fields: politics, research, culture, education, commerce, tourism, sustainable development and the renovation and conservation of cultural heritage.

- familiarising the people of Europe with the cultural treasures of Bulgaria, with the possibilities for investing in Bulgaria's tourism services, and also with the opportunities for exporting knowledge and – consequently – for overcoming cultural differences and developmental lags.

All this should stimulate the creation of new jobs in tourism and culture, while greater employment and tourist inflows should contribute to the overall – and environmentally friendly – development of this new Member State of the European Union.

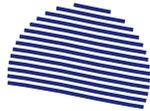
The meeting continued in two working groups:

- one was devoted to cultural tourism and cultural products as tools for establishing cultural corridors, which represent factors of sustainable development in local environments,
- the other, in which I participated, was devoted – in the light of the European document on lifelong learning and the principle education for all – to cultural heritage, cultural tourism and the development of human resources.

Especially welcome were the European examples of 'good practices' and the presentations of experiences in the area of education and training. From Slovenian practices of lifelong learning I contributed a presentation of the youth education programme at the Tourist Association of Slovenia and of study circles, and especially their role in raising the awareness of local environments for preserving cultural heritage.

I am certain that the Bulgarians will succeed in presenting and marketing their cultural treasures, since I admired their will to get established, which at times bordered on the Quixotic (if I can just recall the contribution from the distinguished Bulgarian historian, who demonstrated the presence of the Vikings on Bulgarian soil and of course offered for thought the conclusion that his homeland had long been attractive to enterprising Europeans!). One may only hope that they will not attempt to get established using Euro-American models, and that rationalist Europe will also open up to the special features of Slavonic cultures, especially where this involves the Orthodox environment. Here I am struck by two burning questions: how is it possible – despite the developmental lag – to get established in Europe and at the same time to preserve one's own identity, and how should the creation of cultural corridors be tackled? The first question exceeds the bounds of this write-up, but a possible answer to the second question does arise: we can set up cultural corridors at any time right where we live – in our 'own back yard'! If we can accept difference in everyday life and learn to understand different cultures by means of recognising their cultural history, language, scientific and other achievements, we will also be open to international and cross-border cooperation. International projects, educational, tourist, economic and other forms of mobility will then be simply an affirmation of living ties which will no longer depend on politically planned 'corridors'.

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



The European Commission's Communication
Adult learning: It is never too late to learn

Regional consultation in Brdo – a step towards the EU Action Plan for Adult Learning

From February up to the beginning of April a public debate was conducted in the Member States of the EU on the messages in the European Commission's Communication *Adult Learning: It is never too late to learn*, with the debate for northern European countries being held in Finland, for central Europe in Germany, for eastern Europe in Slovenia and for southern Europe in Portugal. In this way the Ministry of Education and Sport (MES) in cooperation with the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education hosted around 30 participants at Brdo pri Kranju in Slovenia on 26 and 27 March. In addition to the representatives of the Commission, *Marijke Dashorst* and *Monika Kepe*, and the representative of the external provider - GHK Consulting, *Helen Keough*, the regional consultation was attended by representatives from Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovenia. On the recommendation of the Commission, the three-member delegations comprised representatives of the department responsible for adult education, social partners and non-governmental organisations; they were appointed by the ministries competent for adult education.

After an encouraging welcome address from the director general of the Secondary and Higher Education and Adult Education Directorate at the MES, *Janez Mežan*, the first day of the consultation was devoted to a lively debate in the plenary session and working groups on five key messages of the Communication:

- lifting barriers to participation in adult learning,
- ensuring quality in adult learning,
- recognising and validating learning achievements,
- investing in the ageing population and migrants,
- indicators and target values in adult learning.

Attention was also devoted to providing information and guidance to adults – a topic to which in public debates before this, key importance had been ascribed. Participants assessed the initial text of the Communication, enhanced with the results of previous debates, from the aspect of what the European Commission could do in this area, or at least what it could support, to make adult learning on the national and local level perform its important mission in the most optimal way possible. The delegations highlighted on the one hand their achievements, and on the other hand areas in which they would like to hear about the experiences of others. The diversity of views – a consequence of

cultural, social and economic differences among the countries represented and the differing professional backgrounds of the members of individual delegations – enabled us to spotlight key messages from a range of viewpoints, which enriched not just the wording of the Action Plan but also the understanding of each participant.

The second day of the consultation was intended for the presentation of examples of good practices in the host country. Participants were impressed with the *Adult Education Master Plan* (presented by *Elido Bandelj*, head of the adult education section at the MES), the role and achievements of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education as the umbrella institution for developing adult education (*Dr Slavica Černoša*, acting manager of the SIAE), Project Learning for Young Adults (*Natalija Žalec*, SIAE) the role of study circles in trade unions (*Metka Roksanđič*, Federation of Free Unions of Slovenia), and the Third Age University (*Dr Dušana Findeisen*, Third Age University of Slovenia). The impressions of the participants were perhaps summed up best by the enthusiasm of *Helen Keough* over the professional and personal dedication which emanated from all the presentations, and over the commitment to developing adult learning at all levels. Something she felt worth imitating was the umbrella role of the SIAE, which with the stable support of the state is involved in all phases of research and development work – from researching needs, via the creation of models and their practical implementation and on to evaluation of the effects and the repeating of the cycle on a higher level. She would like to see something similar in her own country, Ireland, where these efforts seem to be fragmented and lack synergy. From the aspect of education policy, there was of course no lack of enthusiasm expressed regarding the *Adult Education Master Plan*. The representative of the Commission, *Marijke Dashorst*, in particular recognised this as an excellent example of professionally supported regulation of all the dimensions of adult education, which it would make sense to imitate in other EU Member States.

The regional consultation in Brdo was undoubtedly a success, and this was also discussed at the meeting of the expert group a day later in Brussels. A few days later the supplemented wording was deliberated in Portugal, and the framework of events associated with the drafting of the *Action Plan* also includes the informal meeting of education ministers held in March in Heidelberg, and the meeting of director generals for vocational education and training, which will be in May in Hamburg. Following the final meeting in June of the expert group, the European Commission services will also debate the proposed wording of the Action Plan, and a final version can be expected towards the end of the year. Those in the Commission have already expressed the desire for the *Action Plan* to be officially launched during the Slovenian Presidency, at the joint expert/political event held in Slovenia.

For all those of us who work in the area of adult education, both the *Communication* and the resulting *Action Plan* signify a recognition and at the same time an opportunity – **recognition** for all our efforts to date aimed at making adult education/learning an

important professional and political topic, and at its practices being recognised as an indispensable driving force of the modern knowledge-based society, and an **opportunity** because in this way as part of the *Strategy of Lifelong Learning* it has emerged as an equal side by side with school education of children and young people, vocational education and training and higher education¹. This idea should of course be in our thoughts in creating and implementing the national action plan for lifelong learning in Slovenia, and it would not be out of place to formulate on the basis of the *EU Action Plan for Adult Learning* a Slovenian version even more tailored to our circumstances and challenges.

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

¹ See the study by the European Adult Education Association (EAEA) *Adult learning trends and issues in Europe* (<http://www.eaea.org/doc/eaea/AET1studyfinal.doc>), which established the expert foundations for the Communique.

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



Andragoški center Republike Slovenije
Slovenian Institute for Adult Education