



EUROPEAN
ASSOCIATION FOR
THE EDUCATION
OF ADULTS

Country Report on Adult Education in SLOVENIA

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Introduction

This Report covers the situation of Adult Education and Lifelong Learning in Slovenia. It is divided into two sections. The section *Policy and Politics* gives an overview of the key policy currently in force, and also outlines the main legislation or political situation in the country. *Structure and Providers* gives a more detailed look at the organizational structures, and also outlines the main adult education providers, mainly looking at non-formal and informal learning.

We want to thank our members for their contributions to this reflection on the adult education situation in Slovenia as far as possible as of 2010/2011. Inevitably there will be new things emerging within the ever changing situation of adult education, but we believe the majority of the information provided will be relevant and useful for the foreseeable future. However, to keep the resource accurate and up to date we are open to suggestions to improve the texts. If you feel there is something you can add about your country please contact us via email at eaea-info@eaea.org.



Overview

Adult education in Slovenia is a wide ranging and diverse form of education and training which includes formal education to gain higher levels of qualification (general, vocational, technical, professional, academic), formal specialised training, and non-formal education and learning of adults. Formal education gives adult the opportunity to raise their educational attainment or to gain publicly recognised qualifications (**certified education**); non-formal education and learning is intended for those who wish to acquire new knowledge and skills, or who wish to refresh, expand, modernise or deepen their skills (**non-certified education**).

Provision of adult education is regulated and supported on different fields and levels, according to respective legal framework, mechanisms and instruments. Programmes financed by public sources are: compulsory education (primary school), secondary education for vulnerable groups, different kinds of vocational training for the unemployed, non formal programmes aimed at improving new basic skills (foreign language, IT skills, active citizenship) and programmes for citizens with disabilities or special needs, minorities and migrants. Other programmes are regulated at the level of provision (providers are obliged to meet defined standards) and at the level of certification (publicly recognised certificates can be issued only for attaining verified programmes).

Politics and Law

The Parliament passes laws concerning adult education and training, and supports the National Programme for Adult Education. Annual Plans and the scope of publicly financed adult education programmes are also overseen by the Government.

Educational legislation

The Adult Education Act (1996) determines the fundamental principles of Adult Education in Slovenia. They are lifelong learning, accessibility of education under the same conditions for all; freedom and autonomy in choosing learning paths, content, forms, means and methods of education, secularity of adult education (which is carried out as a public service), professional and ethic responsibility of adult educators, the respect of the personality and dignity of each participant, and - in the education of adults at the state-approved level of education - obtaining the same standards as in the education of young people.

The Act regulates this system by defining the participants in adult education, educational programmes, and adult students' basic requirements. It also



legislates for the organisation of the educational work, such as records keeping and management of the field, including. planning, division of responsibilities, governing bodies, financing from the public funds, developmental and counselling organisations, testing centres, public funds earmarked for the promotion of adult education and controls. Concerning the educational process itself it deals only with questions, important for the protection of the rights of the participants and for ensuring the quality of educational work, that part of adult education which has the nature of public service and is in the public interest. It regulates the system of public verification of knowledge gained by self-education, or through on-the-job learning, or in out-of-school non-formal education, through which adult learners can obtain a public certificate.

The Organisation and Financing of Education Act (1996) regulates mainly the conditions for carrying out adult educational activities, administration in the field, and financing programmes and institutions. The Act specifies the role of state-approved educational programmes for adults, defines the public network of institutions (public geographical distribution of adult education institutions), defines the performance of public service in the field of adult education, and the components of adult education programmes and procedures for accreditation. The Act defines the sources of financing as adult education activities as such are financed either by public means, by means of the founders, contributions from associations, chambers and employers, contributions and participants' fees, or from other sources (selling services and products, donations, sponsorship).

In the **Elementary School Act (2007)** there are also provisions for the education of adults. Basic education of adults is carried out in such a way that the educational programmes are tailored to the needs and possibilities of adults regarding both the organisation of the teaching and procedures connected with the verification and assessment of knowledge, and the system of progression from one class to another and the weekly schedule of subjects and the duration of instruction. **The Gimnazije Act (2006)** stipulates that "everybody who is employed or unemployed or is older than 18 is entitled to education as an adult. The organisation and duration of the course, the assessment of knowledge and testing and the progression and timetable of the teaching is tailored to the needs of adults. **The Vocational Education Act (2006)** also refers to education of adults. It determines that programmes prepared for young people must be tailored to the needs of the adults; it gives the opportunity for adults to learn through courses for adults or choose a certain module from the general programme prepared for young people. **The Higher Vocational Education Act (2004)** and the **Higher Education Act (2006)** regulate part-time studies and the adaptation of the organisation of studies to the specific needs of the adult students. The public verification of knowledge acquired by independent learning and through work and life experiences is regulated in the **National Vocational Qualifications Act (2003)**.



The labour legislation which refers also to adult education includes the **Employment Relationship Act** and the **Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act**, and also the **Collective Agreement**. The Employment Relationship Act gives each worker the right to continuing education and training linked to the needs of their working processes to maintain their skills in order to remain in employment, or to increase their skills in order to create opportunities for promotion with adequate education and training. The Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act defines the right of unemployed people to access all forms of education and training. Unemployed people gain this right if the Employment Service of Slovenia sends them to training in order to improve their employment opportunities. If the training is declined, they lose the status of being unemployed. Those who enter the training are entitled to repayment of the costs of education.

The rights and responsibilities of workers to education and the rights and responsibilities of employers or institutions regarding education and training are defined by the **Collective Agreement**. There are two collective agreements in Slovenia: **The General Collective Agreement for the Industrial Sector** with respective collective agreements for each industrial branch separately and the **Collective Agreement for the Service Sector**. According to these collective agreements a worker participating in education or training which is in the interest of the employer is entitled to the remuneration of their salary and the repayment of expenses (transport, fees, food and lodging). It is also possible for workers to study for their own interests, but in such cases the employer then defines the conditions of training and remuneration.

The Occupational Health and Safety Act, the **Act on Pension and Disability Insurance**, the **Act on the Disabled by War** and the **Act on Training and Employment of the Disabled Persons** also deal with education and training of adults. According to these Acts, employers are obliged to instruct employees to be able to perform their job safely and to examine their knowledge in this respect regularly; disabled workers under certain conditions have a right to occupational rehabilitation and to remuneration of salary during the time of rehabilitation.

Apart from educational and labour legislation, education and training of adults is mentioned in other legal and strategic documents within various sectors of economic activity. This includes the fields of constitutional regulation, public administration activities, defence, protection against natural disasters, local self-management, exterior affairs, denationalisation, judicial affairs, interior affairs, civil and penal act, public finances, economic activities and banking, service field, and spatial planning and environmental protection.



Future trends/key concerns/directions

The **Slovenian adult education Strategy** is developed within the lifelong learning policy document, adopted by the **Ministry of Education and Sports** (2007). In general, the strategy aims at adjusting learning to the needs of the individual; developing a positive attitude to learning; developing key competences for a quality life for the individual and the functioning of society; increasing effectiveness and creating equal opportunities.

In 2010 a group of experts, appointed by the Ministry of Education and Sports, prepared and published a White Paper, analysing the whole educational system in Slovenia, as well as offering proposals for improvements and development of the system of adult education. It identified that the main goals in the future should be (i) to **attract vulnerable groups**, (such as low educated, early school leavers, elderly, immigrants, disabled etc.) to get involved with learning process, (ii) to **raise the level of educational attainment** (compulsory upper secondary education, financed by public sources), and to **increase possibilities for non formal general education** to enable all citizens to improve their basic skills, such as active citizenship, foreign languages, social skills, IT skills etc.

According to the Strategy and in compliance with the White Paper the renewed acts are expected to be designed and adopted in the year 2012, regulating all levels of educational system, including adult education. Meanwhile the **new mid-term National Plan** will be adopted by the Parliament.

Structure overview

Design and Decision making

The main decision making department for the design and implementation of policy within the field of adult education is the Adult Education Division within the Ministry of Education and Sport. There is also a special department for vocational and job-related training within the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MLFSA), namely the Sector for Lifelong Learning and Scholarships.

The Government has entrusted professional matters and programme development to Strokovni svet republike Slovenije za izobraževanje odraslih (Council of Experts of the Republic of Slovenia for Adult Education - CEAE), which monitors and evaluates the conditions and the development of adult education in the country according to the developmental needs of society, from the viewpoint of quality and international comparability. The Government appoints the members of the CEAE, who are well known experts in the field. Four members are appointed on the nominations of the ministries, three from the chambers, three on the nominations of the social partners, two on the



nominations from the consortia of public institutions and two are nominated by other organisations within adult education or their consortia. The CEAE has its own consultative committees (for the curricula, textbooks, for monitoring of the implementation of the National Annual Plan).

The main document which determines the budget and financial distribution of adult education from public funds is the Annual Plan of Adult Education (APAE). The plans are prepared by the Ministry of Education and Sport and the Ministry of Labour, Social and Family Affairs, verified by the CEAE and approved by the Government.

The most important source of public funding of adult education is public official invitation for tenders for the provision of educational and vocational programmes, which are annually announced by both ministries (education, labour). The invitations are open to all institutions or organisations registered for performing educational services.

There are five institutes set up and financed by the Government that play an important role in the system of adult education and lifelong learning in general: Andragoški center Slovenije (Slovenian Institute for Adult Education - SIAE), Center za poklicno izobraževanje (National Institute for Vocational Education and Training), Zavod za šolstvo (The National Education Institute), Šola za ravnatelje (National School for Leadership in Education - NSLE) and Državni izpitni center (National Examination Centre). The role of these institutes are three fold: (i) researching and developing programmes, methods, approaches, instruments and knowledge in their respective fields, (ii) the training of trainers, and (iii) testing, evaluating, acknowledging and certifying programmes, skills and knowledge.

A part of public funds are distributed to support the networks of adult education providers, such as folk high schools, providing general education, Regional guidance centres for adult education, Study circles mentors' network, or the University of the Third age.

Apart from these, there are substantial financial means earmarked for different target groups of adults, provided by other public institutions or other ministries, e.g. the Ministry for Health for promoting health care awareness, or the Ministry for Environment and Spatial Planning for raising the level of knowledge on environment protection or special educational programmes for different disadvantaged groups. The majority of resources aimed at job related training is, however, provided by employers themselves, although some additional resources are provided also by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs as an instrument of their active employment policy.



Human resources

All teachers and trainers who teach in state-verified educational or vocational programmes for adults must have recognised andragogical knowledge and competences, which can be acquired either at the Department for Pedagogy and Andragogy at the Faculty of Arts (University of Ljubljana), or by attending special corresponding training, after which it is necessary to pass an exam and to receive the certificate of andragogical competences. These are provided and issued by the Pedagogical faculties and Faculty of Arts while Slovenian Institute for Adult Education delivers programmes of continuing education and training for teachers in adult education. Teachers are mostly required to have an appropriate tertiary degree, equivalent to a Bachelors or Masters degree.

Curricula

All publicly verified programmes are subject to verification and approval by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and the Council of Experts for Adult Education. The curricula contain the same main subjects as for young people.

Within mainstream education, the preparation for the matura exam and matura course are intended especially for adults. These courses are provided by public upper secondary schools and folk high schools and financed entirely from the state budget.

Non-Formal Education

Other programmes of non-formal education and training are drawn up by the institutions themselves. Examples of courses which include those targeted at specific needs or categories of adults include: education and training for the unemployed, education for democracy, foreign language learning, Slovene language for foreigners, education for quality of life, education for the implementation of the special rights of minorities, education of adults with special needs, and other types of general adult education.

Some forms of non-formal education have been developed at the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education and are successfully integrated in the practice of adult education across the country. For example, the regional Središča za samostojno učenje (centres for self-directed learning). Courses can be found in various educational institutions, libraries, and in education centres of enterprises. Adults can choose courses based on their interest, e.g., computer programmes, foreign languages, programmes for personal development, or programmes for improving their communication skills.



Study Circles

The Borza znanja (Learning Exchange) and Študijski krožki (Study Circles) are examples of the varied offer of courses for adults. Members of Study Circles define the content of their own learning; the content of learning within study circles is diverse, covering subjects from language, arts, and history (both art and natural), to cooking and baking. Quite often the content is linked to the problems of the community the members of study circles live within.

Literacy and 'Second Chance'

Non-formal education as an alternative to formal education has been developed in the last few years. Projektno učenje za mlade (Project Learning for Young Adults) - is a programme which is aimed at young adults who have dropped out of the regular school system. The participation of adults has grown considerably in recent years in the literacy programme Usposabljanje za življenjsko uspešnost (Training for Life Efficiency) and programmes developed within the Third Age University.

Quality assurance

Evaluation and monitoring of adult mainstream education is regulated to the same standards as the education of young people. Various forms of supervision and evaluation of education are in place, such as the verification of public institutions, regulatory procedures for the adoption of curricula, and obligatory Teaching Certification Examination for teaching and other professional support staff. In 1999, a set of instruments for self-evaluation were introduced in elementary and upper secondary education including people's universities. Other types of evaluation include external assessment of knowledge at the end of upper secondary education in-house evaluation and external evaluation of programmes via external contracted evaluation.

Supervision of the implementation of the curricula for adult learners is the responsibility of the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education which reports their findings to the responsible ministers and to the CEAE. It has also developed a model of self-evaluation for adult education under the name Offering Quality Education to Adults.

Adult Vocational Education and Training

Adult vocational education and training includes forms of formal education to obtain a higher level of qualification (upper secondary and higher vocational education for adults), retraining, and training for less demanding work, and also shorter forms of education including continuing vocational education and training. These forms represent only one element of education and learning. The other



forms include self-education and informal learning, which is not covered by official statistics.

Formal upper secondary and higher vocational education and training of adults are governed by the same legislation as for young people. It has the same curricular structure, objectives, and general admission criteria, options for the continuation of education, levels of vocational standards for the specific profession and levels of qualifications.

Beside upper secondary schools, higher vocational colleges, people's universities and educational centres, in-company centres are the largest providers of job-related training. There is also widespread education and training organised by human resource management departments or personnel departments of companies.

In-service training

In-service training is organised by companies and provided in accordance with the requirements of the work within the organisation. Large companies organise training for their employees within their own premises and using their own staff for teaching purposes. Often companies within the same industry jointly establish training centres for their own training needs, which are then broadly recognized for their quality and as such they can apply for registration as educational institutions.

Guidance/counselling services

There is an organised network of 14 guidance centres for adult education spread across the country. These centres were first introduced in 2001 by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (SIAE). Their main task is to inform the adult population on their learning and/or education possibilities and to support them in choosing the most convenient path or appropriate programme.

Certification system for the assessment and award of National Vocational Qualifications

Adults can acquire vocational qualifications also through alternative means outside the formal school system, by participating in the certified national vocational qualification scheme.

The certification system is regulated by the National Vocational Qualifications Act (2002), which specifies the procedures and the institutions bearing responsibility for the preparation of standards and catalogues of knowledge and skills required by a particular vocational qualification. The act also specifies the conditions and procedures of assessment and award of national vocational qualification.



Organisation

The certification system is a network of institutions and bodies, which enables individuals to obtain a formal recognition or certification for the knowledge and skills they have acquired. To obtain the certificate, individuals must prove what they have learnt and what they can do, instead of providing formal evidence of how they have acquired the knowledge. The certificate is a means for recording the results of lifelong learning, but it also serves as a formal recognition of non-formal or uncertified knowledge, and as an equal alternative to the knowledge and skills acquired in the formal school system.

The aims of the certification system are to provide a quicker and more flexible response to needs of the labour market, to increase economic effectiveness, to improve the adaptability of the economy, and to address social inclusion and reduce the unemployment rate.

The assessment and award of national vocational qualifications are based on direct proving of knowledge, skills and competences or on documents and certificates in the candidate's portfolio.

Financing

The candidates only pay for the material costs of assessment according to the rules published by the Minister of Labour, family and social affairs.

Guidance

The provider of the certificate and the assessment of national vocational qualifications should ensure that the candidates get guidance and information on the possibilities and conditions of the procedures.

With the assistance of a counsellor, the candidates collect documents and other evidence required for the certification of a vocational qualification and prepare the portfolio.

Teachers/trainers

Members of the commission should hold an appropriate degree of education according to the field of vocational qualifications, and a license of the National Examinations Centre, which should be renewed every 5 years. The degree of education appropriate is defined by the catalogue of standards of knowledge and skills. The catalogues are approved by the Minister of Education on the proposal of the Expert Council of Vocational and Professional Education.



Key Providers/Main institutions/Sources for Adult Education

Institutions providing adult education in Slovenia are:

- folk high schools, which provide adult education and training;
- schools and higher education institutions, primarily intended for youth education;
- private educational organisations specialised for the delivery of adult education;
- other institutions whose main activity is not the provision of adult education.

Folk high schools

In Slovenia, 32 folk high schools are currently operating, which were founded by their respective local councils. The major part of what they offer comprises programmes of formal education and most programmes are designed to meet requirements for employment, while others cover general needs and personal interests. The programmes offered by folk high schools include accredited educational programmes leading to certificates and/or qualifications (generally these are programmes for youth which are adapted for adults), formal supplementary programmes and non-formal programmes.

The Association of folk high schools (<http://www.zveza-lu.si/>) provides a professional network and represents the interests of its members (28 folk high schools) with the aim of helping to realise Slovenia's development goals in adult education.

Schools and higher education institutions

The next group of adult education providers includes schools (public and private) and higher education institutions which provide education for youth and adults mainly in formal programmes that lead to a qualification or degree. They also offer short training courses, 'refresher' courses and supplementary and specialisation courses. Some schools have special units for the education of adults with a specialism in adult education only, but more commonly staff from the youth education system are employed.

Private educational organisations which specialise in the provision of adult education mainly offer programmes of non-formal education (foreign languages, services, computing, assistance with employment etc.), however, they can also register to provide formal programmes.



Adult education is also provided by many other institutions whose main activity is not adult education, these include: education centres within companies, chambers of commerce, industry, trade, craft, and small business, vocational and expert associations, and others (such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs), societies, libraries, galleries, clubs and associations). They provide non-formal programmes of adult education. An important share in non-formal education is held by driving schools. There is a range of programmes in non-formal adult vocational education which do not lead to qualifications or degrees but are nonetheless important for enhanced performance within an occupation. Such programmes include computing programmes, offered by authorised providers.

University of the Third Age

An important role, mainly in education for older people, is undertaken by the universities of the third age. The Society for Education for the Third Age (<http://www.univerza3.si>) established in 1986, operates for the public interest; today it is devoted to education for older people for personal growth, improved employability and new forms of adult education and voluntary work. It has three sections: the University of the Third Age in Ljubljana; the Education and Research Institute - devoted to research on older people and intergeneration cooperation; and The Slovenian Third Age University which links 45 Universities of the Third Age in a national network.

The Central Slovenian Region, which encompasses the capital and its surroundings, has the most choice and variety of adult education on offer. This area is where about one quarter of the population over the age of 15 resides, but in some other areas there is considerably less choice. In areas where the proportion of the unemployed, the level of education, and the income per capita are below the national average, adult education providers are few and the population has less access to education. To facilitate better access to education, the government is promoting regional educational networks which are included in the annual adult education programme. These networks are:

- Centres for Self-directed Learning (<http://ssu.acs.si/>) where learning is individual and self-serviced. These centres provide study materials that are adapted for self-directed learning, modern learning technologies and professional help which are provided by information services, advisors and mentors. The programmes these centres offer include foreign languages and some other general subjects;
- Knowledge Exchanges (<http://www.borzaznanja.si/>) are information centres which provide details of those who are looking for knowledge and those who have knowledge to offer. Providers are individuals while users also include businesses;



- Information and Advisory Centres (<http://isio.acs.si/sredisca/>) provide an advisory service for adults before their enrolment, during their study and afterwards. In Slovenia, there is a network of fourteen Information and Advisory Centres; the first one was established in 2001. They operate as part of folk high schools in Life-Long Learning Centres. The operation of Information and Advisory Centres is coordinated by the Slovenian Institute for Adult Education (<http://www.acs.si/>);
- Life-Long Learning Centres (<http://isio.acs.si/sredisca/cvzu>) are regional learning points which develop Internet portals related to learning. They publish e-content for distant learners, provide information and advisory services and they also connect and promote partnerships between regional service providers, the local environment, the economy and the third sector. They provide all types of non-formal learning. Currently there are 14 centres in Slovenia with more than 130 lifelong learning points.

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