

# novičke

## Winter 2008

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The first in the new series of the Slovenian Third Age University's public conferences \* Strategic tasks in the area of adult education

European network for family learning \* Meeting of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks held in Slovenia \* First study visit of guidance practitioners as part of the *Academia project* \* New approaches in adult education guidance in England \* Study visit by Estonian coordinators of the *Adult Learners Week* \* *FACE IT!* project concluded \* Presentation of sub-project *Adult participation in the system of formal education*

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## PROGRAMME BASIS OF NOVIČKE

Novičke (The News) is an information bulletin with wish to provide individuals and institutions abroad with latest information on adult education and learning in Slovenia. We publish:

- descriptions and presentations of events and activities in adult education;
- reports on development, research and other programmes and projects; information on organisations, their needs;
- plans and activities;
- information on policies and strategies of adult education;
- latest news concerning the administration and legislation of AE;
- data on education programmes;
- opinions, standpoints and suggestions;
- announcements of forthcoming events, workshops, publications, seminars and conferences;
- presentations of new books, articles, learning aids and other novelties on the book market etc.

Novičke will provide brief, concise, objective and unbiased information.

Novičke will be published two times a year in English language and six times a year in Slovenian 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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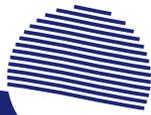
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## ***CHRISTMAS GREETINGS***

Dear readers of *Novičke*,  
friends of the learning culture!

The year 2008 is slowly gliding away and we are all wondering what the coming one is going to bring us. It will doubtless be, in many respects, an exceptionally important milestone. Ahead of us are new challenges that will continue to make life attractive and will generate new, as yet unrealised ideas, that will enrich us.

We wish you many sunny and serene days in 2009, an abundance of small pleasures and pleasant little attentions.

Happy and successful New Year!

Andrej Šotošek, MSc,  
acting director of the SIAE and colleagues

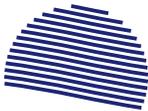


## SIAE EVENTS

### **Andrej Sotošek assumes leadership of SIAE**

In its session of 17 April the Slovenian Government adopted a decision agreeing to the appointment of *Andrej Sotošek, MSc*, as acting director of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education. His term in office at the SIAE began on 15 May this year, when he succeeded *Dr Slavica Černoša*.

In 2000 *Andrej Sotošek* successfully defended his master's thesis entitled *Recruiting adult educators in adult education organisations*. He has worked continuously in the field of adult education. His first employment was at the Catering and Tourism Secondary School and then at the Historical Archives in Celje, at UPI – the Žalec Adult Education Centre – he worked as a member of the professional staff, then later he headed the institution for 12 years. He continued his career as a programme manager for human resources development at the Regional Development Agency in Celje. In 2001 he became secretary-general of the Association of Adult Education Centres of Slovenia. For the time of virtually every mandate of the SIAE Council in the past three years he was its chairman.



### **New family literacy programme for parents of preschoolers**

This year the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education designed a new programme to develop literacy in the family, entitled *Read to know and read for fun* (Slovenian acronym is *BZZ*, also the sound of a flying bee) and thereby rounded up its work on developing programmes to develop family literacy for adults. *BZZ* is a training programme for the parents of preschool children who are motivated to develop emerging literacy in their children. In designing the programme we were led by the desire to formulate an education programme in which parents would cooperate with their children, especially in those families where the parents have not had adequate incentive to develop their own literacy.

It is well known that encouraging the development of early literacy has a favourable influence on children's further development and academic success. The family can have a strong influence on the development of children's literacy through rich mutual cooperation, the arrangement of the physical environment so that it contains a wealth of written material (picture books, posters etc.) and the right kind of emotional climate, in which one can sense an inclination towards reading and writing. Mutually independent research on the characteristics of good young readers in various countries, who have learned to read before entering school, has shown certain common features, which indicate what gradually helps to »turn children into good readers«: all of them had considerable contact with the written or printed word, all frequently heard the complex use of language (written and spoken), they learned early on that there is a link between written and spoken words, they often saw their parents reading various forms of literature (magazines, literature, newspapers), adults read a lot to them, their parents borrowed books for themselves and their children, they frequently visited the library with their children, at home there were plenty of books and printed material available, and reading and writing were valued in the family as important activities.

The BZZ programme is aimed at parents and grandparents (if they are motivated to be involved) who for various reasons have not had proper opportunities for the development of their own literacy, and also at those who are motivated to develop the nascent literacy in their children, but are insufficiently skilled to succeed in this. The programme is aimed at adults, but actively includes children, and is free of charge to participants.

The *Special Part* of the programme states that it includes the parents of preschool children, irrespective of whether the children are attending kindergarten. The programme is conducted by two educators and a librarian from the regional general or school library. It involves team work, with the adviser/coordinator playing the part of team leader. In addition to educators, the programme is provided by other professionals from kindergarten or school, if they have successfully completed the training course. Each group should involve 8 to 12 parents and their children. The idea is for parents to be part of the training at a lecture and workshop, while children spend this part of the programme with one of the team workers (playing, doing creative work, reading). The library visit, closing event, visit to a cultural institution and creative workshop are intended for parents and children to attend together.

The programme is envisaged as covering 20 to 24 hours, and is conducted in a framework lasting two lesson hours every fortnight. Two meetings are planned to be held in the library. The programme should be provided by kindergartens throughout Slovenia, and should always include a visit to a general library. The programme sets out specifically that kindergartens can also link up with a school library or mobile library, if there is no general library in the vicinity. In this case access must be ensured for families with preschool children.

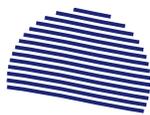
The fundamental aim of the BZZ programme is to facilitate the gradual development of family literacy and consequently an improvement in literacy in all family members. The programme covers the development of literacy, from the first steps to the more concerted mastering of individual stages of emerging literacy. The aims as they are defined in the programme: parents acquire fundamental knowledge and skills to develop family literacy, whereby they develop their own literacy, acquire basic knowledge and skills to encourage their children's emerging literacy, recognise appropriate forms of encouragement for emerging literacy, learn about taking an active role in this, learn about various forms of spending active leisure time with children that are conducive to the children's emerging literacy, learn about how reading books is enjoyable and fun, and transfer this knowledge to their children, recognise that reading is a source of knowledge and an asset, and also transfer this knowledge to their children, and get to know their general library and appropriate children's literature better.

In terms of content the BZZ sets out that parents in the programme should come to recognise the importance of family literacy, how to read with children, what high-quality children's literature (and other media) is like, and they should learn about didactic games to promote reading skills. They should visit the library together with their children, and should learn about various activities that enable the encouragement of the child's emerging literacy and motivation to read. The content sections of the programme, which are at the same time the working titles for the individual meetings, are as follows: *Importance of family literacy*, *How to read to children*, *Children's books*, *Books and other media*, *Writing around us* – raising awareness of the importance of literacy, *Didactic games for reading skills*, *Literacy around the family table* – encouragement in the home environment, *Joint visits to libraries*, *Joint workshop for making puppets from a selected book*, *Joint visit to a cultural institution in the home area*, *Closing event* (joint dramatisation of selected book using puppets made in workshop).

For work with parents and children, programme providers can also make use of the *BZZ Manual*, which contains basic theories and in-depth expert explanations of individual topics. In 14 subject areas various experts present the main theoretical and professional findings in various fields (motivation to read in the home environment, how to read with children, story-telling, family visits to the library, the diversity of children's literature, what we should read with children, the importance of illustration, children and the media, creativity through books – playing with puppets, didactic games to encourage nascent literacy and so forth). Among current topics, the manual contains material on how to introduce children to the world of computer use and the internet, the criteria for high-quality broadcasts for children and an explanation of how children watch television and more. The manual presents specifically all the authors of contributions, which enables users to take a closer look at their references and experience. A particular place is given to the extensive selection of literature, which future providers can use for in-depth study purposes.

The programme of family literacy for the parents of preschool children is a new development in Slovenia. Together with the Ministry of Education and Sport and local communities, it will be necessary to ensure financial sources for its implementation and in this way open up learning opportunities for educationally deprived families. The financial sources for providing the programme in 2008 have not yet been provided and the programme has not been implemented. We stand behind the thoughts of *Marija Grginič*, the author of the recent Slovenian monograph, *Family literacy: »We believe that family literacy has such an important role in children's development of literacy – according to the findings of numerous research studies, it has a significant influence on the development of linguistic capacity, especially on learning to read – that we can in no way leave it to chance, and a successful programme of developing nascent literacy should have a broader, national importance in Slovenia.«*

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## **Formal education open for non-formal education programme to develop basic skills in the workplace**

The Expert Council for General Education confirmed the equivalence of standards of knowledge in the programme to develop basic skills in the workplace to standards of knowledge in primary education programmes for adults, lower and secondary vocational education for Slovenian, mathematics, physics, biology, chemistry and natural science. In this way the two fundamental principles of lifelong learning (LLL) strategy – the principle of equal treatment of the two subsystems, young people and adults, and the principle of validation of knowledge obtained in non-formal education – have acquired for the first time an admission ticket to be placed and functioning in the system of education for acquiring recognised education.

The programme to develop basic skills at the workplace was designed by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) in 2005. It comprises 300 hours and covers societal, entrepreneurial and personal needs for education, and increases access to education for deprived employee groups. It is aimed at employees who have generally completed at most ten years of formal education, and who are working at simple mostly manual jobs.

The aims of the programme are set out for eight areas: Slovenian (1) and a foreign language (2), math (3), natural sciences (4), information and communication technology – ICT (5), social skills (6), active citizenship (7) and learning to learn (8).

The process of placing the non-formal programme in the education system for acquiring recognised qualifications can be resumed into two key phases.

In the first phase the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education performed research, drew up guidelines for designing the new programme in cooperation with unions and employers, developed the programme and enabled (the SIAE in professional terms, the Ministry of Education and Sport in financial terms) its pilot implementation in seven companies in 2007, proposed the Expert Council for General Education to adopt a decision on equivalency of standards and designed the *Strategic guidelines for the development of employee literacy* (hereinafter: the *guidelines*).

In the second phase the focus of SIAE activities was (and will continue to be) on implementation of systemic novelty and on the adoption of the *guidelines* in the Economic and Social Council and the Government, as well as on enacting the *guidelines* in politics, research and in practice.

## **Research**

The research project *The workplace as a factor in developing basic skills*, which was supported financially by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, drew attention to procedures in managing a new workplace, which covers both the technical, 'hard' elements and the social, 'soft' elements of developing human resources. A new workplace requires the transfer of knowledge, information and responsibility downwards to lower categories of employee. These employees are increasingly assuming responsibility for rational and complete tasks, they understand them, try to improve them and they also assume the role of an intermediary between technical information and highly perfected technology. Employers no longer need workers to perform simple jobs under instruction. Workers need to understand the work they are doing and the tools they use. They are expected to be capable of analysing problems and communicating them to others. In this context, mastering and developing basic skills are in the interest of workers and employers.

The research proposed two things – the need to develop an adequate range of education to offer educationally deprived employee groups and adopt and implement strategies for raising the level of basic employee capacities.

## **Determining and confirming equality equivalence of standards**

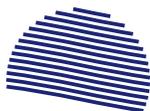
The procedure of adopting the decision of equivalence of the standards was relatively long and it lasted from 2006 to April 2008 despite the fact that there is legal basis for such solutions in Slovenian legislation. The SIAE supported its proposal in five points:

- through the importance and justification of the education programme to develop workplace basic skills for the national level, companies and employees;
- by placing the programme in other parts of the system of education and training (opening up the formal education system to acquire qualifications, verification and assessment, qualifications of teachers);
- through the multifaceted importance and effects of recognising equality (increasing access to education to raise the education level of employees, linking up formal and non-formal education, developing the basic capacities of educationally deprived groups of employees, eliminating blank spots in the education on offer);
- by comparing standards of the programme to develop employee basic skills with standards in the programmes of primary education for adults (Slovenian, mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, natural sciences, technical and technological studies), with key competences in catalogues of knowledge in NPI and SPI programmes (being understood in Slovenian, mathematics and natural science);
- by anticipating the effects of recognising the equality of standards, and these are:
  - increased access to education in order to raise the qualification level of employee groups, who owing to their poorer education and qualifications are generally not included in education, and if they are, such education does not develop their general level of education, and is directed primarily at training for specific work,
  - an entirely new approach of linking formal and non-formal education, which is set as a priority by EU documents synthesised in the material *Education and Training 2010* (EU 2003),
  - standards in the programme cover general education subjects, which are included in key abilities that young people should acquire by the end of their compulsory schooling, and educationally deprived adult groups in the system of adult education (European Council and Commission, 2006),
  - in non-formal education programmes and training programmes for employees (as well as the unemployed) these areas are generally not covered,
  - the proposed standards are transferable in the world of work and thereby increase the mobility of employees in the labour market; this, coupled with the opening up of access to education in programmes for the acquisition of vocational education, also increases the motivation of this employee group towards lifelong learning.

We drew special attention to the role of the programme to develop workplace basic skills in raising awareness among employers and increasing their social responsibility.

We now face the task of establishing a systemic novelty – this is the recognition of equality of standards in practice for participants who successfully complete the adult workplace basic skills programme.

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## **Four new training modules developed to support the introduction of new Instructions on adapting part-time formal vocational and technical upper secondary education**

The extensive overhaul in the area of vocational and technical upper secondary education is also bringing new developments to the field of adult education. The beginning of this year saw the entry into force of the *Instructions on adapting part-time vocational and technical upper secondary education*<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter: *Instructions*), which regulate the adaptation of education and introduce numerous new features in part-time vocational and technical upper secondary education.

Among the most important new features brought by the *Instructions* is a differentiation in the procedures of planning and implementing adaptations, where the provider opts for an **individual** or **group organisational model**. In individual organisational models, which allow the individual to educate himself, while the provider offers learning assistance and the possibility of assessment procedures of learning outcomes, the major emphasis is on continuous monitoring and assistance for the individual, who is learning mainly on his own. In group organisational models, which are based on the formation of the learning group with an envisaged framework common method of progress and duration of education, the provider formulates a curriculum implementation plan of education for the group, which takes into account what group this involves, what the needs of the individuals within it are and what these individuals are like. The preparation of a personal learning plan also acquires a broader role - in part-time education a personal learning plan is prepared for each enrolled participant at the beginning of the education, and this serves to plan and then monitor the individual's progress.

Another important new feature is that prior to advertising the education, the provider of part-time education plans the envisaged adaptations on the basis of expectations about what kind of participants will enrol in the programme, and after enrolment on the basis of analysing the interviews of the enrolled adults the provider determines the final adaptations (confirms the planned adaptations or modifies them depending on the characteristics of the individuals). The introductory conversations thus represent a starting point for determining these adaptations.

The *Instructions* also set out the monitoring and modifying of the curriculum imple-

<sup>1</sup> Official Gazette 8/2008, of 25 January 2008

mentation plan and personal learning plans during the school year<sup>2</sup>. Each provider must identify at least one professional who will monitor implementation of the adopted curriculum implementation plan for the learning group and personal learning plans, and at least once a year this person will hold interviews with teachers and obtain the opinions of those participating in the programme. Where it appears that participants are having difficulty fulfilling the plan, the expert will devise relevant modifications to the curriculum implementation plan and personal learning plans through measures appropriate for adult education.

For this reason the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, to support the introduction of the new *Instructions*, has developed four training modules with which it seeks to help providers of part-time vocational and technical upper secondary education to introduce the new features and changes in part-time education.

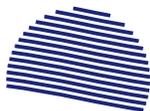
The introductory module *Planning, organising and monitoring of part-time formal vocational and technical upper secondary education* is a transparent module and addresses all the adaptations in part-time education. It is intended for those who will participate or make decisions in the processes of planning and implementing part-time education. The module *Validation and accreditation of non-formal learning in part-time formal vocational and technical upper secondary education* defines the concept, process and principles of evaluating and recognising the individual's previously acquired knowledge, skills and competence. Validation and accreditation of non-formal learning represents the first phase of making adaptations in education. The module *Curriculum implementation plan for the learning group in part-time formal vocational and technical upper secondary education* represents the basis of standards and the entire process of planning envisaged adaptations for the learning group, the process of determining adaptations (interviews, analysis of the learning group) and the method of monitoring the appropriateness of adaptations in the learning group. The module *Personal learning plan in part-time formal vocational and technical upper secondary education* sets out the procedures for formulating and monitoring personal learning plans. It addresses the concept of the personal learning plan and its role in part-time formal vocational and technical upper secondary education, and the placement of this in the professional work of the school and the tasks of all employees in the educational organisation. The content of this module covers both the role and formulation of the personal learning plan in group organisation models and also in individual organisation models.

In this way we carried out eight editions for two pilot groups: five adult education centres and twenty secondary schools, which are providing part-time formal vocational and technical upper secondary education. Based on feedback we gained confirmation that the training contained an appropriate combination of theoretical and practical work and that through various methods of work we presented the new content in

<sup>2</sup> Articles 14 and 18.

concrete cases. Praise was given for the high-quality and useful material, whereas the aides-memoire and instruments will be of help in further work.

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## National opening of LLW 2008 in Maribor

On Friday, May 16th 2008, Andragoški zavod Maribor - Ljudska univerza, Maribor's adult education centre, hosted the formal national opening of the Lifelong Learning Week 2008. Friends of lifelong learning from all across Slovenia gathered together in a pleasant setting of the Knights' Hall in Maribor's castle. After opening recital of Slovenia's national anthem *Zdravljica* in several languages (Slovenian, English, Chinese and Roma), we were addressed by *Rok Peče*, representative of the City of Maribor, *Franc Hočevar*, representative of the Office of the President of Slovenia, and *Andrej Sotošek MSc*, acting director of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE). The formal speeches were then followed by a high-energy performance from members of the gypsy music group Halgato Band.

The main section of the opening this year comprised the screening of the video film *Richer in Diversity*. The life stories of immigrants, Roma from Bela Krajina and Prekmurje and representatives of cross-border cooperation inspired us and motivated us towards further learning, and at the same time encouraged each one of us there to keep active throughout our lives. The video screening was enhanced by an intervening cultural programme provided by young performers from the Maribor First High School and Halgato Band, which was accompanied by the singer *Wei Wei Zhang* in a wonderful rendition of the folk piece *Kje so tiste stezice* (*Where are those trails*) in Chinese.

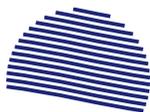
After viewing the video, those present were also addressed by the director of the Maribor's adult education centre, *Melita Cimerman*. She invited visitors to take part in the events that would unfold during the Week.

In the closing part of the event we listened in fascination to a recital of the Roma fairy tale about a violin, which was spiced up with some gripping incidental music from Halgato Band. This was followed by a relaxed social gathering in the castle arcades, with snacks and a glass of sparkling wine.

The positive assessments and words of praise that reached us in the days following the opening convinced us that our effort had been worthwhile. This was also confirmed

by our own feelings, for the energy that infused us on that day glowed in us for a long time after the last notes of the gypsy melodies, imprinting in our hearts and spirits the experience of an unforgettable event.

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Andragoški zavod Maribor - Ljudska univerza



## **Web review of adult education and learning opportunities published**

In the 2008/2009 academic year, schools, adult education centres, universities of the third age, libraries, museums, galleries, private and other institutions are offering diverse educational resources of formal and non-formal education to adults. A wealth of information on providers of adult education and education programmes has been gathered together and presented in an updated and upgraded online *Review of adult education and learning on offer in Slovenia for the academic year 2008/2009* (Review: <http://pregled.acs.si> – only in Slovenian).

In this *Review* you can find:

- Information on more than a hundred adult education providers,
- Everything about formal education programmes for acquiring general, professional or vocational education on the primary, secondary, higher and university levels, training up for professional work or vocations and numerous opportunities for non-formal general education for one's own private or personal development,
- Other valuable information on adult education (application processes, publicly valid education courses for adults, national vocational qualifications and so forth).

One new feature in the upgraded web *Review* is the method of searching for basic information on the education and course provider, and this should ease the search for the desired information.

Information on education and course providers can be searched in a simple or advanced way. The simple (quick) search allows you to search for a provider or education programme by title, while the advanced method enables you to search for the desired provider or programme by several criteria at the same time, with specific searches for provider by title, registered office or region, and for education programme by pro-

gramme title, title of vocational or professional education, place where it is provided, region, subject area, target groups and date of programme provision. The search for programmes can be limited to just publicly valid programmes or programmes for acquiring formal education.

In addition to information about providers and their courses, the *Review* also brings together other useful information on adult education, which additionally highlights the possibilities and opportunities for adult education in Slovenia. It also brings together numerous web addresses and databases that offer additional information for adults seeking knowledge. The new website also enables communication with the general and professional public via the open e-forum *Contact us*.

The adult education and learning on offer is diverse and rich, so we are certain that the information assembled here in one place will bring many people closer to educational opportunities and ease their decision-making in selecting the most suitable education and course provider.

Erika Brenk ([erika.brenk@acs.si](mailto:erika.brenk@acs.si)), SIAE



## SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE

### **The first in the new series of the Slovenian Third Age University's public conferences**

On May the 13<sup>th</sup>, the Slovenian Third Age University initiated a series of public conferences devoted to various issues and education in later life. The conferences are meant to disseminate the knowledge that has accumulated at this University as a result of its long lasting research and development activities.

The first conference was entitled *Between work, education and retirement; European strategies to increase the employability of older people*. Namely, the Slovenian Third Age University has been focusing on the demographic changes and the need to prepare for them, as well as the role of education in later life. Nevertheless, like the climate change demographic change had been attracting little attention, before suddenly they were there and the awareness about them got generalised.

That the ratio between young and older workers has been changing and that adequate educational programmes are needed is what the University has been pointing at for more than 15 years now. Now, the questions that are being raised are: Are we familiar, with common characteristics of young, middle-aged and older workers and are we ready to use them? Are we ready to introduce age management programs and related educational programmes to make adults sensitive to the issue of age at work? How much do we know about work attractiveness? How familiar are we with the imbalances between work and family life and with how to alleviate them? Do we know how to make workplaces and psychological conditions at work attractive to older workers; how to take care of formal and non-formal relationships at work, of in-service education where every day the culture of an individual rubs up against the collective culture testing, each single day the validity of the individual contribution to the collective: values, beliefs, knowledge and so forth? It has been found that older people are prepared to work longer, especially if they enjoy their workplace. And by no means better pay and financial incentives would attract them to work longer.

## **Finnish model for strengthening active ageing and for social inclusion of older people**

Out of the various individual strategies and models emerging in Europe, was chosen the Finnish model. Finland having a long tradition of developing strategies for the entire area of social security has also developed a model for making older people work longer. The strategic guidelines up till 2015 are as follows:

- *Promoting health and strengthening functional capacities* - the government has a programme to promote health, in order to reduce inequalities in the citizens' health status.
- *Make work more attractive.* For the Finnish government, work is the best form of social security. The more people are employed, the easier it is to pay out pensions! However, are there sufficient economic and other incentives for longer working periods?
- *Reduce poverty and social exclusion* especially among young people - the welfare of children and young families, more educational opportunities and possibilities for young people to obtain a better job later.
- *Offer effective services and appropriately secure permanent incomes.* In Finland and in other Scandinavian countries a range of individual strategies have been introduced: for instance, 24 days for days for combating tiredness or for visiting grandchildren, subsidies for schools enabling older teachers to guide younger teachers and to work less in the classroom.

All in all these measures for making work more attractive to older people should be generalised to the workers of all generations. Nevertheless, it seems that the successful Finnish model to raise employment among older people would hardly apply to other European cultures and different historical, social and political realities.

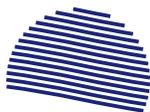
The conference enjoyed the participation of:

- *Prof. Dr Ana Krajnc* who supported the argument that the ageing of the population is an achievement of civilisation, since in this way we are gaining numerous older people who *already have knowledge validated through experience*;
- *Anne-Sophie Parent*, director of the European Older People's Platform which representing 25 million of older people. She analysed the role of the non-governmental sector in the advocacy of older people including in their education;
- *Zoran Kotolenko* from the Market and Employment Directorate at the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs;
- *Rajka Bračun*, MA, from the Slovenian Third Age University with a presentation of a model for the development of new volunteer roles for older people;
- *Dr Zdravko Lavrič* from the Slovenian Railways, who monitored the group work on the advantages of individual generations at the workplace;

- *Dr Dušana Findeisen* with a presentation on European strategies to increase employment of older people.

It is not surprising that the next Third Age University conference will be devoted to the social roles of older people and education related to them. And the title is – Older people as *subjects of their own education*.

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The Slovenian Third Age University



## **Strategic tasks in the area of adult education**

The Adult Education Society of Slovenia, a non-governmental organisation and civil society umbrella association for adult education, set out in its programme guidelines adopted in May 2006 a definition of its fundamental and priority task efforts to ensure *in national policy and the systemic regulation of education the establishing of a concept based on principles and strategies of lifelong learning and to ensure for adult education a status equal in every way (the position and equal rights) for adult education in the education system and in society*. Similar initiatives, proposals and demands have been made for some time by other organisations and associations in the area of adult education, and there have been especially active efforts here from the Association of Adult Education Centres of Slovenia, the Society for Adult Education in Secondary Schools and the Association of Private Providers of Adult Education – GIZ.

In July 2008 the Adult Education Society of Slovenia sent to all political parties in Slovenia a letter setting out and describing the strategic tasks that our education policy should adopt for the development of adult education in Slovenia, with an emphasis on its systemic regulation. The political parties received the letter during the period running up to the parliamentary elections. We believed that this was the right time to communicate our agenda, since at the same time the political parties were formulating their own agendas. Slovenia's education policy to date has been characterised by having generally and for the most part dealt with the schooling and education of young people, and having treated adult education as some marginal appendage to the system of education. In our agenda we drew attention to this systemic discrepancy. Future education policy must eliminate this, and thereby give sufficient weight and recognition to adult education for it to become equal in every way within the education system.

»By addressing our proposals to political parties, we wish to influence the orientation of those parties that have sufficient vision to understand how important the comprehensive organisation of the education system is in this country.« This was how the Adult Education Society addressed political parties in Slovenia. This was followed by text covering ten points. In this article for *Novičke* we are publishing just a summary.

## **Status and placement**

The education system comprises two areas – the education of children and youth or *initial education* and adult education or *continuing education*. These areas are complementary, and only thus can they enable the enactment of the concept and strategy of lifelong learning. For this reason we need to ensure their systemic equality in all areas of systemic regulation, and these are: administration, legislation, financing, development of a provider and programme network and infrastructure.

## **Administration**

On the national level, adult education must be regulated and managed by an interdepartmental institutionalised directorate (office or agency), which can ensure for this field adequate administrative cohesion and sufficient independence and competence. The administration of adult education also needs to be regulated on local levels.

## **Legislation**

The area of adult education needs to be regulated through comprehensive legislative provisions, which would cover an umbrella law on the organisation, promotion and financing of adult education and the specific regulation of adult education in other laws, especially school, labour, regional and other appropriate legislation related to adult education.

## **System and models of financing**

Responsibility for formulating an adequate system of financing adult education, which must be based on partnership (alongside the state this comprises employers, users, participants and others) rests with the state.

## **Establishing infrastructure and its stable operation**

Adequate infrastructure needs to be provided for adult education in seven sectors, as provided by the *Resolution on the National Programme of Adult Education*, and these are: professional staff, programmes offered, guidance, research and development, IT and organisational infrastructure and promotional activity. Priority should be given to settling the status of public adult education organisations and to ensuring the operation and development of a public service as well as implementation of public programmes and activities of public importance, since without this it will not be possible to achieve full realisation of the *National Programme of Adult Education* and the programmes, projects and activities based on this.

## **Incentives and relief for enacting the strategy of lifelong learning and adult education**

A system needs to be formulated to provide incentives for adult education, and this must take adequate account of the possibilities of the individual, employers, local and regional communities and the country, and should include incentives to improve the possibilities for access and participation and to increase investment in adult education.

## **Reducing the large gulf in access to education**

Adult education should serve gradually to achieve greater fairness in access and possibilities for education, and thereby reduce the large gulf between the majority and certain groups of people who find it harder to be involved in education (especially the less educated, long-term unemployed persons, adults with special needs, older adults, Roma, those with insufficient literacy and so forth).

## **Strengthening the non-governmental sector as a partner to government**

A large proportion of adult education is conducted in organisations and through the competences of non-governmental organisations, in more as well as less formalised methods and in circumstances to match. The government should strengthen the non-governmental sector and create partner relations in this area.

## **Renaming the Ministry of Education and Sport**

The Ministry of Education and Sport, currently called in Slovenian *Ministrstvo za šolstvo in šport* (Ministry of Schooling and Sport), should be renamed *Ministrstvo za*

*vzgojo in izobraževanje* (Ministry of Education), since the expression *šolstvo* (schooling) excludes the majority (approximately nine tenths) of adult education and learning, i.e. all education provided outside the school system, including almost all non-formal education.

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## INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

### European network for family learning

For almost a decade now, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education has been involved in researching the influence of learning in the family on children, youth and adults. We have focused primarily on the strong influence of positive incentives in the family on the later development of literacy and on learning in the family as a strong motivational factor for adult learning and education. The family literacy programmes *Let's read and write together* and *Read to know and read for fun*, which we designed, are thus intended first and foremost for parents, and train them to develop nascent literacy in their children before they start school, and it also train them to help children do their school work in a playful and motivating way. In this the participants acquire new knowledge in numerous areas of family life and develop skills for their personal development and lifelong learning.

Around the world there is increasing recognition of the fact that family learning has an exceptionally positive influence on the development of children and their achievements, and promotes adult learning. Family learning encourages adults who have no other opportunities for learning towards greater activity, and in this way breaks out of the vicious circle of transferring inactivity from generation to generation. For many adults, learning in the safe refuge of the family is the first step that encourages them to pursue further learning and to acquire new knowledge for their own development.

A year ago the SIAE joined a group of 11 countries in the *European Family Learning Network* project, which is aimed at establishing a European network for family learning. This serves to create the possibility for exchanging expert findings, examples of good practices and new features in research and development in this field. The programme is financed by the European Commission from the Grundtvig 4 programme. First and foremost the project is intended for experts and practitioners dealing with the development of family learning programmes and projects to raise basic skills and promote lifelong learning. With the help of experts and practitioners, the network seeks in partner countries to promote new possibilities and opportunities for families with low education and with a need for help in learning. In this project, special attention is focused on immigrant families and the families of ethnic communities.

The project is coordinated by the "Campaign for Learning" organisation of Birmingham in the United Kingdom, and alongside Slovenia the project involves the cooperation of France, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Norway, Poland and Romania. Within the project three thematic seminars have been planned, and these are attended by experts

in the field of family learning, covering the following content: cooperation of parents in children's learning, establishing national and local networks for family learning, and family learning and active citizenship. Participation at the seminars is made possible via the Grundtvig 3 programme. The topic of the closing conference, which will be in June 2009, is »family learning and the creation of a lifelong learning society«.

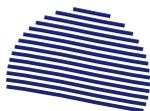
Important aims of the project are the promotion of various forms of family learning and raising awareness about the importance of such activities – on the level of institutions already providing this or able to provide this, and on the level of planning social development and policy – and also promoting the creation of national and local family learning networks. For that purpose an advocacy document has been created titled Raising Aspirations and Raising Potential: the case of family learning in Europe. National and local networks also have the aim of linking together experts and practitioners in institutions dealing with one of the areas of family learning. Their key role is primarily the systemic linking of institutions and measures to help families needing help in any area of family life: raising children, partner relations, mental and physical health, literacy development, help in various dependencies of family members, social pressures, single-parent families, immigrant families and so forth. Systemic linking of institutions and experts on the level of the region and local community enables more effective and expert verification of help for families.

The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education cooperates in the project in the area of family literacy as one of the forms of family learning. The SIAE family literacy programmes were presented in detail to a broad circle of experts, chiefly from Germany and the UK at a meeting of partner institutions in Nuremberg in November 2007. When we looked into the possibility of learning and help for families in Slovenia, we found that in Slovenia there are numerous organisations and programmes to help families on the local level, but they are not linked together systemically and do not offer information for families in one place.

In any event in Slovenia we now face the challenge of designing and implementing an innovative model of local and regional networks of institutions and programmes for family learning, which would be linked together by the common interest in professionally appropriate and effective help for families, whether this concerns educational, social, health, cultural, religious or other institutions, or individual experts and programmes in a given area. At the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education we will seek opportunities for linking up with interested partners on the national and local level to promote family learning, and will study the possibilities for drawing up the expert basis for establishing family learning networks.

You can learn more about this project on the project website <http://www.efln.eu/index.html>, which offers the informative project newsletter.

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## Meeting of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks held in Slovenia

In recent years, since the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks (SGIB) has been meeting on the EU level, the practice has become established of the country holding the Presidency of the EU Council hosting the Group's spring meeting. In 2008 this task was assumed by Slovenia, and specifically the Ministry of Education and Sport (MES), which entrusted the organisation of the 24<sup>th</sup> meeting to Slovenia's member of the SGIB, *Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc*, of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE). The meeting was held on 24 and 25 April at the Hotel Astoria in Bled. It was a part of the events accompanying Slovenia's Presidency of the EU, so participants received special promotional material from the MES and SIAE to mark the occasion. The meeting addressed regular topics discussed by this working group, and the agenda was enhanced by contributions from Slovenian representatives as follows:

- a welcome address by *Mojca Škrinjar*, director of the Kindergartens and Primary Education Directorate,
- a presentation of the structure and challenges of the Slovenian education and training system, provided by *Dr Slavica Černoša*, then still acting director of the SIAE, and
- a presentation of the system of feedback on school achievements in national testing at the end of nine years of primary education and on the matura school leaving exam, prepared by *Darko Zupanc, MA*, and *Dr Gašper Cankar* of the National Examinations Centre, and presented by the latter.

Among the 27 representatives of education and training systems in EU Member States, the four representatives of the European Commission and four representatives of its institutions (CEDEFOP, Eurostat, CRELL and ETF), the Slovenian contributions were very well received.

In support of the organisation behind the SGIB meeting, the SIAE prepared a closed website which published material addressed at the meeting, and other important information, while online registration was enabled and a special presentation was made of the Slovenian Presidency, the MES, Slovenia, Bled and Ljubljana. After the meeting, the website, which will be open until the end of 2008, was enhanced with photographs of the meeting. In the words of the participants, this will remain for everyone a wonderful memory, infused with the lovely atmosphere of Bled, which stimulated some intensive professional work as well as very agreeable socialising.

At the SGIB meeting we also focused on strategic documents that had been published in the period since our last meeting:

- *Keeping up the pace of change* COM (2007) 803 final, 11 December 2007;
- *Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation* - draft of the 2008 Joint progress report of the Council and the Commission, 31 January 2008;
- *Conclusions of the spring European Council 2008* CONCL 1 7652/08, 14 March 2008.

All three documents reiterated the key role of education and training in the Lisbon process, while on the basis of indicators that measure progress in achieving the set targets, the following critical areas were identified:

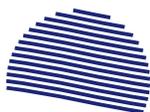
- there is a need to increase the level of achieved capacities (vulnerable groups are early school leavers, older adults not involved in lifelong learning and migrants with a low level of education or low level of key skills);
- in implementing national lifelong learning strategies in the EU Member States, special attention needs to be focused on establishing innovative learning partnerships and long-term investment in high-quality, effective and fair education and training; special mention is made of the need for lifelong guidance;
- emphasis is needed on the role of the *knowledge triangle* (education - research - innovation), especially in connection with increased employability and economic growth.

The main item of the agenda was a deliberation over the *Progress report on fulfilling the Lisbon Process in the area of education and training 2008*. Although at the time of the meeting, data for 2006 from the European statistical system, which is the source for the great majority of basic indicators, were not yet consolidated, we debated the proposed structure of the report and certain approaches which DG EAC staff had used for the first time with the assistance of the CRELL research centre. At this point I should highlight what is called the *lifelong learning index*, a composed indicator showing the participation of Europeans aged 4 to 64 years in lifelong learning. The indicator is calculated as an arithmetical average of the levels of participation of children and young people in preschool, school and university education and of adults in lifelong learning. Preliminary data show that in this indicator Slovenia has very good results, although these results conceal a structural background that is not so encouraging.

A presentation of all the topics discussed at the meeting would be too lengthy for the confines of an article here, so I should just mention the announcement of the conference *Europe and international comparison indicators*, held under the aegis of the French Presidency of the EU in Nice on 13 and 14 November 2008. At this conference researchers, representatives of the education profession, statisticians and the repre-

representatives of educational policy in the EU Member States will exchange their views on the advantages and drawbacks of the existing groups of indicators, on the use of national and international evaluations and indicators in decision-making processes and on developmental possibilities and intersectoral linking on the national and international levels.

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### **First study visit of guidance practitioners as part of the *Academia* project**

The National Vocational Information and Counselling Centre / Euroguidance Slovenia (Employment Service of Slovenia), which is the Slovenian representative in the Euroguidance network, hosted six guidance practitioners from Great Britain, Spain, Norway and France from 5–9 May 2008.

The Euroguidance network (<http://www.euroguidance.net>) is a network of centres linking career guidance systems in Europe. Euroguidance promotes mobility, helping guidance counsellors and individuals better understand the opportunities available to European citizens throughout Europe. Guidance counsellors can learn about career guidance in different European countries as part of the *Academia mobility project*. Moreover, Academia offers programmes that enhance competences of European guidance counsellors through an exchange of professional experience.

*Barbara Gregorič Brezavšček*, Head of the Vocational Orientation Office at the Employment Service of Slovenia, opened the meeting, after which conditions in the Slovenian labour market were described by *Vilijem Spruk*. *Zlata Šlibar*, Head of the National Vocational Information and Counselling Centre (Euroguidance Slovenia), presented the history of the Pilot NRCVG. The regional network of Vocational Information and Counselling Centres was also presented, including their role in the Employment Service of Slovenia and cooperation with other partners (several adult education institutes, where Vocational Information and Counselling Centres are organisational components of lifelong learning points).

The National Education Institute made a presentation on the Slovenian educational system and the work of school guidance counsellors. Our Academia participants were further acquainted with counselling at the Kolezija primary school, BIC Ljubljana and the Poljane upper secondary school.

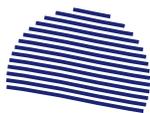
Adult education and counselling at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education was explained by the advisor to the director *Tanja Vilič Klenoušek, MA*, and assistant to the project management director *Margerita Zagmajster, MSc*.

Our Academia participants presented their education and vocational orientation systems in their countries to the Slovenian guidance practitioners. Their PowerPoint presentations can be sent to you on request ([zlata.slibar@ess.gov.si](mailto:zlata.slibar@ess.gov.si)).

The guidance practitioners met with students at MIC Velenje and visited the Velenje Local Employment Office, Žalec Adult Education Institute, the National Institute for Vocational Education and Training and Project Learning for Young Adults (PLYA), and finally Tin Ljubljana, an establishment for counselling and education.

The *Academia project* was evaluated as a good and very useful opportunity for exchanging best practices with foreign colleagues. The participants plan to take part in similar future projects and would like to have more interactive activities and informal exchanges with Slovenian guidance practitioners.

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## **New approaches in adult education guidance in England**

In the last three years in developing guidance activities at guidance centres we have devoted special attention to the development and implementation of new approaches and tools for guidance work, and to the enhancement of partnership cooperation in local guidance networks, which operate at all 14 guidance centres. In order to build upon and develop our knowledge, a group of nine participants involved with work in guidance centres (seven advisers from seven centres and two SIAE personnel) went abroad to familiarise ourselves with new features in this field in the English environment. As part of the *Leonardo da Vinci, Mobility* project entitled *Exchange of experience in adult education guidance*, the SIAE organised a study visit from 15 to 21 June 2008.

Our host was Leeds Trinity and All Saints College, a university-level institution established 40 years ago primarily as a teacher training school. Even today, of approximately 3,000 students, one third are attending courses that provide training for the teaching professions. Alongside the education faculty, the college also comprises a social sciences fac-

ulty and a faculty for media, enterprise and marketing. Throughout the time of the study visit we stayed in the city of Leeds, which had developed enormously in recent years following the recession-driven economic crisis and unemployment of the nineties.

As adult education advisers we were interested primarily in the current range on offer and the organisation of guidance in England, with emphasis on familiarisation with new approaches in adult education guidance, especially for vulnerable adult groups. We set ourselves two other goals, these being to understand:

- to what extent and how our English colleagues introduce the recognition and confirmation of knowledge in adult education guidance procedures,
- how and to what extent individual organisations cooperate with others (networking) and thereby ensure greater quality and integrity of their services.

Currently there are three leading guidance networks and activities in adult education in England:

- *Jobcentreplus* is aimed primarily at unemployed persons. It helps them find employment, and helps employers find appropriately qualified workers (more at <http://www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk/JCP/index.html>).
- The biggest provider of information, guidance and e-education for adults is the *Learndirect network*, which in addition to education to improve basic skills and business education offers mainly via telephone or e-mail information on possibilities for education and employment. In some education centres, personal guidance is also offered via this network. Another very important thing is the provision of information via the web portal (more at <http://www.learndirect.co.uk/>).
- The third major adult guidance network is the government network *Nextstep*, which brings together adult education advisers offering guidance to persons over 20 years old. Currently the majority of resources are intended for priority groups, specifically less educated persons and adults without vocational qualifications or with low levels of qualifications (more at <http://www.nextstepwestyorkshire.org.uk/>).

Alongside presentations of adult guidance networks, all organisations stressed how important partnership cooperation is, so they are looking to devote greater attention to this in the future – this year England has seen the start of a new concept of linking up all the guidance networks under the common name of *Adult Advancement Careers Service*.

We learned more about partnership cooperation at Trinity College. They presented to us their experiences in cooperating with various partners in the local environment with the aim of ensuring greater quality in educational processes, greater opportunities for employment and also the development of a career path for their young and adult students. It is precisely alongside partnership cooperation that they are also developing additional educational services – involving enhancement programmes for

adults. They outlined other advantages of partnership: more participants involved, a reduction in investments of public or individual funds while investment is increased from local companies, the possibility of guest lecturers from the commercial world or other educational institutions and so forth.

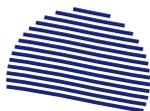
Of course the establishing of partnership cooperation requires considerable effort. This means permanent contact, by means of which they build on openness, honesty and trust, and on the supplementation of knowledge about how the partners operate. It is also necessary to be flexible, to respond quickly, be accessible and to know how to navigate between the requirements of the client and the customer. Finally they also advised us that this is a lengthy process that is built in several phases, and that it is sometimes necessary to establish numerous contacts to create a proper network. In its local environment, Trinity College is incorporated into several such networks, one being the *West Yorkshire Lifelong Learning Network*.

From the aspect of introducing quality assessment into ISIO guidance centres, it was interesting for us that in order to obtain public funding, institutions offering guidance services must meet standards established by the quality assessment system Matrix, which is Britain's national standard for assessing quality.

We should also mention that we visited the National Institute for Adult Continuing Education (NIACE), where we were given a detailed presentation of the issue of new and old immigrants in Britain. These people are faced with numerous obstacles that prevent them accessing education and employment, leading many into poverty and social exclusion – both individuals and even entire communities. For this reason the project *Steps to Success* has developed a method for helping members of ethnic minorities to develop new skills and thus to secure permanent jobs. In this two important parts of this method are emphasised: the first is to ensure information and guidance prior to involvement in education and during actual courses, and the other is for advisers to be present in the local home environment of groups of adults included in this project – an approach to guidance that means operating outside of the institution. Experiences indicate that guidance is more successful if the adviser is a member of the community. Of course the adviser also needs to be offered all support to ensure that he or she is adequately qualified for guidance.

We can conclude that while we were on the visit we were able to familiarise ourselves fairly well with the English education system and the organisation of adult guidance in England, where importance is ascribed both to guidance for education and for the development of career paths and personal life. We gained new insights into the work of advisers, who must be sensitive to vulnerable groups of adults and who increasingly include in their work processes of recognising knowledge. We acquired new ideas for methods of promoting guidance activities and also confirmation that cooperation with other institutions is needed for providing a comprehensive service to those receiving guidance.

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## **Study visit by Estonian coordinators of the *Adult Learners Week***

Everyone working on the *Lifelong Learning Week (LLW)* project is striving to spread the mission of the festival of learning in the domestic environment and also further afield. The cross-fertilisation of ideas and experiences on the international level is so much more welcome, so we gladly responded to the initiative from the Association of Estonian Adult Education (AEAE Andras) and prepared a study visit entitled *Estonian versus Slovenian Learning Festival – Exchange of Experiences*. From 21 to 23 September 2008 we hosted in Bled a group of coordinators of the *Adult Learners Week (Täiskasvanud õppija nädal)* from Estonia, a representative of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research (*Evelin Tiitsaar*) and two representatives of AEAE Andras (*Sirje Plaks* and *Kerttu Taidre*).

The programme for the three-day meeting was skilfully linked together and guided by *Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, MSc*, who was able during the meeting to unravel numerous discrepancies, for instance on the *conceptualisation of coordination*. The coordinator of the *Estonian Adult Learners Week* is a person (not an institution, as in Slovenia), who tries to retain this role for as many years as possible. Each region (there are 15 in Estonia) and the capital city of Tallinn have one coordinator, who tries within his geographical area to generate enthusiasm in various schools, local communities, libraries and other institutions dealing with adult education about participating in the festival. Coordinators thus create their own networks of providers on the regional and local level. In Slovenia the network of coordinators is composed of various institutions that function in a linking way, either in their local area, municipality or across the region (municipal coordinators) or under the principle of content (thematic coordinators).

In the first part of the Sunday afternoon, the addresses by representatives of institutions – the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (*Andrej Sotošek*) and the Association of Estonian Adult Education (*Sirje Plaks*) – were followed by a presentation of the Slovenian *Lifelong Learning Week (Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik)* and *Estonian Adult Learners Week (Kerttu Taidre)*, national coordinator of the project). The second part was devoted to a presentation of the Review of adult education providers and programmes in Slovenia (*Erika Brenk*) and a presentation of some aspects of the Slovenian festival: joint promotional and information material of the festival of learning in Slovenia (*Nevenka Kocijančič*), the LLW information technology system and evaluation (*Franči Lajovic* and *Ajda Turk*) and awards for outstanding learning achievements (*Slavica Borka Kucler*).

We started the second day with presentations of the adult education systems in our two countries (*Dr Slavica Černoša* and *Evelin Tiitsaar*). The group of Estonian coordinators was then joined by ten representatives of the network of LLW coordinators, who summarised certain aspects of coordination work:

- creating a local or regional network of LLW providers (*Maja Kanop Krevh, Tatjana Gostiša, Marija Imperl, Lea Zlodej, Eva Mermolja and Irena Dejak*),
- effective cooperation with the media (*Tatjana Gostiša and Marija Imperl*) and
- transfer of the national opening of LLW to the local level (*Nevenka Burger and Neža Bojnec Naterer*).

The local features of the Estonian Adult Learners Week, which was organised for the tenth time this year from 10 to 17 October, were then presented by *Merike Ojamaa*, coordinator in the region of Võrumaa (in the south of Estonia), *Lehte Tuuling*, who coordinates the Week in the region of West-Viru (in the northern part of the country), *Viivi Lokk*, who provides coordination in the Estonian capital, Tallinn, and *Aivi Telvik*, coordinator of the Week on the island of Iuma.

A special place in the programme was devoted to a presentation of the *Forum of adult learners in Estonia*, which will be held in Tallinn for the third time on 30 November (2005, 2006 and 2008). *Sirje Plaks* stressed the major support from the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research in the functioning of this kind of advocacy, something that could not be asserted for Slovenia.

The final part of the Monday programme was devoted to an exchange of experiences, learning about new and different approaches and seeking new ideas. Of these, the following are particularly interesting:

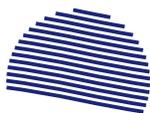
- The Estonian coordinators were very enthusiastic about the fact that through its events, which attract both the youngest and oldest, the Slovenian LLW promotes the possibility of learning and education in all periods of life and for all roles taken on by a person – as an individual or a member of a family, a work team or other community.
- A special feature of the Estonian Adult Learners Week is the *Learning Bus*, which drives around Estonia (including on the islands). Distances between settlements are large and transport links are poor, so this allows educators and advisers to get to people in remote areas (in 2007 it made 52 stops, and guidance was given to more than 500 people). They present to these people various opportunities for learning, and at the same time they advertise events in the Adult Learners Week (open days, exhibitions, workshops, family days, lectures and so forth).
- The *Learning Boat*, which sails between Tallinn and Helsinki, is aimed at promoting cultural dialogue. Since 2002, adult education students on the *Learning Carriage* train running between Raplo and Tallinn have been organising various quizzes and lectures.

- The selection of award recipients differs in Estonia and Slovenia: the Estonians select their best in four categories: student of the year, educator of the year, learning-friendly organisation of the year, learning-friendly local community of the year. Selection is made on three levels: local (the number of categories is sometimes bigger, with the learning family of the year also being given an award), regional and national. All award recipients on the regional level are candidates for national prizes, which are awarded at the national opening.

The Estonian guests spent Tuesday morning at Jesenice, where staff from the Jesenice Adult Education Centre, headed by *Maja Radinovič Hajdič* presented the institution, its role in the local community and some major projects: the Gorenjska Lifelong Learning Centre, Jesenice Guidance Centre and the coordination of the LLW.

Every day we spent together, those of us from the two countries who participated were thrilled with the opportunity to come together and to talk about different approaches and about the achievements of the two learning festivals. We were all united in the idea of meeting again: *See you again!* (or in Estonian: *Kohtumiseni!*).

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## **FACE IT! project concluded**

The two-year project *Families and Active Citizenship Education – an Integrated Training (FACE IT!)*; <http://www.faceitproject.org/> was concluded in September 2008. In the project the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) offered consultancy services as an external co-operator owing to its experiences with study circles. The project *FACE IT!* is an international project supported by the European Commission under the Socrates-Grundtvig programme. It was coordinated by the EuroEd Foundation of Romania. In the project nine other partners from France, Ireland, Italy, Romania and the United Kingdom were involved.

The project developed an innovative approach for families on the margins that need support for active citizenship. It is flexible and can be transferred for local needs. The project serves to encourage marginalised families towards learning and active citizenship through familiarisation with what it means to be an active citizen, and through the abilities they have. To this end we organised training for mentors, practitioners and experts from various local communities, and prepared a manual that enables them to incorporate into their work family and intergenerational learning. The pro-

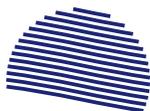
gramme includes methods and materials to promote non-formal and coincidental learning. By including parents in the education of their children, we can contribute to positive changes in their local environment and in inclusion in processes of participatory democracy.

International training courses were provided in France and Ireland in the autumn of 2007, while national courses were provided in those countries and also in Romania in the spring of 2008. Training usually takes three days, and is supported with online resources, so this involved 'blended learning', a combination of traditional and e-learning. In the training courses, participants acquired the theoretical basis for active citizenship and family learning, they acted out role playing on the topic of participatory democracy and they focused in detail on the competences of active citizens. Through simulation we presented the advantages of study circles and other case studies relating to this topic.

The project also involved the production of a *FACE IT!* manual entitled *How to develop active citizenship through family learning*. This contains definitions of the aforementioned concepts, learning material with content recommendations and experiences from international and national training courses, which we condensed into case studies. It offers a collection of articles for additional reading and material intended for copying and practical use in training. The manual is a useful accessory for providing family and intergenerational learning on the topic of active citizenship, but unfortunately it has only been published in English.

Work on the project ran smoothly, and this project is perhaps one of the best in which I have participated. I would highlight the good coordination of the project, and especially the extremely good selection of partners and experts from various fields, whose professional skills and knowledge complemented each other perfectly and thereby enabled a fusion of knowledge into an integrated and innovative approach. At the international workshops, during the presentations I gleaned an almost incredible interest in study circles; many participants, especially from Italy and Romania, actually enquired about training to be mentors for study circles, but this is provided by the SIAE only in Slovenian. It might perhaps be appropriate to organise an international training session for study circle mentors in English, which would undoubtedly mean spreading the idea of study circles beyond our borders.

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## Presentation of sub-project Adult participation in the system of formal education

The project *Towards a Lifelong Learning Society: The Contribution of the Education System - LLL2010* is an extensive project involving 13 countries<sup>1</sup> (Estonia - coordinator, England, Austria, Belgium/Flanders, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Ireland, Lithuania, Hungary, Norway, Russia, Scotland and Slovenia). **The main purpose** of the project is to study the contribution of education systems in participating countries in fulfilling the goals of the Lisbon Strategy. It comprises five sub-projects which from various aspects are aimed at the role of educational systems in individual countries in establishing lifelong learning (LLL) and as potential factors of social inclusion. You can read more about this on the project website <http://lll2010.tlu.ee>.

While certain activities in this project are already behind us, in the past year there has been intensive work on the third sub-project, which is in the concluding phase. Of all the sub-projects, LLL2010 is the most demanding in the field, since it is aimed at researching the participation of adults in formal education. This means that we had to perform extensive surveying of adults involved in formal education programmes. The main purpose of the sub-project is to study the role of the formal education system in promoting participation and perseverance in education, developing LLL, reducing inequality in LLL and increasing social inclusion. Through the sub-project we acquired in-depth comparative data on the views and experiences of adults in formal education and tested out various theories on the causes of inequality in participation (with special attention on less educated and less literate adults).

### Theoretical background

The theoretical basis for the sub-project, in which we are researching the characteristics of adult formal education, lies in socio-psychological theory, but also includes aspects of the sociology of education and pedagogical psychology. The sub-project focuses on the mutual interweaving of individual characteristics with a social context. The main part of our research is the experiences and views of adults forming the basis for their motivation to learn. We describe motivation as that force which encourages a person to enrol in an education programme and to persevere with it. Whenever the motivation is high, we may expect adults to overcome any barrier to education. Where it is low, participation in education or perseverance in it is less probable. In this project

<sup>1</sup> The project ID is published on the website: <http://www.acs.si/LLL2010>.

we take as the basis for analysing the individual's motivation the ARCS model developed by John Keller<sup>2</sup>.

Keller sets out four conditions that must be fulfilled for the individual to be motivated to learn: attention - A, relevance - R, confidence - C and satisfaction - S. Proceeding from the ARCS model, we included in the research plan:

- general views on LLL in the sense of how much a person regards LLL as something that brings satisfaction, is relevant and valuable to him and the wider social environment;
- the importance of motives and expected benefits from participation in formal education, in connection with this we focused on the possibility of academic and occupational advancement, greater employability, greater civic activity and satisfaction in learning;
- confidence (or a lack of it) in the capacity for successful conclusion of the selected formal programme;
- satisfaction or otherwise with the education programme or the expected results of education.

The centre of gravity in the sub-project is otherwise the perception and experiences of adult participants in education. These 'micro' characteristics (such as gender, age and their influence on motivation) have been studied in interaction with factors of the 'mezzo' and 'macro' levels. We are therefore seeking to enhance this insight into learning and the motivation of the individual from the aspect of the learning environment and the wider institutional and social context in which learning takes place. On the level of educational institutions we included aspects such as the possibility of transferring between programmes, information provision to participants, the possibilities that institutions offer to participants, coordination between various sectors and programmes, autonomy and flexibility of the organisation, accessibility and accreditation of previously acquired skills, involvement in the community, implementing various educational forms (modular, credit, distance etc.) and removal of institutional barriers (range of programmes, timetables, affordable prices).

## Field work

The field part of the research was conducted in 2007 by means of two questionnaires, one for participants and the other for organisations. In theory the result of this sub-project should be an international database with around 13,000 surveyed participants of formal adult education in organisations where such education is provided.

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<sup>2</sup> Keller, J. M. (1987). Development and use of the ARCS model of instructional design. *Journal of Instructional Development*, 10 (3), 2-10.

**The target group** of the research was adults involved in the system of formal education. The project group also provided a definition of *formal adult education* and of *participant in adult education*. These definitions were adopted by all the participating countries as a basis for sampling. In sub-project 3 a participant in adult education was defined as an adult who had quit full-time formal education, had returned to it and at least two years had elapsed since the previous inclusion.

The task of the research teams of participating countries was to collect 1,000 completed questionnaires from adult participants. The sample captured in the research was selected on the basis of educational level. In principle 1,000 selected questionnaires should be evenly distributed among four groups of participants depending on the ISCED level (250 each).

**The questionnaire for participants** comprised four sections: data on prior education from formal courses, personal data and data on employment, while the **questionnaire for organisations** comprised three sections: the characteristics of the educational organisation, characteristics of the specific programme and general questions on the lifelong learning policy.

The sample included organisations that provided programmes in which adults from our sample were enrolled. We surveyed 53 organisations providing adult education.

In October this year the Slovenian project group drew up a national report which will be included in the international report with accessible comparative data.

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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

