

novičke

Summer 2007

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Novičke (The News) is an information bulletin with which we wish to inform individuals and organisations abroad with adult education and learning in Slovenia. We plan to provide the following types of:

- description and presentation of events and activities in adult education;
- development, research and other programmes and projects;
- information on organisations, their needs, plans and activities;
- information on policy and strategies of adult education;
- the latest news in administration and legislation;
- statistical data;
- information on forthcoming events, workshops, seminars and conferences;
- presentations of new books and articles.

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

Novičke will be published three times a year in English language.

Users will receive Novičke free of charge. This is a policy we intend to continue, provided we are able to cover the costs of publishing from the public funds allocated to adult education.

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SIAE EVENTS

New doctorate of science

Adult education profession enriched by new findings on special features of study circles linked to sustainable rural development and forests as a resource

At the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, we are delighted by the new doctorate of science achieved by *Nevenka Bogataj*, head of the department for the development of non-formal education. Through this doctorate, she has given a research perspective to **study circles**, extended with a version of the *Reading with Manca Košir study circles*, and has called for similar analysis of other forms of non-formal learning – **Learning exchange, Centre for self-directed learning**, forms developed by the emerging **lifelong learning centres**. As a form of community learning, study circles are particularly valuable, since they include responsibility to the social environment, one of the pillars of sustainable development. The research in fact analysed this aspect in detail. The research is also focused on attitudes in study circles towards nature, particularly forests. Differences emerged between lifestyles in urban and rural environments, as well as the related valuation and preservation of natural resources, particularly forests.

The doctoral dissertation is based on the following assumptions:

- Forests are a pillar of sustainable rural development, and part of rural identity,
- Study circles are the only community form of non-formal self-directed learning in Slovenia,
- Social capital, particularly that of study circles, is a factor of sustainable development of the Slovenian countryside.

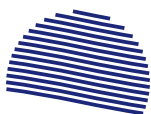
The postgraduate study was carried out at the Department of Forestry and Renewable Forest Resources of the Biotechnical Faculty of the University of Ljubljana, in conjunction with the Centre for Theoretical Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Ljubljana. The doctorate supervisor was *Prof. Dr Boštjan Anko*, with *Prof. Dr Frane Adam* as co-supervisor. *Nevenka Bogataj* entitled her work Understanding of forest role for sustainable rural development in study circles, with the following abstract:

The research was focused to the relation between study circle participants and rural environment, forest and sustainable development. Diverse methods were

used - quantitative analysis of study circle yearly reports, results of survey performed in June 2003, literature analysis and personal involvement/engagement in 2001-2005 period. It has been found that study circle participants - particularly in the countryside - are tightly linked together with horizontal social capital, are particularly careful for and committed to their living places including forests, what has - up to now - never been activated in developmental initiatives because of lack of vertical social capital. These characteristics are key elements of sustainable rural development. We identified the key inquiry questions of »sustainable personal behaviour« (explaining 60% of its variability) and confirmed possibility and usefulness of interviewers stratification. The hypothesis of different lifestyles of study circle participants in the rural and urban environments was therefore confirmed and at the same time the target groups for education, public relations and further research were formed. By using an interdisciplinary approach in research we avoided limitation on measurable entities and model solutions. We have found answers on complex questions with triangulation of sources and methods, inclusion of local, traditional and daily life. Consequently conclusions are immediately and directly applicable.

We would like to extend our sincere congratulations to the new doctor of science, one of the few women forestry professionals, and the first in Slovenia to link non-formal forms of lifelong learning with natural sciences. At the same time, we hope that the bridgehead she has established will allow us to gain new insights of value to the future development of both fields.

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



Study circles

Study circles modernising

e-SC application

Monitoring the work of study circles, a national project providing adults in Slovenia with an important opportunity for non-formal education, is moving to an electronic form. This means that we will soon replace paper-based monitoring with monitoring based on information and communications technology, i.e. personal computers and the Internet. Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE) has (in conjunction with an outside contractor - eVsebine d.o.o.), designed and

developed a **web application for monitoring the operation of study circles – the e-SC application**.

The web application **enables** monitoring of the work of study circles on two levels:

- The individual level for study-circle mentors implementing the study circle,
- The SIAE level, which will thus have access to more up-to-date, standardised and comprehensive data on study circles in Slovenia.

The e-SC application allows us to monitor data on study-circle mentors, registrations of new study circles, study-circle members (participants), the progress of individual meetings (e.g. records of meetings), the operation, effects and costs of study circles (report), and other aspects.

By launching the application, **we want to**:

- Establish the infrastructure for standardised, up-to-date and transparent monitoring of the work of study circles;
- Rationalise the costs and time involved in documenting work carried out;
- Enhance the quality of work at various levels (with regard to the number of providers, circles, types of circles etc.);
- Establish regular contacts among mentors of study circles, as well as between mentors and the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, the project coordinator;
- Enable the promotion of circles themselves and their events (a list of active circles in a certain period and major events to which mentors hope to attract the wider public will be published on the study circles website).

The application is **aimed at** active leaders and mentors of study circles. The mentor of individual study circle will have the duty to complete the forms for collecting data, an integral component of the application..

Before study-circle mentors start using the application regularly in their daily work, we will offer them an exact presentation on it; they will then test it and **train themselves to use it**.

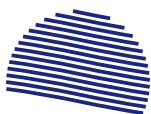
The Ministry of Education and Sport and the European Social Fund enabled the development and implementation of the application for monitoring the operation of study circles.

SC website

As one of the tasks set out in the SIAE Annual Work Plan for 2007, we are also developing the study circles website (<http://sk.acs.si/>). The main aim of the web-

site is to present study circles to a wider public, provide an overview of study circles currently active in a particular local environment, and provide a single point for recording and archiving important events, documents and publications on study circles in Slovenia.

Jasmina Orešnik (jasmina.oresnik@acs.si), SIAE



Quality assessment of adult education

Using the web to gather opinions on quality from various interest groups

Adult-education organisations increasingly opt for planned and systematic assessment of the quality of their own work, i.e. self-evaluation. In doing so, they use various models and methods to gather the opinions of various interest groups (employees, employers, participants etc.). Adult-education organisations participating in the Offering Quality Education to Adults (OQEA) project use such methods as: questionnaires, interviews, benchmarking and focus groups. A questionnaire is the most commonly used method, as it allows them to collect representative data on the quality of their work in a relatively short time. They design the questionnaires themselves, allowing them to take account of the specific characteristics of respondents and the environment in which they operate, and they use a self-evaluation plan defining the subject of evaluation. From 2001 to 2005, organisations participating in the OQEA project designed questionnaires by setting their own questions or adapting the questions of their predecessors. They then distributed printed questionnaires to respondents and processed the data independently. Organisations spent a considerable amount of time preparing and implementing questionnaires and processing the resultant data. In 2006 the SIAE therefore developed a web-based set of questions for assessing the quality of adult education to enable the design and completion of questionnaires, and to provide an overview of the results over the Internet. The application currently contains more than 1900 questions; they relate to areas, sub-areas and indicators of quality defined in the OQEA model. The questions arose from practice and have been used in 54 educational organisations involved in the project. Based on experience, certain questions were amended or expanded. They were designed to take account of the subject or interest group (participants, teachers, employers etc.) included in quality assessment. Thus an individual educational organisation can compile questionnaires for different subjects, and can

examine specific problems from several viewpoints. At present, organisations involved in the OQEA and *Adult Education Quality Advisors* projects and participants in the *How to assess quality and improve work with adults* educational module have access to the web collection; it is currently used by 56 educational organisations. In future, we also plan to provide training to organisations not involved in these projects.

What do users think of the web collection of questions for quality assessment of adult education? We asked 24 organisations that have undertaken self-evaluation using the web application for their opinions. Analysis showed that most organisations take the view that the web application is a very welcome aid to compiling survey questions, reviewing results and processing data. They viewed positively the fact that it contains many different questions, providing additional ideas for improving their questionnaires. At the same time, they said that despite its size, the web application is still practical, simple and useful. Using it they can compile questionnaires and review the results much more quickly. Nevertheless two issues must be raised: first, by adding extra questions users quickly find themselves with questionnaires that are too long; and second, the questionnaires contain questions not dealing with self-evaluation. Consequently, a professional judgement must be made when compiling questionnaires as to whether individual questions are appropriate with regard to the respondents and the subject of self-evaluation.

In addition, the web application has other limitations. In particular, users felt there was a particular lack of questions to assess the quality of non-formal education, since the current application contains many questions relating to certified programmes¹. They also said they would like more options to change the content of questions and adapt them to their own needs. The current version of the application contains only a few questions that can be changed in part.

Most organisations also encountered other problems in implementing the questionnaire over the Internet. The web application is designed such that the surveyor must create a password for each individual questionnaire and send it to respondents by electronic mail. In doing so, most organisations found that they had insufficient data on participants' email addresses – in many cases participants didn't have email or sufficient knowledge to use computers and the web.

SIAE will attempt to remove some of the limitations of the web application and to upgrade it to make it more useful for organisations, although organisations will have to do some of the work themselves: improving existing forms used to collect

¹ The OQEA project is open only to organisations providing certified programmes, so only these are subject to self-evaluation.

data on participants and other interest groups, and using the web application as an aid to computer literacy training for questionnaire participants.

Milena Zorić (milena.zoric@acs.si), SIAE



SLOVENIAN ADULT EDUCATION SCENE

Comprehensive guidance model **Mentoring improves the success of students**

In the 2005/6 academic year, the College of Business Maribor and the Vocational College Maribor launched a project to introduce a comprehensive guidance model for students in order to make students more effective. The initial responses from students were very positive.

Guidance is increasingly recognised as an important factor in the study success of students in tertiary education. Guidance in the study process represents one of the most powerful drivers of the intellectual, personal and social development of students. Doba, as a school with innovative approaches, follows the examples of educationally more developed and successful countries where various approaches to guidance and various forms of help for students have become a tradition. In the first year, guidance covered all students starting their studies at the College of Business or the Vocational College.

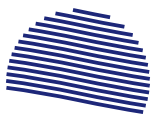
The aim of introducing comprehensive guidance is to make it easier for students to integrate into the study environment, prepare them as effectively as possible for the demands of study, guide them through their studies and advise them on solving general problems arising during their studies. The key aim of this partnership between and joint effort by students and colleges to achieve study objectives is to improve study results, increase progression and raise the level of studies.

The first year of student guidance is already behind us. 449 students received guidance, monitored by 11 specially trained mentors. Student reaction was positive: 94% felt that guidance had significantly influenced their motivation, success and satisfaction in their studies, and their own self-confidence. Help from a mentor meant a great deal to them in planning their studies, undertaking study activities and resolving dilemmas relating to their studies, and in terms of motivation. As to the model of guidance provided at Doba, we can state that linking the personal and study lives of students produces the most positive results. The results of the 2005/6 academic year show that student activity and success increased on average:

- An average of 93% of students registered for the first sitting of exams;
- The pass rate at the first sitting was 89%;
- Progression to higher years averaged 91%.

For both students and college staff, we can assert with pleasure that our joint efforts have produced good results, representing achievement of the objectives we set on introducing the mentorship model.

Irena Amič Ravnik (irena.amic@doba.si),
Vocational College Maribor



A new model in education of older adults

How to become a voluntary cultural mediator at the National Museum of Slovenia

The Slovenian Third Age University network has been developing a new educational and training model, aiming at both, education of the elderly for personal growth and voluntary work, and “education” of the representatives of public institutions to integrate volunteers in their activities. After the implementation of the educational and training programme, public institutions should be enabled to employ highly educated older people as volunteers. Moreover, older people will be able to take up voluntary roles that are far from being traditional since older people’s individual culture and newly acquired knowledge and skills will be taken into account. The programmes are accompanied by vast public campaigning.

How do the programmes (at present two¹) within this model make a difference? Students – future volunteers – acquire new topical knowledge studying contents proposed by the mentor as well as the study contents they propose themselves. Through mutual and reciprocal learning, the knowledge acquired has characteristics of new knowledge students and their mentor construct together. For instance, students study religious history and identity of Slovenians, they learn about rhetoric and group dynamics, they are introduced to the National Museum and at the same time they prepare for work as voluntary cultural mediators at the National Museum of Slovenia. This “topical” learning is accompanied by learning about voluntary work. And there is, in the end, permanent voluntary work within selected institution.

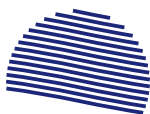
At a joint educational meeting at the National Museum of Slovenia, representatives of the Third Age University of Slovenia, Slovenian Philanthropy – a national

¹ Public speaking for voluntary work and How to become a volunteer cultural mediator in the National Museum of Slovenia.

volunteering organisation – and experts from the National Museum of Slovenia paved the way for future volunteer work of cultural mediators – students of the Third Age University of Slovenia. What needed to be done to this end? The University examined the needs of the National Museum, with whom it had reached an agreement on the employment of volunteers, volunteers whom the two institutions are educating together. The emphasis is on professional content and on the social mission of voluntary work to be performed by the elderly in this and other public institutions.

The knowledge of the elderly, and the ways in which it is passed on to others have become, owing to this model, formalised and institutionalised and have thus become more visible for everyone. There is, namely, a stereotype – one out of many when older people are in question – that education and learning of the elderly can serve only them and nobody else, that their learning, so to say, has, no wider impacts. What a mistake!

Dr Dušana Findeisen (dusana.findeisen@quest.arnes.si),
The Slovenian Third Age University



Winners – 20 years of the Third Age
University in Velenje

20 years - 58 circles - 800 participants - still growing

In 1986, the Third Age University in Velenje opened its doors. We entered, took the first steps. We grew in confidence, and the world opened up to us. We create, we learn, we improve, we trade experiences. The firm desire 'to know more' has borne fruit.

20 years means that we have passed through adolescence to reach a mature period of creativity. We are the second-oldest such university in Slovenia. We are experienced in effectiveness and cooperation, and particularly in the transfer and acquisition of knowledge, since we have been able to transfer our years of work, tested in practice, to the third age.

We transfer the wisdom and knowledge of the elderly to a wider environment, particularly to younger generations, ensuring cultural ties and bringing generations closer together. Despite the rapid changes in life, we know how to be bold, friendly, humane: we are **winners**.

That we are **winners** is demonstrated by our programme, our work, our products and successes, and confirmed over the years by many exhibitions, ethnological events, preservation of cultural and natural heritage, presentations at home and abroad, humanitarian campaigns and the numerous research publications and literary works of our members.

Through our activities and presence, we demonstrate that life flows with us. By organising events, we jointly create in the wider social community. The greatest value of the University is an ambitious, creative, innovative, adaptable and decisive team – through group work we develop cultural progress, effectiveness and success. We are always looking for new opportunities to introduce new knowledge and adult-education approaches, and to establish them in practice.

In an extensive brochure issued to mark the anniversary, we presented the activities of the university, which we bring together in the following areas: visual arts, handicrafts skills, language and literature, computing, protecting cultural and natural heritage, music, horticulture and cooking, and health care.

Members of the sculpture and arts circles are trained in artistic techniques, and frequently display their creations at numerous exhibitions. Members of the art history study circle meet established art historians and their work both at home and abroad. The handicrafts group produces wonderful Slovenian folk embroidery and lace. The threads interweave like our ties. In the modern world there is an express desire for knowledge of at least one foreign language. The Third Age University in Velenje offers education in English, German and Italian at various levels of ability. Knowing how to use computers is no longer just a need, but an essential, even for the older generation. Our computing mentors help participants use computer programs and the Internet, and provide information on the latest developments. Members of the dance circle certainly don't lack choice in terms of dance steps – both standard and Latin American dancing. Music circles learn music theory and play the zither and the electronic keyboard. Members of the *Health Care* circle learn about the working of the human body, diseases and problems, as well as the best methods to overcome or alleviate them. The maintaining mobility circles also help participants with their health by practising physiotherapeutic exercises. Those wanting to practice exercises originating in the east are members of the *Gi Gong* circles. The hiking and hill-walking circles have many members. Nordic walking is an innovation this year. Fruit-tree pruning and growing quality fruit are studied in the fruit-growing circle. *The Cooked with heart* and *Reading with Manca Košir* circles collect old recipes and also read for pleasure.

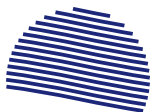
Without doubt, much credit for the breadth and quality of education at the Third Age University in Velenje must go to *Erika Veršec*, who was president of the socie-

ty for ten years. At the Winners event (5 April 2007), she was presented with a plaque for her work by the mayor of Velenje, *Srečko Meh*. Congratulations!

Our vision is to continue our initial work and to promote our cultural and humane work. In future, we will also give public presentations of old folk customs and traditions, and the work of people who are part of our history. A special task for the future is to open up to the world, establishing professional, experience and financial links, and enabling older people to participate in lifelong learning and to actively participate in their social environment.

To close, let me mention the words of one of our mentors, *Igor Bahor*: “*The incredible energy and drive of the elderly are a shining example to younger generations to imbue their lives with work and creativity.*”

Marija Vrtačnik (info@uni-tri-velenje-drustvo.si),
Third Age University, Velenje



Generating ideas for business opportunities
on farms

Literacy programme for adults living in rural areas in the Memory educational institute

Employees of the Memory educational institute in Dutovlje strive to establish ties with their environment, and to help in community development on the local and regional levels. For the second time, they organised¹ a literacy programme for adults living in rural areas². The programme is aimed at adults who want to start a new activity or update their current activities in the areas of agriculture, crafts and tourism. The target group is adults with at most vocational education who have or wish to start an independent or supplementary activity. The programme offers participants initial knowledge in the area of self-employment and basic literacy, ensuring the development of the basic knowledge and skills they need in their activities.

¹ Project coordinated by SIAE and financially supported by Ministry of Education and Sport.

² For further information on the programme, see: <http://pismenost.acs.si/projekti/uzu-ip/>.

Memory mentors and employees have presented the programme in various media outlets to draw public attention:

- Advertisements in local newspapers,
- Posters and brochures in public places,
- Established ties with suitable organisations (regional units of the Agricultural Development Advisory Service and the Employment Service, tourist information centres, etc.).

Most participants responded to a personal invitation. Mentors used publicly available data on farmers, wine-sellers, farm owners etc. from the immediate and wider area, and with the help of the schools database on suitable participants, managed to establish contact with people in the target group for whom such education would be suitable.

An extremely interesting group of seventeen participants of all ages and with all levels of prior knowledge – most had completed vocational education – gathered. The sexes are represented equally (47% women). Seven participants are aged 27-39, four aged 40-49, and six aged over 50.

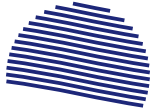
Despite this diversity, after initial preparations they were able to design a project the contents of which suited all participants. Certain standards of knowledge and objectives of the educational programme are achieved by project work extending to various thematic areas. Mentors also help participants to master knowledge and consolidate prior knowledge through individual lessons. The group usually meets twice a week late in the afternoon; the meetings often extend into the night, as participants enjoy meeting up and exchanging experiences.

Professional staff through interim evaluation found that participants in the first part of the programme were satisfied with the themes, which helped enhance what they had to offer, and the image of their homes: marketing, mutual communication, decoration and arrangement, linking farms to the historical, cultural and other tourist features of the area, and also looking for new ideas for those currently only considering something similar. Participants rated all indicators as very good or excellent, and they were particularly satisfied with the organisation, work methods, relations in the group and teachers.

The programme finished at the end of August 2007 with the release of a publication³ and the presentation of awards to participants in September.

Nataša Ujčič (memory@siol.net),
Memory educational institute, Dutovlje

³ The book presents the agricultural, tourism and other activities of participants and their new ideas.



Promoting LLW Joint promotional and information material

From the very beginning - the first Lifelong Learning Week (LLW) was organised from 30 September to 5 October 1996 - the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education has ensured a standard image for the project. The joint promotional and information materials link LLW providers all over Slovenia. As far as the image is concerned, the twelve years of the LLW project can be divided into two periods:

- The first period (1996-1999) was marked by the 'tree of learning' used by *Karel Ozvald* (1873-1946), the Slovenian educator and theorist, to portray lifelong learning in his book *Kulturna pedagogika (Cultural Pedagogy)*¹. The designer of the LLW logo was Studio Botas;
- The second period is defined by the visual promotional material for LLW from 2000 to the present, due to its attractiveness, communicativeness and recognisability. The corporate image was designed by *David Fartek*, now a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, in November 1999, when he was selected in a competition while still a pupil at the Secondary Design School in Ljubljana.

The fundamental medium of visual promotion is the LLW poster; every year it is supplemented by smaller promotional material (brochures, paper cubes, notepaper, invitations to LLW opening, programme schedule, placards, postcards, notice boards, e-postcards, e-advertising banners etc.). The LLW News bulletin, the LLW brochure, web calendar of events and LLW website all play an information-promotional role. All of these materials help ensure the visibility of the Slovenian LLW at home and abroad, and have become a brand for many events all over Slovenia, linked by the slogan Slovenia, a learning country.

LLW Poster

The basic elements of the LLW poster advertising events in 1997-1999 were the logo with the year, the title Lifelong Learning Week and the date in characteristic font and the 'tree of learning'. Since 1998, the poster has appeared in at least two

¹ Ozvald, Karel: *Kulturna pedagogika: kaŕipot za umevanje vĉloveĉevanja (Cultural Pedagogy: A guide to understanding humanisation)*. Slovenska ŕolska matica, Ljubljana, 1927, reprinted: Jutro and Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, Ljubljana, 2000.

versions: the **basic poster**, with its bright colours and distinctive design solution, achieved considerable recognition for LLW at home and abroad; and the **blank poster** with a similar graphical basis but without the image, allowing providers to write about their own events. Demand for the second type of poster has been growing for a number of years, since providers want as much material as possible that they can adapt to their own needs, but at the same time the common brand of LLW remains clearly recognisable.

The poster based since 2000 on a new corporate image also enables a similar solution. The basic elements of this poster are: a meadow with the title Lifelong Learning Week, date and the project website (<http://llw.acs.si>) and a daisy and sun, above which is the slogan *Slovenia, a learning country* and the logo of the project with the current year.

For the first time in 2003, at the request of local providers, we prepared **bilingual LLW posters** for the **Slovenian-Italian** cultural region; we have continued to do so every year since.

Since some events on the national level were international in character, for the 10th LLW in 2005, we also prepared a **Slovenian-English version of the poster**.

On special occasions, when we wanted to promote important LLW events, we prepared **thematic posters**. These are posters advertising national events: the LLW opening ceremony (printed every year since 2003), adult education colloquium (1999, with bilingual Slovenian-English posters produced in 2003-2005) and the *Learning parade* - the first connecting event for the festival of learning in Ljubljana, which was intended for joint presentations by LLW providers from central Slovenia.

For the 10th annual LLW (2005) we issued **combined posters**, advertising the operation of guidance centres (similar posters were printed in 2003) and self-directed learning centres around Slovenia, and promoting the Offering Quality Education to adults (OQE) project.

Other joint promotional material

Many small promotional materials have been produced to popularise LLW over the last twelve years: LLW leaflet (1996), stickers (1997), bookmarks (1997), paper cubes (1998-2000, 2004, 2005 and 2007), invitations to LLW opening (1998-2006), programme schedule for LLW opening ceremonies (1998, 2003-2006, with an English version also produced in 2005), promotional tassels (2000), wall calendar

(2000), note paper (2000 and 2001, 2005-2007, 2005 also in English), since 2001 we have also been printing registration forms to register LLW activities, and posters intended for SIAE award winners for achievements in adult education, panels for the LLW 2003 opening, programme schedule for the SIAE Open Door (2005), placard for the Learning Parade (2005) and postcard (2007).

LLW News

Informing providers and coordinators of preparations for the Lifelong Learning Week, encouraging and coordinating them, publishing life stories of winners of SIAE awards for outstanding learning and professional achievements in adult education, and evaluating each individual Week is usually done through the LLW-Novičke information bulletins. For the first two Weeks, in 1996 and 1997, this appeared as colour supplements to *Novičke*, but at the end of 1997 it began to be published as an independent bulletin monitoring the progress of all phases of the project. Today it has a print run of 2,200 copies. More important issues, such as the bilingual issue of LLW-Novičke 3/2000 with presentations of 49 winners of SIAE awards for outstanding learning and professional achievements in adult education 1997-2000, had higher print runs, sometimes twice as many copies. In the months when LLW-Novičke is not issued, information and promotional articles on the project are published in the *Novičke* bulletin under the Lifelong Learning Week column.

We prepared English editions of the bulletin - LLW *Novičke*² - at the end of 1996, in March 1998, Spring 1999, August 2000 and February 2001. We wanted to report to friends around the world our experiences from the festival of learning, and the plans we have. Since less money has been allocated in recent years to such information, we decided to report on the development of the project in all English editions of the *Novičke* bulletin.

Since 2000³, LLW *Novičke* has also been available in electronic form published on the website: <http://siae.acs.si/novicke/>.

LLW brochure

In 1999, as part of the uniform promotional materials, we prepared for the first time the LLW brochure entitled *Always time for learning*. The following year (and

² 750 copies of LLW-Novičke are sent to recipients all over the world.

³ Published on the website as early as 1999.

in 2003 and 2005), the brochure was published in Slovenian⁴ and English, since some national events were international in nature, and general promotional and information materials in other languages were welcomed. In 2007 we are offering only a graphical solution for the brochure, which we have published on the website at <http://llw.acs.si/material/>.

In 2004 we also focussed on areas that inherently involve lifelong learning - literacy, reading culture, acquiring knowledge for amateur and voluntary activities, quality of life and personal growth - largely intended for study and reading circles. To mark the 10th anniversary of study circles, during LLW we prepared a week-long network of events *Reading on trains*, producing a brochure for the occasion.

Calendar of events

Since 1996, festival events have been accompanied by a printed calendar of events prepared by the SIAE each year for providers all over Slovenia. It was intended to help potential visitors to events choose which events to visit. We distributed it to the public in shopping centres, media outlets and also to deputies in the National Assembly (1999). The advantage of the printed calendar is that it allows anyone who might be drawn to study by LLW to have an analytical overview of week - subject areas represented in LLW, reviews by region, municipality or provider (persons or institutions) managing, organising or implementing the event, and the time of the event; it is also useful for event organisers, as it allows them to compare and draw ideas for future years. As the Week expanded, so a comprehensive overview become larger⁵, its preparation more demanding, and implementation and distribution all over Slovenia more challenging.

In 2000 we began to prepare the LLW information system, allowing direct entry of data on events and co-creators of the LLW programme. Due to a reduction in funding for infrastructure activities, we had to stop printing the calendar of festival events, so that since 2001 it has only been available on the website (<http://llw.acs.si/calendar/> - Slovenian only). The web calendar offers a comprehensive overview of festival events on the national and local levels; it allows a wide range of queries (by time and place of event, content, events outside Slovenia, outside the official Week etc.). Coordinators and event providers can export updated data in other formats, and print their own regional calendars for use in their own localities, something the printed calendar was unable to provide.

⁴ McDonalds in 2000 distributed 3,000 copies of the brochure with symbolic entry tickets to LLW events.

⁵ The 2000 brochure covered almost 1900 events.

LLW website

The passing of time and the development of modern technology have dictated changes in the area of information and contact with festival event providers. The project website, which was launched in 1998, was updated in 2000 in line with the new corporate image. The web designers, *David Fartek* (graphic design), *Damjan Uršič* (graphic interface) and computer expert *Franci Lajovic* won a Golden Web Award for their work.

The LLW website (<http://llw.acs.si/>) is an important tool for e-promotion of the project. At the same time its various sub-sites provide support to everyone involved in the project. Through the In the spotlight column, LLW Novičke and the LLW coordinators forum, we provide up-to-date information to all interested parties.

We have been publishing the web calendar of festival events since 2000, and in 2001 for the first time we enabled web-based registration of activities. The importance of the web calendar cannot be overstated, and so every year we try to promote it effectively. In 2002 (and every year since) we published links to the LLW site and the LLW calendar on all major Slovenian portals. Analysis of traffic data for the SIAE Linux server hosting the LLW site shows every year a sharp rise during the Week, indicating that the overall promotion, including e-promotion, is fairly effective. The increased visitor numbers to the LLW calendar website can be ascribed to:

- Promotion with advertising banners on the most popular websites in Slovenia,
- Announcement of events linked to LLW on Slovenian portals,
- Increased number of LLW providers on the website,
- Use of multimedia technology to present the life stories of SIAE award winners (video presentations of SIAE award winners for outstanding learning and professional achievements have been published on the website since 2004 at <http://llw.acs.si/awards/archive/>),
- Innovative approaches to increase annual visits to the LLW site (e.g. e-postcards, which we have prepared since 2003).

This year's promotional material

We are delighted that this year we have prepared not only traditional but also new items of the information-promotional material for LLW 2007:

- Posters (two versions of the poster and a bilingual Slovenian-Italian poster), paper cubes and postcards have already been printed;
- The Slovenian translation of *Beating the Drums for Attention*, the final publication of the IntALWinE project, entitled *S festivalskimi zvoki za večjo pozornost*;

- The publication *12 Years of LLW - thoughts from the paths walked*, providing an overview of the development of the *Lifelong Learning Week* project from its launch in 1996 to this year's twelfth Week;
- LLW Novičke 4/2006-1/2007, 2/2007;
- video presentations of SIAE award winners for outstanding learning and professional achievements in adult education for 2007, and
- examples of good practice (video), which we have called *Equal opportunities for all through lifelong learning*.

On the website (<http://llw.acs.si/material/>) we publish joint promotional and information materials for LLW 2007, based on the corporate image. We thus offer LLW 2007 event providers the opportunity to print or otherwise use the logo, the various versions of the poster, the two versions of the brochure and minor promotional materials in preparing their own promotional materials.

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INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

Dissemination of the IntALWinE project **Participation in the Estonian adult learners' forum**

In the December 2006 issue of *Novičke* we wrote about the completion of the IntALWinE project; this time we are reporting on an event linked to the project. At the invitation of the Association of Estonian Adult Education (ANDRAS) and the initiative group of the Estonian adult learners' forum, on 1 December 2006 we attended the second meeting of the forum in Tallinn.

The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and ANDRAS worked together on the IntALWinE project most intensively in the first thematic group, the strategic objective of which was to present and introduce the concept of the 'adult learners' forum'. Representatives of the partner countries met in 2004 and 2005 at two international meetings, at which they concluded that the introduction of forums required professional, financial and moral support on the national and international levels. Slovenia was represented at both meetings by *Dušica Kunaver*, an SIAE award winner in 2002, and *Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik*, MSc of the SIAE. By doing so, we accepted the task of presenting the concept of the adult learners' forum in Slovenia. Thus in September 2005, the first Slovenian adult learners' forum was organised as part of the jubilee tenth Lifelong Learning Week. Twenty-five participants (mostly SIAE award winners) supported the idea of the forum and expressed a willingness to play an active role in its activities as far as they were able in line with the primary areas of their work – once the activities were defined and confirmed. The first Slovenian adult learners' forum called on the Institute for Adult Education to assign an individual or a working group to establish the professional foundations for the forum, carry out preparatory work and ensure the operation and development of the forum. Among the first tasks should be the formulation of the mission and operating strategy of the forum and determination of the basic rules. Another urgent task was ensuring suitable funding on the national and – if possible – international levels.

The Institute for Adult Education unfortunately was unable to secure financial support to include the proposed activities in the work plan for 2006, and so the purpose of participation in the second Estonian forum was not merely to present our activities to date, but also to learn about their experiences and acquire fresh ideas for the possible launch of activities in 2007.

The Estonians organised their **first forum** in December 2005. They then formed an initiative group of adult learners (9 of 36 participants chose to join). The group met four times in a year, reached certain target groups, attempted to promote local activities and most of all learned that greater cooperation is needed at all levels.

The second Estonian adult learners' forum was opened on 1 December 2006 by *Terje Haidak*, head of the department for adult education at the Estonian Ministry of Education, who expressed great support for the operation of this form of advocacy. She said that the ministry wanted to learn the views of adult learners and incorporate them into its policy, and it therefore welcomed the forum as a means to obtain and combine these opinions. The meeting was then enlivened by the well-known Estonian actor and producer, *Jaanus Rohumaa*, who taught participants effective public speaking, particularly regarding posture and speaking methods.

At the start of the afternoon session, I outlined the *IntALWinE* project and the Slovenian experience, as well as obstacles to establishing the forum. This was followed by work in five groups. We formed views on the Estonian adult learners' forum with regard to:

- **facts** (the forum is already up and running, the idea is also current in other countries and internationally, objectives need to be more specifically defined ...);
- **feelings** (mixed: we have the feeling we could fly but have no wings, we feel fear, hope, doubt ...);
- **doubts** (may be a waste of time, who will do our work while we're working in the forum, who will fund the forum, will the operation of the forum be transparent and clear ...);
- **optimism**, which the idea engenders (we could increase awareness of the importance of learning, entrance requirements, legislation, supply, people will become connected ...);
- previously **unexploited opportunities** (search for charismatic people and involve them, organise round tables, access to drop-outs and their motivation, increased communication with other adult learners, organisation of interesting social and sporting events that would encourage people ...).

Finally, we considered **further steps**: there is a need to investigate the operation of forums in other countries, formulate clear objectives for the forum, define and establish contact with target groups, establish a network of adult learners, establish local cooperation, inform and train participants, establish a website, ensure financing, apply to tenders, find partners and sponsors, contact nongovernmental organisations, attract media attention, find people who need support for participation in education, and motivate them by their own examples, organise public

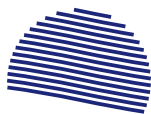
events to present the idea of the forum, meet regularly, prepare a mission statement and a forum slogan, discuss legislation and the needs of adult learners etc.

In Estonia as in Slovenia, two main purposes of the operation of the forum clearly emerge:

- **motivation and animation**, involving reaching and encouraging other adult learners, particularly the educationally inactive and possibly active,
- **advocacy**, involving defining and forwarding the views of individual learners and target groups to politicians and the adult education profession.

Participation in the second Estonian adult learners' forum gave new impetus to similar efforts in Slovenia, but it still first requires the securing of moral, financial and professional support.

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Presentation of international project

What does *EMMA* offer?

The *European Network for Motivational Mathematics for Adults (EMMA)* is a European project financed by the *Grundtvig 4 programme*, which supports the development of networks of European professionals in particular areas, in our case adult numeracy. The project brings together institutions from fifteen countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Hungary, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway with two partners, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden) and representatives from three countries, so-called silent partners – Australia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. The project coordinator is the Norwegian Education Institute (VOX). *EMMA* was officially launched in October 2005, but in practice it started with the first meeting of participating partners in Oslo in December 2005.

The purpose of *EMMA* is to establish a working network of professionals in various European countries dealing with adult numeracy. Within the project, the professionals should:

- search for ways to raise awareness of the problem of numeracy;
- collect and describe examples of other projects dealing with adult numeracy;
- collect and describe programmes intended for the development of numeracy;

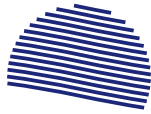
- prepare descriptions of national systems that support the development and implementation of numeracy programmes.

Visitors to the *EMMA* project website (<http://www.statvoks.no/emma>) will find much useful information that will help you develop this area of adult education. All of the information gathered is published in the form of papers and other contributions, and there are also interesting discussions on various themes related to adult numeracy.

Project partners took part in a study visit to London and a conference in Bucharest. During the **study visit to London** we visited the LLU+ institution, which is part of London South Bank University and is the largest centre for vocational teacher training in the United Kingdom. Experts employed at LLU+ presented to us the English system of adult education, particularly programmes aimed at literacy education (Literacy, Numeracy, Skills for Life etc.). Of particular interest was the presentation of their system of teacher training. The study visit was a good opportunity to exchange opinions among participating partners and to plan future work. The **conference in Bucharest** was intended to present the project and selected examples of good practice from European countries. Bucharest was chosen because this area of adult education has not (yet) developed and is scarcely even discussed in Romania. Another aim of the conference was for representatives of ministries and adult education organisations and other experts in the field of adult education to study the problem of poor adult numeracy, and to emphasise the importance of this field in designing new education policies, development programmes etc.

This year, partners will go on a **study visit to Copenhagen**, where amongst other things we will learn about the numeracy system in Denmark. In September, we are preparing for a **conference in Florence**, at which we will present the results of the project, thereby ensuring the transfer of the information gathered and the findings.

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Intercultural learning to recognise and preserve cultural heritage

Participation in the international colloquium Cultural Corridors in SE Europe in Sofia

From 8 to 11 February 2007, Sofia showed a gloomy face: there was a drizzle in the air, the streets were occupied by striking taxi drivers, but on the outskirts of the city we were taken without a fuss to the conference-hotel part of the governmental residence of Bojana, located in the shelter of a hill, the centre of which is dominated by a little church, a jewel of medieval iconography, recently renovated with funding from Unesco.

In this idyllic environment, delegates from fourteen countries and the European Union¹ met at the international symposium *Cultural Corridors in SE Europe – A Capacity Building Challenge*. The organiser of the symposium was the Bulgarian Heritage National Association (BHNA) in conjunction with the European Centre for Higher Education (Unesco-CEPES) and the Council of Europe.

Given that in recent years more than three hundred cultural monuments have been (or are being) renovated all over Bulgaria under the aegis of Unesco, it is easy to understand why the theme of the international symposium was *establishing cultural corridors in SE Europe*. Particular emphasis was placed on learning to preserve and market cultural heritage on the one hand, and raising European awareness of the cultural treasures of Bulgaria and encouraging the international environment to participate in joint projects and to transfer good practice to Bulgaria on the other.

At the plenary session, with opening addresses by the President of the Republic of Bulgaria, the foreign minister and the minister of culture, the concept of cultural corridors was presented. Their purpose was two-fold:

- to educate the Bulgarian population to plan and implement a cultural tourism policy that will enable not just the preservation but also the international establishment and marketing of Bulgaria's rich cultural heritage,
- to acquaint the European public with the cultural treasures of Bulgaria, with the possibility of investment in Bulgarian tourism, and with the opportunities

¹ In addition to nineteen delegates from other countries, the symposium was also attended by more than one hundred Bulgarian experts in different fields: politics, research, culture, education, business, tourism, sustainable development, renovation and preservation of cultural heritage.

to export knowledge and – consequently – to overcome cultural differences and developmental deficits.

All of this should encourage the creation of new jobs in tourism and culture, while increased employment and tourism revenues should lead to comprehensive, environmentally friendly development in this new member of the European Union.

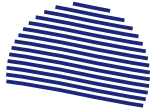
The meeting continued in two working groups:

- one was devoted to cultural tourism and cultural products as a tool for the establishment of cultural corridors, representing a factor of sustainable development in local environments,
- the second, in which I personally was involved, was devoted – in the light of the European document on lifelong learning and the principle of *education for all* – to cultural heritage, cultural tourism, and the development of human resources.

Particularly desirable were European examples of good practice and presentations of experience in the area of education and training. Based on Slovenian lifelong learning practice, I gave a presentation on the youth education programme at the Tourist Association of Slovenia and study circles, particularly their role in raising local awareness of preserving cultural heritage.

I am convinced the Bulgarians will successfully present and market their cultural treasures, since I was impressed by their desire to establish themselves that at times was verging on quixotic (if I mention the contribution of a respected Bulgarian historian who demonstrated the presence of Vikings in Bulgaria, and concluded with the thought that their homeland has long been of interest to enterprising Europeans!). We can only hope that they will not attempt to establish themselves by copying the Euro-American examples, and that instead they will open rationalist Europe up to the special features of Slavonic cultures, particularly Orthodox regions. Two burning questions arose: how – despite the developmental deficit – to become established in the European space while maintaining their own identity, and how to go about establishing cultural corridors! The first question is beyond the scope of this article, but an answer to the second came to me: cultural corridors can be established at any moment where we live – in our own backyard! If we can accept difference in everyday life and learn to understand other cultures by 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 mobility will then only consolidate living ties, which will no longer depend on politically planned ‘corridors’.

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Validation of non-formal and informal learning **Partner meetings of the *Value of Work* project**

This is a brief report on the fifth and sixth partner meetings of the *Value of Work* project. All partners attended both meetings: the Education and Training Service Centre from Iceland (the promoter), The Synthesis Center for Research and Education Ltd. (Cyprus), the Danish Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, the Centre of Validation in the City of Malmö (Sweden) and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (Great Britain).

The fifth partner meeting was held in Larnaca (Cyprus), from 29 March–2 April 2007. The purpose of the project was to report on the pilot. Namely, each country validated the non-formal and informal learning of employees acquired at the workplace. Cyprus, Denmark and Iceland validated such learning of bank employees, while Slovenia and Sweden tested the methods and tools for validation developed in the project in transfer sectors: Slovenia validated non-formal and informal learning of home care workers, and Sweden validated knowledge and skills acquired at the workplace of workers in administration. Among the methods of validation that all the partners used were portfolio and self-assessment with or without a supervisor. We found out that in most countries supervisors evaluated the candidates higher than they did themselves; therefore this method proved efficient. Iceland, Cyprus and Sweden used case studies as well, while Slovenia tested some new methods which had not been used in the social sector in Slovenia up to that time: essays and observation at work. A checklist of observation at work became a part of the portfolio. Another innovation that we introduced into the already existing system of national vocational qualifications in Slovenia was a guided CV. The common characteristic of all five pilots was that the candidates were very motivated for collecting the portfolios. The pilots were finished by the end of April 2007.

The sixth partner meeting was held at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in Ljubljana from 2–4 July 2007. A summary of all the pilots was presented by the Danish partner. It is interesting that in some of the countries the candidates had contact with the assessors from the beginning of the validation process, while in others they had contact from the beginning of the process only with the advisers.

Candidates who participated in the validation processes in each country were also present at the Ljubljana meeting (one from each country). They formed a

focus group and shared their experience on the validation process. Although some of them felt reluctant towards the process at the beginning, they gradually realized that it was an important process for their career and personal development. It raised their motivation at work, but unfortunately only one candidate experienced a raise in salary after successful completion of the validation process. The focus group was led by Alfonso Alvarez, the external evaluator of the project, who also presented the external evaluation of the project. Among his findings are:

- 83.3% of the assessors, advisers and social partners collaborating in the validation process (other than candidates) think that the process is useful for employees and employers; only 12.5% of them think that it is useful only for employees.
- Only 4.2% think that the process of validation enhanced recognition of the candidates' work in the company.
- 29.2% of them think that new training opportunities were offered to candidates after the validation process.

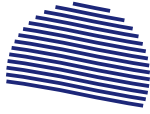
Nevertheless, the candidates think that the process enhanced the visibility of their competencies. The process also increased their interest in further education. Unfortunately they were of the opinion that employers still do not take the results of validation into consideration very much. Namely, for many there will be no salary raise, better position at work or further training after the validation process.

At both partner meetings we also completed the main results of the project: a handbook of methods and tools, handbook of standards, and guidelines for the validation process for advisers, trade unions, companies and assessors.

In the scope of the sixth meeting in Ljubljana, the Swedish partner also presented its Centre of Validation in the City of Malmö to the wider Slovenian public. The Slovenian Institute for Adult Education also granted VOW project certificates to the candidates who participated in the validation process, and confirmations of participation in the project for assessors, advisers and members of the Professional Task Group who monitored the implementation of the pilot.

The conclusion of the project and its final conference will be held in Reykjavik on 28 September 2007.

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Meeting again in Ljubljana **Recognising diversity of non-formal education in Slovenia**

On the Swedish-Finnish border, by the Tornio River and the Gulf of Bothnia, there is a town called Haparanda, with approximately 10 000 inhabitants; in this town there is a liberal adult education center called Svefi Folkhögskola – Svefi “folk high school” or Svefi Academy, as we have decided to call it in English. Svefi was established in 1973. My colleague *Marjatta Morin* and I had the opportunity to visit Slovenia, with *Dr Nevenka Bogataj* from the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education in Ljubljana as our host, from 1–7 May this year. The goal of our visit was to become acquainted with non-formal adult education in Slovenia. The idea was born when *Dr Bogataj* participated in an international liberal adult education seminar in Haparanda and gave a lecture about the situation in Slovenia. Our journey was partially financed through the *Grundtvig 3 scholarship programme* and the EU National Agency in Sweden.

We really did have a nice start for our visit – the first stop was the Celica hostel, which had previously been a prison but now delights tourists with its surprisingly and individually designed facilities. We also got a short tour of the city of Ljubljana and admired the architecture of Plečnik. More contrasts were found in a church which didn't look like a church at first sight, but the interior told us that this was indeed the case.

The next day, our host was *Tatjana Gostiša* from VITRA in Cerknica, and we had the opportunity to learn of the educational offerings in a rural area. They have had, for example, different study circles which deal with everyday life and old traditions; women in the village gathered and prepared traditional food, and the meaning of this was among other things to get youngsters interested in old traditions and lifestyles. During this visit we also experienced Slovenian nature with its “peculiarities”: a lake even vanished in front of our very eyes! Maybe not quite, but we had the opportunity to see a very pedagogical performance in miniature about the vanishing lake.

During our visit we also had the opportunity to hear how CMEPIUS (Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes) works with EU-programmes. *Kristjan Zemljič* explained the different projects which are going on and which they've had, and talked about the financial issues they have to deal with. Interest in EU projects has increased in Slovenia, according to *Kristjan Zemljič*.

At SIAE, the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education, *Dr Slavica Černosa* and *Margerita Zagmeister, MSc* gave us a brief description of the Institute's history and activities, and the goals they have in the field of non-formal learning. We also discussed distance learning with *Dr Bogataj*; Svefi has been organizing distance learning courses in a network together with other folk high schools and study associations in Sweden. These courses are 100% at a distance, and no meetings are arranged. *Dr Bogataj* told us about a training programme for study circle mentors. This programme was a distance learning programme and meetings were also organized. We also discussed the quality of small groups and the benefit of them. Statistics doesn't always give a clear picture of activities; the numbers measure quantity, not quality. In small groups, participants have the opportunity to discuss and share experiences in such a way that can't always be measured in figures.

The Oton Župančič Library in Ljubljana also opened their doors for us. In this central regional library we got to know about two interesting projects and were hosted by *Erika Pečnik*. One of the projects is self-study groups, where people have the opportunity to use computers and space for their own studies and receive technical support and even mentor support. You can decide yourself what you want to study, what area of your knowledge you want to improve. This seems to be a popular way of studying, since we observed that many, even elderly people use this chance. The other project was something new for us; learning exchange. If someone is an expert, for example, in carving wood (or other handicraft), he/she can post a notice of this through a database, saying: "Hello, here I am and I'm good at wood carving. Is someone interested in joining this experience with me or have you something else to offer?" And these persons can actually meet and exchange knowledge and experience with each other; we could also see some of the concrete results of these meetings in an exhibition at the library.

From this light and modern building we moved into the wonderful architectural world of *Plečnik* - the National and University Library. While standing at the entrance and looking up towards the stairs, you really felt a certain respect for the atmosphere of knowledge - we later heard that this is what *Plečnik* actually wanted to achieve. In the National and University Library we really felt the "wings" of Slovenian history.

Špela Jurak from CDI Univerzum showed us around in this college of continuing education and told us about their goals and visions. Most of the students (from 16+) are young people who dropped out of regular schools, middle-aged unemployed people and working people who need retraining, as well as ethnic minority people. In most of the courses, some kind of practical work is included and the students have a chance to get acquainted with future job possibilities and maybe

establish contact with future employers. A new idea that CDI has started thinking of concerns elderly or retired people who live near by and do not have that much to do. Creating activities for them is a new field for CDI. It was easy for us to identify ourselves with CDI Univerzum and their study programme, since Svefi also has unemployed people and youngsters who dropped out of ordinary school. We also arrange activities for retired people.

The "last but not least" place of our visit was Adult education centre Ptuj. The director, *Klavdia Markež*, MSc and her staff took good care of us, and not only did they talk about their activities and show us the facilities, but we also had a guided tour of the old castle on the hill. Among other things, Adult education centre Ptuj also offers self-study possibilities, and we had a chance to meet an elderly lady who is a former German language teacher - now she is learning how to use a computer language program for self-study in German!

During these six days we had a wonderful opportunity to become acquainted with Slovenian non-formal adult education from many different angles. We also saw different parts of Slovenia, the vanishing lake, the one and only lake with an island in Slovenia, the mountains and the northeastern part - the only thing we missed was seeing the coast. This only means that we have to return!

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Svefi, Haparanda, Finland

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

