

Access of Adults to Formal and Non-Formal Education – Policies and Priorities

The Case of Slovenia

SP 5 – National Report

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The study was financed by:
6th Framework of the EU,
Ministry of Education and Sport, Republic of Slovenia.

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INTRODUCTION

In Slovenia, the transformation of economic structure has been an ongoing process including the structure of enterprises, the fragmentation of big size undertakings and rising of new small and medium size enterprises and in the case of education introducing private institutions of adult education which found their place along the ones that had been in operation since before World War I or after the World War II.

The study explores access of adults to formal and non-formal education looking at it from various points: national strategies, priority groups, vulnerable groups, and institutions of formal and non-formal education and policy makers. The goal is to get in-depth information in order to provide a broader framework. The aim is to analyse the role of education institutions and non-traditional educational contexts in promotion of access of adults to the education system and evaluate through interviews with schools (vocational, upper secondary), institutions of non-formal education, prisons and universities management, as well as government officials, the main obstacles to establish a mechanism for the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access of adults to education system.

The interviewees included in the study were selected on the basis of predefined criteria: organisations of formal and non-formal education at all educational levels represented by the top and middle management, education in prisons represented by the manager and head of education. In case this was not possible counsellors were interviewed. Interviews with ministries involved in educational policy represented by senior Government Officials were also carried out. Seventeen interviews were realised ranging from peoples' universities (non-formal education), upper secondary schools (one private established for adults only and one upper secondary school for youth with a unit for adults), two institutions of higher education (one university and one non-university), a prison, and two ministries (education and sport and ministry of science, higher education and technology).

The selection process of the institutions of formal and non-formal education used the already established network of educational providers and Institute's contacts in the relevant ministries. The prison institution was selected because it had a policy of education of the inmates. All the institutions were approached by letter first and telephone contact after a few days. All accepted the invitation to participate except one person in an institution of higher university education. The reason given was that she was in the office for a short period of time and would not be able to meet the requirements adequately. Nevertheless

she directed the researchers to a person in the same institution that was able to meet the requirements of the research project.

Data was collected by using semi-structured interviews. In the selected institutions we carried out 17 interviews, six of them with top management, eight with middle management (heads of adult education), two with the senior Governments officials and one with the head of adult education sector at the ministry. Interviews were carried out in March, April and May 2009.

In order to reduce the length of time for the interviews with managers and officials, written information was sent in advance explaining what kind of data we were interested in.

The interviews have been carried out in schools, institutions of higher education, peoples' universities, ministries and prisons during their working time. Anonymity of the data has been secured. The conversations have been tape-recorded and later on transcribed by skilled typists. The data relevant for the project available on the internet were taken from there.

The interviews have been analyzed by applying the qualitative methods. Reports for individual institutions have been prepared and are presented hereby serving as the main data source for the preparation of the national, and later on, comparative report.

1 FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

1.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION – NATIONAL LEVEL

1.1.1 Status and extent of formal adult education

Educational system in Slovenia is designed in such a way that adult education forms a complementary system to the education of children and youth. There is no special qualification structure for adults.¹ They enrol in initial education programmes prepared for youth which are at the level of execution adjusted to special needs and characteristics of adults. It is important that education programmes prepared especially for adults as well as youth programmes adjusted to the needs of adults deliver equivalent standards of knowledge and skills to youth education. This means that educational programmes at all levels of education are accessible to adults, from primary education onwards. The laws pertaining to individual educational level also have provisions regulating education of adults. According to the Organisation and financing of education act formal education at each level can be delivered by corresponding schools and other providers that are officially registered and verified for delivering particular education programmes. Primary adult education programmes are the only ones carried out by peoples' universities while programmes at the secondary and tertiary levels are delivered not only by schools and colleges but also by people's universities if they are officially registered for their delivery. In practice only minority of adult formal education is carried out by people's universities as they often lack adequate premises and human resources, and are forced to work in cooperation with schools.

The Law on Adult Education is not dealing with formal adult education. It regulates the conditions for delivering non-formal education, specifically:

- programmes for raising the level of general educational and cultural level of population,
- literacy programmes,
- training for work and profession,
- education and training of the unemployed,
- education for democracy,
- foreign language learning,
- learning of the Slovenian language for foreigners,
- education for the quality of life,

¹ Perhaps the only qualification designed specifically for adults is the qualification of master craftsmen.

- education for asserting special rights of minorities and adults with special needs, and special groups, and
- other general adult education (article 7).

For the time being there is only one route for obtaining formal education which is officially recognised – enrolment in formal education programmes. Since validation and recognition of non-formal and informal education in formal education is not yet implemented in practice non-formal education, no matter how far it is formalised and standardised, does not count towards formal education (Šlander, V., Hvala Kamenšček, P., 2007). From this point of view non-formal programmes may represent an important way for improving and upgrading knowledge and skills and obtaining new competences but they do not deliver higher social status. However, this may represent a competitive advantage when competing in the labour market.

Adult education is administered and governed at the national level. As part of the national education system, it is placed in the Ministry of Education and Sports. This ministry is charged with administering primary and secondary education of adults and – for the time being – short higher education programmes. A special unit for adult education – an adult education sector has been established within the ministry that is responsible for designing national policy and legislation in adult education and executing administrative tasks regarding adult education and its implementation. It is placed in the Directorate of secondary and postsecondary education and adult education. As it may be evident ministerial departments for primary education and secondary general education have no tasks related to adult education.

The tasks of the adult education sector are much broader than formal adult education – they cover the entire field of non-formal education as well.

Formal higher and university education of adults is allocated to the Ministry of Higher Education Science and Technology. Since the enactment of the higher education reform in 1994, the act on formal tertiary education has been distinguishing regular education and irregular education. All those enrolled in part time study in order to be able to participate in the labour market or carry out other roles in the society as well as those young people who do not fulfil criteria for enrolment in regular studies and are ready to pay tuition fee for their higher education are characterised as irregular students. One might even argue that the main difference between regular and irregular tertiary education provided in public sector is that those enrolled in irregular studies do pay the tuition fee and are delivered reduced study programmes in terms of hours of organised teaching process, and in quite a number of

higher education institutions no supporting services are provided to them. Irrespective of that virtually a quarter of all tertiary students are irregular students no one (unit/person) is in charge of them – not to mention the “real” adult students - within the higher education ministry.

It is up to an individual higher education institution to decide to what extent a part time study will be organisationally supported and to what extent it will be left to independent learning of students on the basis of formal structures and rules established by the study programme and individual college or university. As shown in national reports for SP 3 and SP 4 services provided to part-time students differ significantly from one institution to another.

It is the ministry of education and sport that is administering and coordinating lifelong learning. An inter-ministerial group called Strategic council for lifelong learning was established at the education ministry in 2009.

Formal systemic channel through which various stakeholders can exercise their impact on the development of adult education field is represented by the Professional council of adult education established by the Government. It is composed of representatives of the state employers and trade unions, professional public and civil society. The council discusses adult education issues and formulates recommendations to the authorised minister but has no decision making power.

When it comes to the education of various target groups especially the educationally deprived ones the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs plays a significant role. Most measures supporting the policy of equal opportunities are administered through the labour ministry either within the active labour market policy or various other social welfare policies. Stimulating education and learning of vulnerable groups makes the most significant part. Consequently, regulations in the field of labour and employment and social welfare play a significant role when easing access of marginalised groups to adult education is dealt with. Groups underrepresented in adult education such as elderly and migrants, and Roma have found their place in adult education policies defined by the education ministry only most recently but not yet the education of prisoners.

Table 1 below shows the extent of adult continuing education in the academic year 2007/2008. According to the Statistical Office, the attendance was more than 10 % higher than a year before.

Table 1: Providers of continuing education and participation in these programmes, Slovenia, 2007/2008

Organisations of adult education	Number of providers	Attendance in number of participants	Attendance in programmes not publicly valid	Attendance in publicly valid programmes	Attendance in language courses
TOTAL	326	291,205	233,051	33,501	24,653
Peoples' and workers' universities	32	22,255	15,759	932	5,564
Other specialised organisations	110	66,247	44,781	7,175	14,291
Units at schools	36	13,297	10,117	1,670	1,510
Units in firms etc.	42	134,486	134,031	70	385
Educational centres at Chambers	2	5,118	5,118	0	0
Professional associations	15	12,379	10,171	0	2,208
Driving schools	67	23,526	0	23,526	0
Other providers	22	13,897	13,074	128	695

Source: Nadaljnje izobraževanje, Slovenija, 2007/2008 (Continuing education), 10th July 2009, Prva objava (First announcement), http://www.stat.si/novica_prikazi.aspx?id=2474 , July 10, 2009.

Note: publicly valid programme is accredited in legally defined procedures by the respective national body and is nationally recognised but does not deliver the level of formal education.

Table 2: Adults participating in formal education by ISCED levels, Slovenia, year 2006/2007

LEVEL	STUDENTS	
	N	%
ISCED 1 + 2	2,127	3,45
ISCED 3	12,471	20,25
ISCED 4	6,167	10,01
ISCED 5 + 6	40,827	66,29
Total	61,592	100,00

Source: National report SP3, table 3.2.1.

Data in table 2 shows the number of adult learners enrolled in formal education in Slovenia in academic year 2006/2007. At the same it shows the enrolment trend present in Slovenia for quite some time – the majority of adults attending higher education programmes. There are different reasons for this situation the most apparent one the economic value of higher education, better chances of employment and relative safety of employment.

1.1.2 Strategic and political documents related to adult education

Various policy documents at the national level are dealing with adult formal and non-formal education in terms of shares of adult population that should improve their level of education or enrol in educational programmes. The most comprehensive national policy document defining strategic and operational goals in the area of adult education, and activities supporting realisation of the goals set is the Resolution on the National Programme of Adult Education (ReNPAAE) which is still ongoing. It was adopted by the Parliament in June, 2004 and covers the period from 2004 to 2010. The Resolution defines four global aims to be reached by 2010. More specifically there are also three priority fields. All four global aims are considered equal. They are as follows:

1. Improve general education of adults.
2. Raise the level of educational attainment whereas at least 12 years of successfully finished schooling is the basic educational standard.
3. Increase the employment possibilities
4. Increase possibilities for learning and participation.

The three priority fields relate to 1) general adult education and learning, 2) raising the level of educational attainment and 3) education and training for the labour market.

The first priority field - general adult education and learning - foresees that adults will be assured various forms and possibilities to participate in programmes of:

- raising the level of general and cultural education, personal development and social inclusion,
- active citizenship,
- healthy lifestyle,
- environment protection,
- retaining cultural tradition and national identity,
- developing literacy skills,
- acquiring new basic skills,
- decreasing social neglect,

- motivating and stimulating learning and conclusion of abandoned schooling.

In order to achieve the above aims the share of population participating in various forms of general education will reach 6²% by 2010. The activities will be targeted to the following groups: younger adults, less educated, unemployed, marginalised groups, population in less developed regions, migrants.

Second priority field - raising the level of educational attainment – assures adults various forms and possibilities to acquire or finish:

- primary education,
- lower and upper secondary vocational and general education,
- higher vocational education.

It is planned that at least 50% of adults without compulsory primary education will achieve this level while at least 25% of those without finished upper secondary education will achieve either lower or upper secondary vocational or general education, and at least one tenth of those with finished upper secondary education will achieve higher vocational education. In this respect the needs of the labour market will be taken into consideration, while the target group are adults without a level of education and unemployed. Priority in learning will be given to the natural-technical field.

The third priority field - education and training for the labour market – assures adults various forms and possibilities to:

- participate in programmes raising the level of literacy in order to retain, modernise and update the knowledge and skills necessary to increase the employment possibilities,
- acquire National Vocational Qualifications through the certificate system.

It is foreseen that 50% of the unemployed will participate in programmes aimed at increasing the employment possibilities. Those who are employed and whose workplace is threatened because of their low educational attainment will be included as well. Those who are either employed or unemployed and are without vocational or other kind of education, 10% of them will acquire National Vocational Qualification by the certificate system. They are also the priority group.

² The target has already been met in 2006 when it reached 7.4% according to the Analysis of the Resolution on the National Programme of Adult Education.
www.acs.si/upload/doc/61_Analiza_uresnicevanja_ReNPIO_za_leti_2005_in_2006.pdf

By realising the aims of the Adult Education Master Plan Slovenia will by 2010 achieve the following: a) the share of adults aged 25 to 64 with at least upper secondary education will reach 85% (Eurostat 2006: EU (27) – 70.0%; EU (25) – 69.7%; EU (15) – 66.7%; Slovenia – 81.6%), the participation of labour active population aged 25 to 64 in lifelong learning will be at least 15% (Eurostat 2006: EU (27) - 9.6%; EU (25) – 10.1%; EU (15) – 11.1%; Slovenia – 15.0%).

In order to achieve all the aims of Adult Education Master Plan various activities are envisaged dealing with:

- teachers and other professional staff in adult education,
- programme provision,
- information and guidance in adult education,
- research and development activities,
- information relating to provision and demand,
- organisational structure,
- promotion.

According to the law the global amount of public funds necessary to realise the goals of the National Programme of Adult Education had to be set up as well. The distribution of public funds for its realisation is shown in the table below.

Table 1.1: Public funds earmarked for the realisation of the National Programme of Adult Education

Priority field	%
I general adult education and learning	27.19
II raising the level of educational attainment	39.19
III education and training for the labour market	17.43
Infrastructure	16.19
Total	100.00

Adult education is financed in different ways. Formal education is usually paid by either individuals themselves or employers (rarely) with exception of primary education which is free of charge. In accordance with the ReNP AE some programmes of formal adult education are paid by the Ministry of Education and Sport but adults have to apply for funds. Institutions offering adult education are various as well. The most common ones are Peoples' Universities which have a long standing tradition in adult education. Programmes of formal adult education are also offered by schools (upper secondary – general and

vocational) and institutions of higher university and non-university education. With regards to ownership institutions offering adult education can be public or private.

Regional adult education programmes are also foreseen but none has been adopted so far. By and large a majority of communes has not yet prepared an adult education strategy and do not have any money intended for adult education although they are founders of people's universities which are supposed to develop into community education centres. Just a few of them have a tradition of adoption of annual adult education plans and some have started to prepare it.

There are no special national policy papers on adult education in prisons while there are separate (national) strategies defining goals and measures related to specific target groups, e.g. Roma. In case of Roma the strategy defines the basic goals as written in ReNPAAE, while specific ones for adult Roma population refers within the first priority field of ReNPAAE refer to health preventive and Roma culture. Additionally there Roma co-ordinator is defined as the one coming in contact with Roma population and various institutions. No special education is foreseen for this person and the post is supposed to be covered by public works (p.38). The Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MoLFSA) prepared Strategy on the Care of the elderly, relating to social inclusion of the ageing population which includes also adult education as a key to social inclusion and more active life. The Resolution on the National Programme of Higher Education 2007-2010 (ReNPHE) passed Parliament in 2007. Besides the main theme, higher education, marginalised groups are also mentioned though not identifying them as such. The ReNPHE speaks of improving the possibilities for the study of students with special needs (aim 4). In the chapter on scholarships, state stipends are foreseen to render possible the study of socially threatened groups though one wonders how this is going to be achieved since there is no data on the social background of students. Further on, students with a physical disability mentioned in light of removing the barriers - programmes, didactical, architectural and communicational though not as a separate, underrepresented group.

It has to be mentioned that in Slovenia educational programmes are highly standardised, most structural elements are set by respective national regulation mechanisms (statutes and decrees issued by the education minister) and apply to all secondary schools delivering a particular programme. National curricula define 80% of training goals and contents. The school autonomy is limited to developing syllabi and their execution. Schools mainly differ in how quickly they are able to implement changes and how far they are able to use their autonomy in planning the execution of curricula and their actual realisation.

Given the role attributed to formal educational settings by the society one may hardly argue that Slovenia belongs to countries where it is widely recognised that schools are not the only learning settings but just one among them and that other settings are more appropriate for developing competences. Schools are strongly anchored in the society and formal education attested by certificates issued by the education system is the basic mechanism enabling access to more rewarding positions in the labour market. Schools set rules regulating the implementation of recognitions of non-formal and informal learning in the formal education system. The declining young generations may endanger the position of individual schools and teachers, and those are aware of that. To cope with this they develop activities to keep young people in school as well as those which would bring adults back to schools. Measures such as recognition of prior learning, development of modular training, introductions of support to adults who participate in formal education, introduction of outreach activities that would enable access of hard-to-reach groups to education, all serve this purpose.

1.2 INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION 1

1.2.1 Features of the institution/ information on the interviewees

The secondary electro-technical school was established shortly after the II WW (in 1948) as an industrial mechanical school and was situated within a large metal manufacturing company. In the 1950s the school became an experimental school of the National education institute (Zavod za šolstvo). In the next decade it was transformed into training centre providing vocational education and training of young and adults. Iskra, another large company, joined in 1973. Since then the training centre provided vocational education and training also for the needs of factories within the Iskra Company. With an expansion in numbers of pupils the school organised new services such as professional social worker and librarian. Interest activities (e.g. skiing school), were also introduced. At the time of career oriented education (1981-87) the school earned some 4-year secondary technical programmes. Great attention was paid to modernising education and training through introducing advanced learning and teaching technologies such as, specialised workshops, lab exercises, ICT, CNC machines... Some international cooperation was nurtured already at that time.

Economic crisis and industrial restructuring characteristic of first years of the transition period brought the firm which the school had belonged to, to bankruptcy. As a consequence the Republic of Slovenia became the founder of the school in 1992. The school was

thereafter transformed into secondary vocational school with only symbolic cooperation with companies. The teaching staff was intensively involved in the development of 2 year upgrading vocational technical programmes and the school extended its offer of vocational education programmes with these new programmes. The current offer of the school is composed of:

- secondary technical education programme (4 years) –technician – mechatronic,
- vocational technical programmes (2 years) – electro technician,
- secondary vocational education (3 years) – electrician,
- lower vocational training (2 years) – assistant in technological processes; assistant to electrician.

Although the school is state owned it is primarily oriented to fulfil qualification needs of Ljubljana and its surrounding, which is clearly expressed in the mission statement. It is claiming that the school which is the only one with vocational vertical for electro technical field follows - in line with interest and strategies of the development of the city of Ljubljana - the objectives:

- education and upbringing of young people and adults in lower and middle secondary vocation training programmes and vocational – technical programmes in electro technical field,
- delivering to the Ljubljana town and broader surrounding workers with advanced vocational knowledge and skills on secondary level which are comparable within the EU,
- enabling young and adults to participate in prospective work processes of modern post industrial societies,
- promoting vocational education and training in electro technical field among young people in higher grades of primary education.

In successfully performing these tasks the school is to represent an important factor of occupational mobility, the living standard improvement and the development of the environment it belongs to.

Training in vocational vertical enables gradual building of vocation, finishing of the training and exit to employment at various time points (after 2, 3, 4, 5 years of education) and levels of complexity of work. This conforms better to the abilities of young people and interests and expectations of their parents, employers and learners themselves. In addition it enables access to matriculation examination and continuation of study at higher and university education.

Learning and education processes are organised in the way which provides that learning comes close to the nature of work which pupils will perform after completed training. In comparison with other schools the school disposes of more advanced equipments and practical training which to a greater extent enables the development of highest forms of learning and vocational socialisation. Pupils as well as teachers can engage in practical problem solving, research activities and the like.

The school has established a school counselling service which is funded by the Ministry of Education and Sport and regulated by the law on Organisation and Financing of Education, article 66, item 3 (Official Gazette, 98/2005, 07.11.2005). This is typical for Slovenian education system. Following are main tasks:

- vocational guidance and counselling before enrolment in school, at the time of enrolment and before enrolment in tertiary education,
- analysing enrolment and following progress of pupils,
- dealing with pupils of foreigners and organising Slovene language courses for these pupils
- various prevention activities related to drug abuse, aggressive behaviour; workshops on questions regarding sexuality,
- workshops on independent learning and learning how to learn,
- counselling on personal and social development,
- dealing with social issues of pupils and with other problems related to learning, discipline etc.,
- preparation of adjusted programmes for pupils with special needs and monitoring of progression, counselling and provision of help when needed.

Semi structured interviews were carried out with a representative of the school management (C99-R1) and a teacher (C99-R2). Both were women.

1.2.2 Funding sources of the organisation

As already underlined, the school is state funded and as such a public school. A great majority of finances comes from the state budget. But the school earns some additional money through participation in international projects obtained via tenders (European social fund), and through selling products produced in practical work. Individual tuition paid by participants in adult education is another important source of additional finances.

1.2.3 Background data to profile target groups for access strategies

Schools in support of lifelong learning

From the information collected by interviews we first try to find out how the school sees what should be the role of schools to successfully implement lifelong learning strategy.

Our interviewees claim that formal adult education has been too strongly based on commercial principles. Respondent 1 argues that according to the market rules a product which is not in demand in the market is usually dropped. To apply this to formal adult education, when there is no private interest no programmes are available. She suggests that public secondary schools should have greater role in providing formal education to adults and deal with this education as national good (C99-R1, p. 1, lines 7-18). Apart from this she maintains that the modernisation of education carried out in last decade has already introduced the components in the VET system that support lifelong learning. *“It is that, at schools, secondary vocational schools the curricular reform has already done certain things. Those of us who have intensively worked on the reform, where in addition to vocational competences we were able to define well also generic, key competences... it actually comes to the links between the two which is then transferred to work. Here is no demarcation line between young and adults.”* (C99-R1, p.1, lines 40-44).

However with this she does not mean that there is nothing more to be done; changes have to be introduced all the time. *“I will say that changes have been going on all the time, changes are a constant here.”* (C99-R1, p. 2, lines 17-18)

She does not seem to believe that current organisation of work and existing resources at schools comply with greater involvement and responsibility for facilitating lifelong learning. She sees an important step further in the transformation of public schools into education and training centres. In her opinion this would create conditions for bringing in adequate human resources and providing other conditions needed for successful developmental work. The school has been answering to the challenge of emergence of different settings providing competence development by the development of modular education, but to the respondent 1 it seems of more importance to implement validation and recognition of prior learning since (adult) students come to school with different levels of skills and competences. The implementation of modular education would be the next step (C99-R1, p.2, lines 32-36; 44-50).

On the contrary, respondent 2 sees teaching pupils to learn how to learn. *“Yeah...above all to teach them how to learn, as this is what they will have to know their whole life and not the content they learn at present.”* (C99-R2, p.1, lines 15-16). According to her the main curricular changes have already been introduced and have been in the process of implementation. In this respect she attached great weight to the competence based

approach and creation of conditions which support more individualised approach to pupils in terms of *“Very simple and quick answer: less pupils in classes; to have 32 pupils in a class and individually approach to each pupil is impossible..., well it’s difficult.”* (C99-R2, p.1, lines 30-32).

2.2.3.2. Preventing alienation of students from the education system

Early leaving of education system is quite a big problem encountered by secondary schools in Slovenia. Endogenous as well as exogenous factors cause young people to give up schooling. The society and the school system are more inclined to attribute this to deficiencies of individuals than institutions. Recently there has been a strong tendency to retain young people in school at least to finish upper secondary school or alternatively stay in formal schooling by the age of 18 years. We wanted our interviewees to think about measures that schools could introduce in order to motivate young people to stay in education.

Respondent 1 strongly emphasises the importance of an individualised approach to pupils with problems. She claimed that pupils who leave schooling usually have problems. Schools that do have capacities to deal with such problems in the way which does not lead to heavy traumatisms are more successful in the process of returning to school. The practise in the school is to transfer the pupil who decides that he/she is not able to function in the school, in agreement with his/her parents, to irregular (adult!) education. *“I would say that this is about complementing/continuation – since we do this in the way that the pupil gets shifted for certain period of time, perhaps a year, to irregular education and as soon as possible he/she returns back to regular schooling..., and often it works”* (C99-R1, p.3, lines 49-50; p. 4, lines 1-2). According to her such solution does not work when wrong choice of education programme is the reason for early school leaving. From her words it may be understood that no general rule exists, what works for some pupils does not necessary work for others. *“One pupil significantly differs from the other and it is not unusual that the one who was unsuccessful in regular education doesn’t necessarily continue being unsuccessful in irregular education”* (C99-R1, p. 4, lines 8-10). Between lines she is suggesting that the existing enrolment system causes a lot of problems *“In cases where it is about entirely wrong vocational guidance of the pupil, when pupil does not find any strong pillars, goals in the programme it does not work and she/he disappears in a way”* (C99-R1, p. 4, lines 2-4).

She is also pointing out there are more pupils with special needs as well as those with some knowledge and skills deficit who need additional support then officially declared. They have pupils and adult students who do not speak Slovenian language. The school organises language courses for them and they are happy with the achievements.

A counselling service is established at school that deals with problems that may lead to early leaving of the education system but there is a belief that class teacher is the one who is first responsible for dealing with such problems. He/she is the one creating the class climate, recognising early signs of individual problems and being able to react before their full escalation. The school thus heavily invests in class teachers. *“I believe class teacher is a key person contributing to class climate... also other teachers are important but the centre is emotionally stable class teacher who takes care for good climate which significantly contributes to integration of individual pupils in the class environment”* (C99-R1, p. 5, lines 24-27).

To the question whether the school may be treated as typical representative of the Slovenian secondary schools or it differs in its activities in this area she answered that it is not about ranking schools. There is no particular rule. It is a process of constant search for new more adequate ways. *“Each year brings something new, just now the modernisation of curricula is going on, and in fact it prevents repetition, and we will again solve... again search for new ways and opportunities”* (C99-R1, p. 4, lines 20-24). According to her schools mainly differ in the quality of teachers, their personality.

Respondent 2 pointed to the class size as the main problems. For her 32 pupils in a class renders impossible to practice greater individualisation. Same holds for early identification of individual problems that may aggravate. *“In these large classes, it often happens that individuals get lost. You see that he needs help, he needs a hand..., a talk...however... If there were any one to talk to. ... A single teacher may retain a pupil in school and this often happens”* (C99-R2, p.2, lines 39-42).

The next problem she has identified was the fragmentation of curricula. In her eyes linking and integration of individual subjects makes teaching contents and goals more sensible which increases the motivation of pupils. *“I am teaching English and just this very year I have first started to deal with... we have been interlinking English and geography, history, ICT, professional subjects...”* (C99-R2, p.1, lines 30-32).

She agreed with respondent 1 that it is difficult to judge whether they are a typical representative of secondary schools in Slovenia when it comes to prevention of early leaving of the education system. She too underlined that that their counselling service was well organised. The attrition rate decreased but still, it is hard to argue that the pupils are provided with adequate support. She confirmed that most of work rests with the class teacher. He/she bears most of the responsibility but there are also other actors. In addition

to the counselling service provided by the school they use help of specialised institutions and agencies outside the school in the local environment.

1.2.4 Types of support provided to students to enable them to stay on at school

From the answers provided by respondent 1 we may realise that the school organises various activities to equip pupils to deal with personal problems of their own and their school mates. They regularly organise workshops carried out by external providers on issues such as violence, drugs addiction..., they also participate in some projects as it is assumed that pupils may establish better communication with expert people from outside *“Each year we organise workshops, we participate in several projects, e.g. attitudes towards violence and some similar and we have external teachers. Sometimes pupils are more open with external teachers as the school is a system with its rules”* (C99-R1, p. 5, lines 27-29). They react to problems as they come. *“We deal with each problem separately... this year we had a death of a pupil and we had to work a lot with school mates that they were able to place, in a way, this event in most reasonable way – we had to stop, to interrupt... We do not have an expert group to work on such problems, the whole collective of teachers does this...”* (C99-R1, p. 5, lines 21-34).

The counselling service organised in the school premises provides pupils with vocational guidance and counselling when needed. However, to this end they also use services of outside providers. The school is open to the local organisations and initiatives: *“We render it possible that local institutions introduce their work, we open our door to them”* (C99-R1, p. 5, lines 43-44).

At the level of individual pupils the school has introduced an individual learning plan but the measure is limited to less successful pupils.³ All concerned are involved in preparation of individual learning plans: teaching staff, parents, counselling service and the pupil concerned. Individual learning plan is taken very seriously on the site of the school. *“In essence we are saving a pupil in this way and individual learning plan must not be just a piece of paper, ... prepared individual learning plans were mostly all also realised”* (C99-R1, p. 6, lines 10-13). Respondent 2 also agreed that individual learning plans prepared with the

³ Actually there are a few groups of those: the pupils on pedagogical contract because of health problems or some other problems, repeaters of a class who have the right to perform some tasks from successive class, those who have to repeat only certain topics, those who passed to successive class but did not reach national minimal standard.

support of all involved from teachers to parents and pupils are of great help (C99-R2, p. 5, lines 23-27).

According to respondent 1 the school organises various extra curricular activities, some obligatory some voluntary. A list is made and pupils are able to choose from among them. All of them are organised so as to enable a choice among those completely free of charge, nearly free and payable. In any case, the school tries to make them as interesting as possible in order to attract pupils. *"We are looking for quality, what is worth to participate in [...] also to those at risk to become early school leavers, and thus sometime need more emotional approach, and these extracurricular activities are often spaces that bring pupils closer to each other than formal meetings or discussions"* (C99-R1, p. 7, lines 1-3). At the same time she admitted that no extracurricular activities are organised specifically for the pupils who are at risk of early school leaving.

On the contrary, respondent 2 means that extracurricular activities could be better used to motivate pupils. According to her the school is too absorbed into the process of modernisation of curricula and various administrative tasks, and finds no time to organise more than what is mandatory (C99-R2, p. 5, lines 31-33). She mentioned participation in international projects and research activities but she added that only one small group has participated in international projects (C99-R2, p. 5, lines 37-39). Those at risk are not likely to be specially invited to participate in such projects. *"Those who display the tendency to early leaving of schooling... we first try to get them to school, though you are right, perhaps another way would be more successful than words, phone calls..."* (C99-R2, p. 6, lines 1-3).

She too recognised two types of pupils at risk, those who have chosen wrong school/programme; they need vocational guidance and counselling to help them transfer to the right programme. The second group is composed of those who need additional motivation, help to learn how to learn and more individual work, and teachers have no time at disposal to work with them (C99-R2, p. 6, lines 19-24).

Alternatives to suspension/expulsion

Not excused absenteeism is among the factors that most often lead to early school leaving. Accordingly, to retain pupils in education schools have to cope with this phenomenon first. With the new system of financing of schools (lump sum based on per capita) they have to assume greater responsibility for the quality of education in terms of process and outcomes alike. Starting with the organisation of classes in terms of time, respondent 1 is convinced that the school has found the optimum regarding the existing opportunities. Classes are organised in the morning. Pupils who have problems with time are assigned the status of a

»commuter«. Besides they do not distinguish any more excused and non excused absence from school but registered and unregistered absence. The right to judge about excused and not excused absence is left to parents. Parents report to the school the reason of absence and the school just keeps evidence. As a result the number of pupils expelled from school because of not excused absence from classes decreased considerably. None was expelled in this school year (C99-R1, p. 7, lines 12-23). *“In fact we try with the non-punishment policy, as it used to happen in the past that a pupil was punished with unexcused hours of absence but he was not the key person who contributed to that, but all others including the parents who had forgotten to provide written excuse to the class teacher. And it happened that a potentially good electrician, mechatronic etc. was suspended/expelled from the school and that was not good”* (C99-R1, p. 7, lines 31-34).

From what was told by respondent 1 one may assume that, loosening disciplinary measures and implementing non-punishment policies considerably lowered the number of pupils who left schooling before finishing it. New policy of progressing to the next class is another reason for that. It is less strict and provides quite a few options how to compensate for deficiencies without repeating the class. This policy is arising from the 2006 law on Vocational and Professional Education. According to the article 53 of the mentioned law, the principal may decide that the pupil is progressing to the next class. In this case he/she defines the conditions the pupil has to fulfil in order to do this.

Respondent 2 expressed more criticism in relation to the current absence policy. It did not seem consistent to her, besides she assumed that some pupils misused these new rules as they believed that it was their right. *“We have a curious rule..., we adopted the possibility of 15% absenteeism from classes because of which a pupil may not be present at class for 15% of time”* (C99-R2, p. 4, lines 36-38).

Curriculum to engage at risk students

We also wanted to know about the flexibility of organisation of the teaching process, especially whether the school organises the time table more in line with personal needs of pupils and in this way attracts those at risk of early leaving of schooling.

As already mentioned the classes are organised in the morning and within this limitation the school has found in the opinion of respondent 1 the best possible solution regarding the timing. However no organisational measure can remedy the consequences of bad choice of education programme and an inadequate selection process. She exposed again the issue of inadequate selection process on the entry to school and stressed that it may cause

irreversible damage. She argued that the opportunities provided by vocational guidance and counselling in primary school are not used enough. There is still space left. Further more she sees some space left in the process of modernisation of curricula. Interlinking different subjects has become a rule but teachers may represent a weak point as some of them still adhere to traditional ways of teaching. According to her *“a teacher who has thought in his own way for 20, 30 years ... will have serious difficulties to change his/her way... the time will require its time. [...] I expect a lot from this modernisation...”* (C99-R1, p. 7, lines 35-37; 44-45). Although there is a system of in service training for teachers funded by the Ministry of Education and Sport there might still be some who have problems. According to the collective agreement teachers have 5 days per year for training which is usually organised in teachers' free time (afternoons, Saturdays) and sometimes, though rarely, during their working time.

In contrast respondent 2 was looking for motivation mechanisms mostly in teaching and learning approaches. She underlined the importance of teaching and learning methods which activate pupils, especially those that create learning situations close to the one in real workplace. The school managed to create some opportunities; they have established a testing ground (polygon) for practical training and opened a small solar power plant. *“We managed that ... that our head opened a solar power plant... and polygon and I really think that this is great contribution... Pupils who learn about solar energy and actually assemble a solar power plant and work in there... I think this is very strong motivation”* (C99-R2, p.4, lines 21-24. *“And the polygon is house within the house and they really work in there as they were working outside [in a firm], intelligent installations, computer networks, all this. And this seems to me very good for motivation”* (C99-R2, p.4, lines 24-26).

According to her, the school is flexible enough but teachers are overburdened by administrative tasks and lack the time for what should be their main mission – working with pupils. Otherwise she sees great potentials in project work, in linking different teaching subjects with concrete goals. *“4th grades will have the project week in September ... and all teachers and subjects will participate in such a way as to follow very concrete goal, and I think that pupils have stronger motivation for such things”* (C99-R2, p. 7, lines 9-12).

But she stresses again that large groups represent an obstacle to successful work, as not all pupils can get engaged in work, *“they just watch and this isn't it...”* (C99-R2, p. 4, lines 27-28). To picture changes in assessment and grading she described a practical example of work where several subjects were interlinked. *“We have just worked in this project “European Union” with a colleague from England, geography teacher, art teacher and Slovene language*

teacher. The pupils introduced 27 countries at all those subjects and got grades for the same work at each subject” (C99-R2, p. 7, lines 33-36).

Active citizenship at school

Curious enough the school sees voluntary activities primarily as a disciplinary measure as an alternative to punishment and not as an extracurricular activity providing opportunities for developing cooperation with local surrounding, the sense of social responsibility, intergenerational solidarity and competences for active citizenship.

Pupils have the opportunity to participate in managing the school. Respondent 1 described the pupils’ community as a strong one that delegates representatives in the school parliament. Pupils can also delegate their representatives to the school council; they have a say in procedures of adoption of formal acts prepared by the school and in evaluation of work of the school principle. She also claimed that their opinion was usually discussed and taken into consideration. However respondent 2 was sceptical about that pupils are prepared enough to use these official paths. Her observation is that they are not interested. *“This is official form, but this official form..., they do not use much this form. We tell them that they have ways and if they would just realise and know how to use those ways...” (C99-R2, p. 9, lines 13-15).* To the question whether pupils need a help from teachers in this respect her answer was: *“Yeah, certainly, but they are not interested... they just grumble in their benches but to act in organised way this they do not do on their own but with some help from our side they may” (C99-R2, p. 9, lines 19-20).*

2.2.2.5. Adult education at the school site

The school has long tradition in adult education. Looking at the history it actually catered for adult education from its very beginning. After all it was established to fulfil the qualification needs of two largest companies in Slovenia. This tradition was carried on also after the ownership of the school had been transferred from an enterprise to the state. In times when the school was strongly linked to the founding company there were almost more pupils enrolled in the field of mechanical engineering than electro technical field, and adult classes were much larger. With the separation of the fields in 2002 and 2003 only programmes in electro technical field were retained which has significantly reduced adult classes. The school is developing new offers for adults all the time. Nowadays all educational programmes delivered to young people are organised for adults as well. In addition to delivering whole programmes they have been in the process of creating conditions for delivering modular courses. They are about to introduce independent modules which will not give publicly recognised education. However their intention is that the modules would be leading to

national vocational qualification in line with the National Qualifications Act. They also carry out development work in order to create new qualifications. Currently they have been involved in a large project for promotion of alternative resources more specifically, they promote production of solar energy. They have developed a training module which they deliver on commercial basis to various customers. In fact they see great opportunities in developing modular training and to offer it to other schools, to young and adults alike. *“It’s very important for me... I have to say that I work hard on these programmes, this modular building and if the schools were able to cooperate they can carry out these modules... I hope that we will be able to start with modular approach and acquiring national vocational qualifications by building up modules, to start this in September”* (C99-R1, p. 2, lines 44-50).

In general adult education classes are organised at evenings, sometimes also at weekends, but – according to respondent 1 weekend courses have been practiced less and less as students are not inclined to the idea to have classes on Saturdays. For some of them this would increase travelling costs. *“As it is also the wish of the participants, especially those... you know we are Ljubljana and Ljubljana covers quite a large periphery which is to a large extent connected to their work at Ljubljana. And the transportation from C. to Ljubljana on Saturdays represents an additional effort and so....”* (C99-R1, p. 10, lines 22-25).

Speaking in terms of using school premises for the needs of general education of local people, for the time being there is no strong cooperation between the school and local community. For one, the premises are occupied during the whole day besides there is no real demand on the site of the local community. The school used to rent some premises to some adult education providers and they still do if those are not occupied by their pupils. So far they do not have security problems and even if they had this would not affect such kind of cooperation. *“Thinking from the standpoint what is more important for me and then weight what else could be for me better protection than 200 or 300 students who know why they have come to school in the afternoon – no security guard at the door can be better guarantee than such group of adult students”* (C99-R1, p. 11, lines 7-11).

Respondent 2 additionally confirmed that there were no such cooperation with local community, but they cooperate with firms and enterprises and with some private adult education providers who deliver similar programmes. Such kind of cooperation is more or less typical for almost all schools in Slovenia. It is usually based more on economic basis - letting (renting) the gym or some other premises, rarely on working together. It can best be described as ‘living in parallel worlds’.

Support provided by the school to underrepresented groups

It is typical that the school in the first place associates with hard-to-reach groups of adults the financial capacity of individuals to access education. The school offers irregular education as entirely commercial activity. The fee has to be paid by participants. It is actually dealt with as a market service. The differences between various social groups are mostly visible when individuals bear the costs by themselves. It happens that the payment has to be postponed, or extended to more years. Even if there were means available it is against the law to transfer finances from regular to irregular education. *"It is very important here how supportive the school can be. We participated in ESF tenders and from these means we reimbursed the entire tuition fee. This was met with a wide response, as these are not all that small expenses"* (C99-R1, p. 13, lines 1-4). But there are other small benefits available by public schools to youth which can be at the disposal to irregular students, such as study materials, library, counselling service.

Distance education on the school site

The school is well equipped with computers and the internet and they strongly promote their use in the teaching and learning processes. By the end of this school year all classrooms will be equipped with Internet. Following our interviewees the school is well equipped with "hardware" but has no adequate "software" to develop distance education. *"We have been working on it, but we are there again. If I were able to organise special service to work on it - if this is something additional it is too burdening - we would have had it long ago"* (C99-R1, p. 11, lines 25-27). Most recently the school has been promoting internet classroom as a desirable way of working with pupils. It has become rather common practice of many teachers to create internet classroom where learning materials are available. There is also a forum with e-mails for electronic communication. However there are still pupils who are not skilled enough to take this opportunity. *"I can speak for myself. We have internet classroom and those who want to use it get passwords. And there are ever more making use of this possibility... I think that not all of them - the whole group – are ready for that as yet, but the process is gradually moving in this direction"* (C99-R2, p. 11, lines 4-5; 12-13).

Links between the school and third level

As described in the background information, the school provides the entire vertical in the field of electro technique, from lower secondary vocational education to programmes providing matriculation examinations and thus the access to tertiary level studies. Young people and adults can obtain qualifications that lead directly to the labour market and enable access to tertiary education as well as qualifications that enable access to tertiary education only via special preparatory programmes (2-year vocational-technical education).

It is a general tendency to pass matriculation exam and continue at the tertiary level which holds both for young and adult participants. Especially regarding youth education the school takes care that representatives from tertiary education organisations come and introduce their studies; sometimes they are invited to participate in the delivery of a programme. In this way students get the information in which way their education careers can continue. The counsellor also hands advertisements of higher education institutions to pupils and she is available for additional information and counselling. In addition pupils attain information days organised by higher education institutions. As regards adult students respondent 1 in a way suggested that the school leaves it to themselves to figure out whether they can afford to continue their formal education and where. *“One has to know that irregular study in a certain sense takes time ... and it takes time either from the family or some other planning ...and within this is usually made the decision, how much time can one afford in a particular moment. [...] The word “can” is accentuated here, and “how much one can afford”* (C99-R1, p. 12, lines 32-36).

School climate and teacher training

Permanent investment in competences of teachers for coping with new requirements posed in front of schools in constantly changing economic and social circumstances is strongly stressed in various policy documents. Especially when it comes to adult education some evaluation studies (Evalvacija izvedbenega kurikula – Evaluation of the execution curriculum) suggest that teachers lack adequate competences to successfully deal with concrete circumstances. In Slovenia teachers are formally entitled to 5 days yearly for in-service training. The system of promotion of teachers is also closely connected with investment in training. However it appears from the information collected by our interviews that in-service training is primarily meant for the improvement of professional competences while more soft skills needed for conflict solving, participative learning and the like appear to be more related to individual personality. *“Personal attitude of each individual is of key importance here. Some people are naturally so equipped as to be more able to cope with this and those who have greater difficulties. However we know that knowledge is very important”* (C99-R1, p. 13, lines 23-26). Respondent 1 further mentioned that they organise workshops where teachers learn how to deal with such problems. In her opinion not just in-service training but social learning and experiential learning in concrete environment and knowledge sharing within the school and outside in various working groups significantly contributes to the development of skills needed for successful resolution of problems as well as to learn new approaches to teaching and learning. *“Yes, we do organise in-service training and it’s never enough of these skills. But individual readiness to learn all the time, to supplement this knowledge, this is what should be the leading principle for the individual and this can not be*

provided by organised learning ... I believe that non-formal learning, internal sharing of knowledge and information, this is very important and this seems very good to me” (C99-R1, p. 13, lines 33-38).

At the same time teachers would like to have more time available for upgrading their skills and competences. Respondent 2 described the feeling of fear and uncertainty caused by changes in their approach to the preparation of new training programmes. They are charged with great responsibility, which in the past was not the case *“Those are such new things now, first you get scared. It’s a lot of all this, some dislike at first, but then it goes some way as we need that. But we also need a lot of help from outside. To let the whole programme like, now the four of you will create [note: renewed training programme], this is difficult, demanding, and I think to great a responsibility... there has to be a broader national picture or in relation to the economy...” (C99-R2, p. 12, lines 26-31).*

Concerning teachers it appears that they are rather unhappy with work they do not consider teacher’s work (paperwork such as planning, reporting, doing evidences) and which in their eyes does not contribute to the quality of teaching process and reduces scope of time they could devote to their personal development. *“Yes, schools should be given more peace..., also teachers need more peace in order to be able to work on their personal development. You have to work first on yourself if you want to be good in the class. This has to be first, not to exhaust teachers too much, as they will work badly in such case...” (C99-R2, p. 12, lines 41-43).*

At the end we evaluated some findings from the results obtained in the SP 3 subproject about the share of teachers participating in in-service training. We have found out that about 94% of adult education staff participates in some kind of training. We wanted our interviewees to evaluate effects of reforms and national policy on these results. Respondent 1 maintained that it was the time full of instabilities that demanded permanent learning and training. Not participating in training in her eyes means not being successful. *“I can’t imagine how for instance a teacher who finished schooling 30 years ago and thereafter has not participated in any further training would teach computer programming” (C99-R1, p. 14, lines 3-4).* Respondent 2 also suggested that profound changes which were introduced in the education system in the last decade have forced teaching staff to intensively participate in organised training. However only 5 days per year are legally set aside per teacher for training and these days are devoted to professional matters while there is no room left for other training needs (C99-R2, p. 12, lines 48-49). This means that in-service training is usually organised for all different subjects and all fields teachers are involved in. The problem is that only 5 days per year for training is not enough to cover all teachers’ needs. Teachers usually

attend training related to the subjects they teach and some others workshops or seminars as well, but not all they wish to. In principle they could go to more seminars, but then they would have to take a day off and it is difficult to find a replacement for the day. Apart from this there might also be a question of finances which are not limitless and have to serve many teachers in the school.

1.3 INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION 2

1.3.1 Institutional strategies, structures and review processes

Institution 2 started its activity in 1996 within the framework of the educational centre that is placed in south-east Dolenjska region of Slovenia. Their programmes serve approximately 1000 students in a wide variety of programmes, supported by on-line teaching resources and lecturers coming from the enterprises. Studies last for two years. A good third of the programme consists of practical work in companies. Applicants having passed a final examination after a completed four-year general ("matura") or technical secondary education ("professional matura") may enrol. They are carrying out several programmes. In 2001/2002 they have started "environmental engineering", in 2002/2003 "electronics" and in 2005 "transport and logistics". Programme of mechanical engineering and environmental engineering are organised both for regular and adult students. Electronics, transport and logistics is organised only for adult education. All the programmes are based on the use of on-line resources.

As for typical student profile, in general they recognize two groups of students: adult, non-traditional students and regular students. Regular students enrol in our institution immediately after finishing their secondary school. They have less applicative knowledge and less skill compared to adult students. They have theoretical knowledge mainly, and that is reflected in the way that they approach studying. Adult students who in most cases pay for their education are more motivated, have applicative knowledge and therefore can be more involved in the process of learning.

One interviewee also noted their social class has been lower than in average tertiary education student population (especially students who come directly from secondary school): *"... the majority comes from lower classes, because this is the most accessible educational programme for them – it is in their hometown and it is less demanding. They also have a possibility to continue their education"* (E02-R2, p. 1, lines 5-8).

As interviewees told us, they do not actively seek traditionally marginalized groups in education. They do not exclude them; they all have the same possibilities to study here. If they fulfil formal conditions for inclusion, everyone can take study in the centre. In the past, they had some language problems with students from ex-Yugoslavian republics. They helped them overcome these problems with tutors and instructions. There were also some students with health problems (e.g. epilepsy). In those cases, they consulted external experts on how to help them. School's tutors and teachers were informed about that, too.

In Slovenia, institutions usually have not set up any specific targets for the inclusion of different risk groups. The only risk group identified in Slovenia with regards to quotas are students from other countries. The ministry defines these quotas. They vary from 1-2 %. Other groups are not defined.

As second respondent told us they have a very small number (1-2 %) of foreign students. The main reason for their coming is that they have relatives; they have no possibilities for education in their home countries. They are mostly from ex-Yugoslavian republics (Serbia, Bosnia, and Croatia).

There is also no formal committee to promote and implement an agenda for increased access in the college and they are also not systematically monitoring the number of marginalized students. *"Yes, I know ... not separately, separately no, but we would tackle this if the number or pressure were, let's say, bigger..." (E02-R1, p.2, lines 15-16)*. Generally, they promote their programmes together with secondary school informing the pupils of the programmes they deliver.

They also don't do any specific strategic planning of promoting increased access. They are making yearly plans, where they define how they will promote their programmes in media (local TV and newspapers), organisations and upper secondary schools.

Both interviewees think they are a typical tertiary school in Slovenia.

1.3.2 Institutional climate

The school is not aware that any from these target groups are employed in the school centre.

As the main advantage for institution in having a diverse student population they see a positive contributions to formation and dynamics in a group. Students support each other and connect to each other. Groups are more tolerant. In their experience, diversity has positive impact also on teachers.

1.3.3 Outreach

Presently, the school does not have any special promotion for underrepresented groups. They prepare people to present properly their programmes and what their institution offers. All groups of adults come to these presentations, among them also marginalised groups. They can also come to student services office if they want some additional information.

As regards the future promotion of schools programmes in underrepresented communities, they think that it will all depend of the size of the group. If there is an increased interest of such groups for their education programmes, they will surely detect the need for new approaches. They would try to integrate the themes with others, and if necessary have some additional activities for them. Currently, they handle this individually – with tutors.

Institution's building is available for evening and summer events for many associations. Especially in the summer time, they can use it in the evenings for their meetings, lectures etc. *"Yes, yes, they also, also use it. Various societies use lecture rooms, above all as a place for their meetings, lectures and similar matters, don't they? ... but this in the purpose of their organisation, this is to say we only lend the premises, that is, we give the premises, yes..."* (E02-R1, p.3, lines 37-38, p.4., lines 1-2).

1.3.4 Transition programmes

They do not organize any specific preparatory courses. The only thing they do – and it is unrelated to marginalized groups – is organisation of additional classes for gymnasium students. These students' previous knowledge is too general and they lack specific technical skills (e.g. technical drawing). They also need additional knowledge about some technical subjects that they will learn in the programme.

The school is more focused on promotional activities. These activities are primarily formal in nature and are usually organised by the ministry. They are targeted to all groups of potential students, not just the disadvantaged ones. They are delivered in the school location and dis-locations. As a deputy director of the schools says: *"We make an arrangement with and organizer/tutor with a group of students. We publish information about our programmes in local newspapers, radio and TV"* (E02-R1, p. 3, lines 108-10). They also organise visits to Folk High Schools and inform their participants about their programmes. These events are organised approximately three times a year: at the beginning (September), in the middle (February) and at the end of the school year (April/May).

1.3.5 Admission policies

There are no additional criteria for non-traditional students. All students regardless of their characteristics have the same possibilities to enrol in programme. *“All citizens are equal.”* (E02-R1, p. 3, line 124)

The same is true for scholarship or grants for disadvantaged groups. Most educational institutions in Slovenia do not give any grants or scholarships. They are regulated nationally. Occasionally companies are interested to employ specific students, and give them scholarships. The only kind of financial support that is provided by this institution is indirect – a possibility of instalment plans. Students who don't want (or can not afford) to pay all the scholarship amount at once, can put in an application. It has to be stressed that this option is open for all students, not only disadvantaged ones. At the time of interviewing, there were approximately 10 students using these instalment plans (from 900 students in total). Usually first instalment is paid in October, the second in January, and afterwards each month.

1.3.6 Recognition of prior learning

As far, as recognition of prior learning is concerned, they are mostly recognizing previous formal education as much as possible. They recognize knowledge that can be “proved on paper”, and is certified by institution e.g. other faculties or schools. They are much more reserved with recognizing non-formal knowledge, because no standardized certificates are available: *“we cannot approve some certificate that we don't know. We don't know how it was achieved”* (E02-R2, p. 3, lines 107-08).

As our interviewees stress on, regarding knowledge and skills gained non-formally, some exceptions can be made based on work experiences: *“Occasionally we also recognize non-formal knowledge or skills. If someone for instance has a lot of experience on a subject (e.g. computer skills), his teacher will give him tests to prove it, and eventually he can skip exams, lectures or compulsory practical work”* (E02-R2, p. 4, lines 130-32).

By the Slovenian laws, if someone worked longer than three years, the school must exempt him from practical work (it lasts 10 weeks) when he enrolls in the programme. Practical work is obligatory for other students not reaching this standard or, if they are enrolling as regular students. Regarding school subjects, things are different. For adult – and regular students, if they were employed – teacher can file in an application to faculty committee for dispensing them from certain exams. Student must present some proofs and documentation about the knowledge acquired in other educational programmes (school certificate or reports and similar). Committee evaluates submitted documentation and decides if this student will be completely or only partly excused from doing this exam.

Both interviewees agree that the main obstacle to recognize prior non-formal learning is transparency and standardization of acquired knowledge and skills. In their opinion to improve non-formal certification, certain national directives or at least inter-institutional agreement should be made about giving proper certificate about knowledge and skill gained at some non-formal course. At the moment, they are having discussions in the community of post-secondary schools about possibilities of recognizing non-formal knowledge, and developing tools to do that.

They do not evaluate or assess any needs, skills or knowledge. They say that in a school like that this is not necessary (like for instance in artistic academies etc.). On the other hand, students from general (non-technical) secondary schools are warned that some additional technical knowledge will be required.

1.3.7 Supports

This institution does not run any support service on its own. They are liaising with support services in secondary school (which is in the same building). They have an agreement with the counsellor, that she occasionally presents to students the possibilities of counselling on learning and organisation of study. Afterwards it mostly depends on an individual student initiative or interest if he/she will make good use of this opportunity or not. Their experiences show that the biggest problems are connected with planning and approach to study. *“We plan their learning together, and it is both, educative and motivational. Unfortunately, a lot of them realise their problems when it is too late”* (E02-R1, p. 5, lines 186-7).

Institution does not have any particular guidance related to emotional or behavioural problems. Most often, their staff in student services office detects those kind of problems and advice students to whom they should turn to, most of the time to an adviser within their institution, sometimes to external experts. To date, they didn't have a case with a need for psychological or psychiatric help.

They don't have any specific career, academic, access, literacy, or financial support services either. The main (and only) support service is “Students' service office”. In this office, they give information and directions about every aspect of study programmes. Occasionally they also attend job-fairs, and listen to lectures about employment.

1.3.8 Distance learning

In this institution distance learning was begun in the academic year 2001/2002. They are carrying out this programme as a blended learning: approximately 50 % of lectures is held on dislocation and 50 % online. Online learning process is mostly dedicated to discussions, chats, downloading learning materials, live presentations etc. Currently they are working on expanding this online experience with more sophisticated ways of learning and videoconferencing. They have six e-learning programmes (machinery, electronics, ecology, logistical engineering, woods and informatics), that are carried out in eight dislocations (study centres). They also employed a person that is working full-time on support to distance students, and is available to them practically 24 hours a day.

For now, they haven't linked distance education programmes with disadvantaged groups or areas. They are aware, though, that the main benefit of offering distance learning is especially for those adults that live in locations and regions where previously there were no educational offers. They are promoting it as a more accessible education to a wider audience of adults that are interested to participate in education.

Other than "location", there are no other links or ways of promotion of distance education among disadvantage groups. From their answers we can establish, that they think that this is also the main if not only reasonable aspect of widening access to education. Also, they do not see distance learning it as suitable for other marginalized group: *"We know that students must be more motivated to learn at a distance. In our experience, there are no problems with motivation, because they all have very strong goals already at the beginning of education"* (E02-R1, p. 6; lines 246-8).

1.3.9 Course content

Both interviewees opinions on recession are similar. They both agree that at this moment they do not feel any influence. They don't expect it really – at least for full-time studying. They even think that the lack of jobs or unemployment will even increase participation or have at least some positive impacts: *"Since there will be some potential students that gained new opportunities in their careers, they will be more motivated and willing to participate in education"* (E02-R1, p. 7; lines 267-9).

On the other hand, they allow the possibly that consequently in adult education some decrease in participation will be felt, because employers will not be able to pay for school tuition: *"With adult education in mind, maybe there will be a little decrease, because their employer paid sometimes 30% of the school tuition. On the other hand, it will be in their own*

interest to get an education because they will be more employable as workers” (E02-R2, p. 6; lines 210-3).

1.3.10 Additional questions for formal education

45.5% of ISCED 5 level institutions offer open lesson days either often or very often.

This institution alone does not organize open lesson days. They collaborate with upper secondary school.

94.2% of institutions across ISCED levels 2-5 provide in-service training for staff.

Teachers have many possibilities for continuing training. In most cases they are trained outside institution. They pick a course they need and school will usually pay that for it. They don't think national policy has a lot to do with it. In their opinion national policy mostly influence formal advancement of staff. They think training of teachers is foremost in schools' and teachers' interest. *“It is in schools best interested to have qualified and satisfied staff, so most of the time the school pays for fees” (E02-R2, p. 6, lines 231-2).*

78.4% of ISCED 5 level institutions reduce their enrolment fee to increase access.

They do not reduce fees. As explained before, the only thing they offer is a possibility of instalment plan. However, it must be noted that it is not limited for particular (disadvantaged) groups, but for all students that wish to pay for tuition fee monthly.

38.7% of ISCED 5 level institutions reserve places for disadvantaged groups

They do not reserve places for disadvantaged groups, and they do not feel any need to do so⁴.

⁴ There is no tradition of quotas in Slovenian schools or universities except for minorities. Education in socialist times was considered a public good and the state was trying to make it accessible to all either through subsidies (co-financing accommodation, transport), scholarships and now also food vouchers. The same practice is still valid. In socialist regime e.g. quotas were applied more to political life e.g. shares women and young workers in parliament, trade union and communist party.

1.4 INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION 3

1.4.1 Institutional strategies, structures and review processes

This faculty is a member of the University of Maribor and has a seat in the northern part of Slovenia. It has a long tradition in the field of education and scientific research in the field of managerial work in organizations. The Faculty executes three study programmes covering the field of human resource management, processes and information:

- organization and management of business and work systems
- organization and management of human resource and educational systems
- organization and management of information systems

The faculty's educational activities take place within the pedagogic unit, which includes various chairs, the Information Technology Centre, the library and the INDOK centre. The scientific research activities are organized within the institute for organization and management, research centre and the individual laboratories. In addition, the Faculty also comprises the centre for education and counselling and a publishing house. The Faculty publishes the scientific journal as well as many textbooks and professional books each year.

Our interviewees from the institution of higher university education do not think that some specific groups are currently included in their programmes. There is approximately the same number of male or female students, the age groups are quite equally distributed. Among adult students, there are 19 % students younger than 24 years, and 21 % of students are from 30-40 year age group. The shares of other age groups are around 10 %.

There are no representatives from under- represented groups. Regarding nationality, 99 % of students are Slovenian, some are from the ex-Yugoslavian republics and only very few from other countries.

The institution has made special regulations for students with a disability, although these students are not participating in their educational programmes in big numbers (at the academic year 2008/9 two persons with a disability were studying at their faculty). Otherwise the interviewees did not mention any other specific targets for inclusion or risk groups. Having said this, they also do not have any Social Inclusion/Access/Lifelong Learning Committee at institution level.

When they promote they do not promote their programmes especially for specific at-risk groups. Their promotion is equal for all potential target groups. The same promotional approach is used for full-time and part-time students. They, nevertheless have some innovative approaches (at least in Slovenia) in promotion of their faculty: *"This year we*

printed calendars that were distributed to students of 56 upper secondary schools... to promote our faculty. We will be also advertising through jumbo posters this year. Last year we organised a rock concert for upper secondary school students" (G01-R1, page 1, lines 46-8).

They have systematic approach to promotion that includes all aspects of promotion i.e. open-school days, participation on educational markets (fairs), web site, direct promotion through mail and e-mail newsletters, billboard ads, banners on other websites etc. In the academic year 2008/09 they employed a professional that takes care of promotion of their school and educational offerings. They find that a bigger stress on promotion is necessity, because: *"Competition is getting stronger... there are new programmes arising all the time ... then there is a decline in demographics..."* (G01-R2, page 2, lines 65-6).

As mentioned, these promotional activities are not focused solely to at-risk groups, they are general activities. According to the dean of the faculty, they grasp around 75 % of Slovenian population. In his opinion, this is sufficient for (at least) Slovenia. In practice, they are monitoring social class of their students, and there are no differences: *"I can say at least for full-time studies that in our faculty you can find a student whose parents are top managers and a student whose parents are unskilled workers or farmers"* (G01-R1, page 2, lines 79-81).

They think their organisation is typical tertiary organisation.

1.4.2 Institutional climate

None of the target groups are employed in institution. They do not meet with many advantages or challenges of a diverse student population, because the student population is not very diverse. In principle they agree that diversity stimulate tolerance and development of multicultural competencies.

1.4.3 Outreach

Institution is open regarding availability for evening and summer events for the local community and/or target groups. There is no problem to give other profit or non-profit organisations rooms, when they are free. They do that free of charge⁵ – they do not demand any money for that. They also let several student organisations (AISSEC, sports clubs etc.) to use their offices free of charge.

⁵ It is quite possible they do this because their new premises were built, not only with funds from the state, but mainly with donations and funds from various companies.

1.4.4 Social interaction to promote social network supports

There is no peer mentoring practices in this institution. In addition, no information regarding opportunities for social interaction was given.

Students give no specific feedback on outreach strategies, availability of relevant information to underrepresented risk groups, access supports and entry process. Institution collects a more general form of feedback that is more focused on courses, and more general study and students matters. They use several questionnaires for collecting feedback.

1.4.5 Transition programmes

They don't have any preparatory or foundation courses. They only have differential exams for those students that are not fulfilling the enrolment requirements or those coming from other institutions of higher university education where the programme was somewhat different.

1.4.6 Admission policies

Institution does not and cannot have any schemes for reserved places for traditionally disadvantaged groups. In Slovenia, this is managed at a national level. At the moment, only quotas for foreign students are in action. There is no law against having quotas but it is customary to adhere to what the relevant ministry is saying concerning reserved places. The faculty could have its own policy concerning the issue but in this respect it is focussing on different issues.

They do not offer any scholarships, grants or fee reduction schemes operated for traditionally disadvantaged groups. This is kind of a general characteristic of institutions in Slovenia. In theory faculties do not have any funds or other possibilities for autonomous decisions or strategies for stimulating non-traditional students to learn though in practice they could do so if they decided on such a policy. They only offer instalments plan. In the near future, they are planning to offer student-loans and in a few years with the demographic change one might expect scholarships and other drivers as well.

1.4.7 Recognition of prior learning

In Slovenia, the recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience in order to open access for adults to the education system is mainly based on formal knowledge. Second respondent said that she was aware that according to Bologna programme students have a possibility of recognition of non-formal learning, but they do not have these experiences yet. At the moment they are recognizing only formally achieved knowledge, i.e.

degrees or/and exams attained in other schools or programmes. Teachers must examine the contents and the length of the course, and then he/she decides if it is fully or only partly sufficient. The dean says that at the moment the situation does not make it possible to recognize any other knowledge. There are no defined criteria that would allow systematic and system-wide recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience. He also thinks that in the age of exceeded commercialisation of education in Slovenia, situation for that is not right. *"I think that at the moment there are no possibilities to recognize anything, [...] when there will some higher degree of culture, this will also enable recognition of such knowledge. In this aspect I think we are still acting still in a very –Balkan- way"* (G01-R1, p. 9, lines 405-7). They do not assess specific needs or skills (including literacy skills) in this institution

1.4.8 Supports

The faculty is at the moment not equipped with support services. Support is mostly "happening" at the student's office. All students with problems are asking questions there, and the staff directs them to external institution if solution to the problem is not within their reach. Dean stresses that in fact they have one support service – a committee for social events. This committee is responsible for organising all kinds of social events. Other services (e.g. tutoring) are all non-formal. They are not organised and managed by the school but by students that are interested or need these services.

Currently they do not have any career support centre. Dean recognizes that such a centre is an important pillar of faculty's work and is planning to implement it soon: *"I know that the lack of career centre is one big anomaly of this faculty. Unfortunately, we did not have it in the past. I have a plan to do that, but in the past few months, since I was elected a dean, I didn't manage to get to it"* (G01-R1, p. 10, lines 460-463).

There are no other support services in the faculty right now. They think that they actually don't need it, although there are cases when students have very little knowledge about their own language grammar. They blame Slovenia school system for that: *"We have created functional illiterate in operationally incapable people"* (G01-R1, p. 11, line 496).

1.4.9 Distance education

At the time of interviewing, they did not have distance education offering faculty's programmes. They were working to implement e-learning in the near future on the Moodle learning platform.

The dean said that their teachers already made available their lectures and presentations on faculty's website, but acknowledged that this was only a part of making education accessible to students, but could not label it as e-learning or distance learning: *"Look, our teachers, and me also, we all have some websites where we attach presentations of our lectures, learning material etc, but that's not it"* (G01-R1, p. 11, line 531-2).

They have trained staff for making e-materials, computer servers, and a webmaster, so distance learning will be available soon. In their plans it will not be 100 % online learning, but blended with "live" lectures and meetings with teachers.

1.4.10 Course content

At the moment there is no specific strategy to promote learning that is activity-centred and learning as a social practice.

As for recession, dean thinks that economic crisis is ending, and that we are coming in a second phase, which will be much more critical, and will be influenced by inflation.

1.5 INDIVIDUAL INSTITUTION 4

1.5.1 Features of the institution

Institution 4 is a private adult education provider that carries out formal and non-formal adult education. It was established in 1989 starting with the supply of computer training and in 1996 it has extended its offer to some formal education programmes at the secondary level and tertiary level (2-year vocational college). The study is carried out both in classical form (teaching classes) as well as e-study/distance education. Students pay for the study.

The organisation is declared as a leading provider in computer training. In its mission statement it is declaring that its mission is to help people to increase their productivity, competitiveness, and satisfaction by using information technology. It has been creating trends in education and information technology. It has been strengthening its market role, responding quickly to innovations and enriching its activities in the field of education and information technology solutions.

Further more, the institution has been investing in high quality services and mutual relations. Since 1998 they have pursued ISO 9001 quality standards in the field of computer training. In years 2006, 2007, and 2008 they were awarded an international award for their multimedia achievements. In 2007 the institution received special national prize as one of the best vocational colleges in Slovenia.

Secondary school and 2-year vocational college function within the organisation. Our case study is represented by 2-year vocational college. It delivers 3 study programmes – ‘business secretary’, ‘economist’ and ‘information sciences’. About 2300 students were enrolled in these programmes within 10-years period.

Two interviews were conducted: with a member of the management and a representative of administration and organisation staff. Both interviewees were women in the age bracket 27-35. They had university education.

1.5.2 Funding sources

The institution is profit oriented provider of adult education and training; its training offer is entirely commercially based. This is clearly shown also through the introduction of education programmes on the web page. It generates its income in the market from fees paid by the students; some money is also earned through participating in public tenders.

The study costs are divided as follows: a registration fee which is uniform and amounts to 270 €; a tuition fee which differs among programmes and amounts from 1,555 to 1,835 € per study year, depending on the programme; sitting for final exam amounts to 250 €. Hence the full costs of the study programme amount from 3,650 to 3,750 €. E-study reduces the fee by 200 €. ⁶

1.5.3 Background data on potential students

According to the information provided by the interviewees adults taking part in their vocational college programmes are comprised virtually exclusively of the employed population. Most of them belong to the age group above 30 years – more than 50% are above 40 years of age. They return to education for various reasons; the drivers differ with regards to the programme they are enrolled in. Looking at the students studying to become business secretaries they have enrolled for of formal reasons - the new law on the pay system in the public sector forced them to upgrade their level of education to comply with promotion requirements. Those participating in information sciences programme, on the other hand, dispose of extensive work experiences in programming but they need formal diploma. According to respondent 1 they will most likely not obtain any new knowledge and skill; they participate just to get the “paper” (*state recognised diploma*). And finally the adults choosing the programme “Economist” usually want to improve their career prospects by increasing their market value. Indeed some of them are forced to enrol because of their workplace situation.

The student population has become rather homogeneous not just by the economic activity but also with regards to the bearer of the study expenses. Great majority of the students pay

⁶ The prices refer to the study year 2008/2009.

the study by themselves. *“At the beginning of 2000 and 2001 we had quite a number of students who were sent by employers. Their study was paid by employers but now this stopped. Almost all students pay themselves”* (E17-R1, p. 1, lines 47- 49). According to E17-R1 it did not appear that the price of the study would have affected the decisions on enrolment.

According to information gained from our interviewees, students from vulnerable groups such as unemployed, immigrants and those with a disability do not participate in college programmes. Unemployed people are enrolled in secondary education where the expenses are covered from Active employment policy programme. The school does not organise any activities to bring in participants from these groups. Their target population is made by the adults who are able and willing to pay their study. *“Do you know what the problem of those unemployed is? Who is going to pay for their study? Certainly this may be an interesting group but we are given nothing, we are financed exclusively from fees of our students and quite often this is a problem – we postpone payments... but unemployed... here?”* (E17-R1, p. 1, lines p. 37-41).

1.5.4 Access strategies

When asking about possible state measures to increase participation from underrepresented groups both interviewees suggested that the state should perhaps introduce some financial incentives. However respondent 2 was not sure that it would really help though it may be important. What would help is to guarantee a job after finished education. According to respondent 1 the state should perhaps partly subsidise the school and the school could then promote free of charge education for members of underrepresented groups. She also believes that the strongest driver would be an adequate job.

The answer to the question asking about the introduction of quotas reserved for these groups was that the school had some additional places that were announced in media but so far there had been no response to that. Respondent 1 quite clearly expressed that as long as virtually all study places are occupied the school is not interested in recruiting from marginalised groups. The education organiser also confirmed that the school did not have any special strategies related to this issue. *“We don't pay special attention to these groups as already said, but I could say that we are a school which pays attention... If we had such*

demands we would certainly do our best to adjust...but to direct intentionally to these group... no, till now we haven't done this" (E17-R1, p. 3, lines 12-15).

The school is not acquainted with childcare problems of their students and does not deal with this issue.

For the time being nothing like reduced fees exists. Though there is no need for that, but the school is flexible in adjusting payment conditions. One of the interviewees explained the situation *"It's not a problem to offer more favourable conditions for the fee payment. Actually it would be difficult for us to provide more favourable; they have the possibility to pay in 30 instalments. It's no problem to lower the fee; in X there are lower standards and lower fees as well, but also some additional reductions in order to enable access. No such needs exist in Y., none has applied as yet saying 'well, I'm unemployed and I would like to enrol in your school. Could I get any special payment conditions' – something like that has not happened yet"* (E17-R1, p. 2, lines 4-10). To help those who are in weak financial conditions the school enables paying the tuition fee in instalments negotiated on an individual basis up to 30 instalments.

1.5.5 Strategies, structures and review processes

The school does not have any special recruiting strategy or promotion activities. They rely on their web page and especially on oral promotion by their students. They believe that the quality standards they provide to the students are the best promotion. The feedback of the students is their most important orientation. They administer evaluation sheets several times during the study period.

By and large the school invests a lot in organising the study in the way which suits most the needs of individual students. There are several possibilities how to adjust the organisation of the study to individuals to take account of their actual situation. *"There is a lot of flexibility here. One may decide to combine e-learning and classical study... we have very individualised approach here. Students give us a lot of credit for this..."* (E17-R1, p. 2, lines 48-50). The interviewees see an advantage in the fact that their study programmes are also carried out in the form of e-study. This reduces the price, saves time and travelling costs and enables adjustment of the learning time to the possibilities of students. A number of problems may be resolved in this way, such as childcare, too tight working time etc.

1.5.6 Institutional climate

It is expected that creating more »domestic« environment by employing staff coming from marginalised groups would positively affect motivation of underrepresented groups to participate. However one has to be aware that adult education providers who mostly organise part-time education usually do not have teaching staff employed on regular basis. They engage honorary teachers and lecturers who deliver adult education as their additional work. This holds for the observed provider too. Permanent staff is composed of those dealing with organising and administration work. In hiring process they do not pay attention to social background and they do not dispose of information if any of their employees has come from marginalised groups.

1.5.7 Outreach

As expected, the school has not developed any special outreach activities directed to the recruitment of underrepresented groups. As the target group of the school are adults who are able and ready to pay for their study they design their promotion activities so as to reach those people. *“Secondary schools are not interesting for us for we are adult education. Someone who has finished secondary school will choose a school where his/her parents will not need to pay for the study. So, they are not our target group”* (E17-R1, p. 4, lines 3-5). Obviously the school does not organise any activities that could facilitate enrolment of students from marginalised groups. Still we enquired about the particular measures that may exist.

The idea to facilitate the community learning is likely to be alien to the school. The interviewees claim that the school premises are fully occupied during the week and often also on Saturdays. Consequently, there are no real opportunities for such cooperation. They sometimes rent out school premises to the government services, mostly in mornings. They serve the needs of local people mostly through projects earned in public tenders. Most often they provide computer training; they do not go beyond that. *“A tender is held just now for adult learning, this computer literacy for elderly and we are preparing to apply... I don't know, in this period of recession..., I strongly doubt that we would offer anything free of charge to anyone”* (E17-R1, p. 3, lines 21-27).

1.5.8 Opportunities for social interaction

It appears that this kind of support is not embedded in this environment. There is a mutual support among students attending traditional classes but it is not mediated by the school; it is left to students' self-organisation. *"To organise something like that, no, we carry out the programme as it is defined..., any additional activities, formation of supportive networks... such things are left to students themselves"* (E17-R2, p. 3, lines 36-37).

1.5.9 Transition programmes

The school does not organise any preparatory programmes, since this would require prior assessment of knowledge and skills of all who want to enrol in the school, which they are not able to carry out. There are teachers of individual subjects who are responsible to find out strengths and weaknesses in knowledge of individual students at the start of a particular subject and to overcome the gaps. Actually in the past they offered some refresher language courses, but that has not become a regular practice. Students have to pay such preparatory courses, and it may happen that there is not enough interest among them and the investment by the school is not paying off. *"As there obviously is no demand for that we as a school don't react. [...]. This may be quite risky in the sense that the school prepares the offer [...], and then the number of those interested is too small..."* (E17-R2, p. 3, lines 44-49).

1.5.10 Admission policies

Adults who want to enrol in formal programmes have to fulfil legally determined enrolment conditions. No exemptions are made for adult students, and there is no possibility for atypical access. Knowledge and skills obtained prior to the enrolment are recognised upon the enrolment.

The school alone does not pose any additional enrolment conditions. On the contrary, they would support any attempt in the direction of relaxation of existing legal requirements. *"Someone who has not passed vocational Matura or master exam and has let's say 20 years of service, not anyone with any experiences... that who was working in office and knows those things. [...] I think that those people could also enrol and progress normally ...If we look*

at the subjects, so what if they don't have biology and history and geography, it's none of that we require. They could manage in our school, I think" (E17-R1, p. 5, lines 37-41)⁷.

1.5.11 Recognition of prior learning

The school has developed the procedure to account for prior learning of their students. According to our interviewees, many students are exempted from participation in some parts of study programmes. The assessment and recognition tools are established at the school. Recognition of prior learning attested by formal certificates has been practiced for quite a while whereas validation and recognition of non-formal learning has just started. The body authorised to carry out the procedures is the study commission. In addition the school principal and the subject teacher participate in the process. *"As regards non-formal learning it is like that, I as a school principal, as the procedure here is a bit more complicated..., I help the person... what kind of evidence is needed, what he/she needs. Many have done a lot of things in their lives but they are not aware of [...]. To be more concrete, a person has been working for 15 years as a programmer and she/he would like to get the exam in programming recognised. We sit down and talk. She explains about programming languages and provides the employer reference on his/her work... We always involve the subject teacher who evaluates student's prior knowledge and skills on the basis of the discussion or/and his/her practical product" (E17-R1, p. 4, lines 28-36).*

Respondent 1 pointed to the problem of adequate assessment tools to assess knowledge and skills not attested by any evidence. This especially applies to the assessment of work experience and self-learning – how to properly define and measure knowledge and skills in such cases and not just recognise the duration of work experiences. *"When we started to talk about this it was like that 'you cannot simply recognise it'" (E17-R1, p. 4, line 50).*

Respondent 2 accentuated that the opportunity to get validated and recognised one's prior learning is available to all students; it is announced on the web page, so is the application form with the instruction how to use it. Their experience so far has been indicating that the

⁷ From occasional discussions it seems there are some in Slovenia in favour of such a solution, however it is difficult to say how many. 'Ladderisation' as progression from one level to the next one through successfully finished previous level has a strong tradition in the country.

students enrolled in information science programme (E17-R2, p. 4, lines 23-50) mostly use this opportunity.

1.5.12 Support

The school has no special counselling service but this does not mean that the students do not have access to counselling. The interviewees asserted that the school principle and personnel responsible for study affairs carry out this support service. Respondent 1 stressed that their contacts with the students are very genuine and are based on mutual trust. Students trust them with personal problems and the staff attempts to help them overcome those problems. *“It's not our goal to enrol mass of students but to bring the mass to get a diploma”* (E17-R1, p. 5, lines 14-15). Twice a year they contact all students who are not progressing according to expectations. They invite them to come and discuss their progress. Together they search for ways how to successfully overcome whatever obstacles hinder the progress.

1.5.13 Distance education

All study programmes are delivered also in the form of e-study. This reduces the price, saves time and travelling costs and enables adjustment of the learning time to the possibilities of students. Special attention is paid to e-students. A tutor regularly monitors their progress and stimulates those who may be behind the schedule or do not participate intensively enough in activities such as forums, chat rooms, etc. *“...This person is in permanent contact with these students who are not physically present so often to give them the sense of belonging. Her role is mostly motivational, above all in relation to those – their progress is monitored all the time.... We see exactly the progress of individuals, how much individual time is spent on computer... and those who spent little time... mentor contacts them and tries to motivate them to work harder”* (E17-R1, p. 3, lines 21-27).

1.5.14 Additional questions

Effects of economic crises on lifelong learning

For the time being, the school does not have any problems with the enrolment. Even more, in comparison to other schools they are in much better situation. However previous experiences so far indicate that in slack time people reduce money for leisure time activities, cultural activities, education. Hence it seems reasonable to expect that something similar

may happen now. Respondent 1 told that she and the owner of the school differ in how they see the consequences of the crises for participation in adult education. He expected the number of participants to decrease and she, on the other hand, believed that this would not happen because people would realise that better education may increase their chances to keep their jobs or find a more decent one and this would motivate them to go for education. *"... because I think that exactly in time of crisis, although they are left without job and they don't have proper education they start thinking in a sense like 'see the neighbour has job and has school, hasn't he. I will also go to school to make things easier', and this will motivate him...."* E17-R1, p.6, lines 22-24). However she is aware that there may be financial problems hindering realisation of such decisions. To reduce these problems schools can help with measures such as postponed payments, extension of payments to a longer period, and the like. She is rather optimistic about formal education but less so with regards to non-formal education and learning, especially if it is not related to work and employment. Such courses may well be postponed to better times.

Respondent 2 agreed that the crises should not reduce numbers of participants in formal education, but they should be rewarded at the end in terms of increased career prospects. But she admitted that she personally had doubts about such positive effect of the crisis, especially in cases when people pay for education. In her view the school will have to take account of that (p. 6, lines 20-28). She agreed that European funds might help overcoming the financial crises but considering the administration work and other problems accompanying the use of these funds she was doubtful that schools would like to apply for these means except if this would significantly increase the number of students (E17-R2, p. 6, lines 37-40).

Teacher training

Since the school has no permanent, teaching staff it does not take the responsibility for their training. They invest only in the training of permanently employed staff (organisers of education, administration, management). Teachers and lecturers are bound by law to renew every 5 years their pedagogical title (licence). This forces them to invest in training. The requirements are rather strict and those who fail cannot extend their licence and they consequently lose their teaching position. However, when it comes to the introduction of

innovations in the study process, e.g. e-study, the school provides in-service training for external teaching staff as well. Such in-service training is provided free of charge.

2 NON-FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

2.1 INSTITUTION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION 1

2.1.1 Background organisational context

The institution of non-formal education (people's university) in North West Slovenia, situated in an old town, which was founded in 973, was established in 1959 by the municipality under the policy of one people's university in every municipality. Later on when Slovenia passed the law on the local self-management (1993) the founding municipality was divided into three new ones which are now the founders and should also be the financers of People's university and its activities. The university offers programmes of formal education (professional and vocational), language courses and general non-formal education. On average it organises 30 different programmes annually with the staff of seven which attract more than 1,800 participants. In 2008 it realised an income of 540 thousands Euros and 640,000 in 2007, and in 2006 – over 880,000 Euros, *“therefore there is a downward trend”* (A04-R1, p. 2, line 34).

“I have to say that at the beginning the institution was financed 100 percents and our role was defined more precisely. The founder more clearly defined our tasks and its expectations were clearer. With the years the trend was discontinuation of financing so that now, I can say, that three municipalities for ten, more than ten, some even fifteen years do not contribute anything apart from the municipality of ... which gives a little bit, and this bit represented 2.5% of our total income in the past year” (A04-R1, p. 1, lines 30-36). The institution gains its income mainly from the participants, a small amount (2.5%) is received by the original founder of the People's university, approximately one percent is obtained by the Ministry of Education and Sport on the account of the repayment of salaries⁸, and a share is coming from tenders either national or European.

The mission as Respondent 1 puts it is *“...above all to react as flexibly as possible to educational needs of our local environment”* (A04-R1, p.2, lines 16-17). At the moment the majority of participants are coming from the age group 25-35 and are enrolled in programmes of formal education (upper secondary professional and vocational, under and post graduate studies). The majority of participants are women. Programmes of non-formal education are diminishing in number though there are still some offered. The student population is diverse, from relatively young to those who have already retired. Their

⁸ for the staff employed according to the Act on Organisation and Financing of Education.

educational attainment is fairly good. More than half of them have upper secondary education⁹.

In the last five years, there is an orientation towards programmes for which the participants are paying. These programmes are mainly those of formal education while non-formal education is diminishing because of fees. The institution has tried several things but has not been successful. As the Respondent 1 says *“things stops with money”* (A04-R1, p. 4, lines 5-6) while the Respondent 2 described the situation by these words *“year by year I change the field of my work. You seek what you can do, where, in which field, so that you’ll be successful, and as I say the space is somehow narrowing”* (A04-R2, p. 5, lines 22-25) and also *“...concerning this we are nevertheless somehow limited, you know with potential candidates, and as I say especially with this non-formal education; if it is free of charge then there are candidates, as soon as they have to pay, then there is a problem. Yea, so it is...”* (A04-R2, p.3, lines 4-7). Both interviewees have stressed that formal education is diminishing with the lack of money. These are their experiences over the years. It is difficult to say whether the situation is the same all over the country. Judging by responses in this research it can be both – diminishing or increasing.

Promotion of adult education, also drawing attention of the underrepresented groups, does not seem a big problem. This People’s university tackles it in different ways - through Lifelong Learning Week when each household is informed by a small publication of the programme and possibilities. It is evident, as the directress says, that people read what they receive and come when events or programmes (lectures, workshops) are free of charge. *“We have also tried a painting workshop just within the Lifelong Learning Week and the first visit was free of charge. The participation was good. When at the end of the day we asked whether they were prepared to participate, they were, very much and gladly. When we sent out the invitations and also presented how it would look concerning the fee, participation was no more. Here the matter finishes”* (A04-R1, p. 4, lines 36-40).

Regarding promotion the institution is well developed within its environment. It is felt that the instruments have been developed and are still developing but the reaction to the promotion is according to the response. In this respect this institution is no different from other similar institutions in Slovenia. They are more or less in the market and promoting their activities is one of the prerequisites if they want to remain in the field. Peoples’

⁹ This is because of the number of participants in formal education, especially in under- and post graduate studies.

universities were among the first which embraced the idea of Lifelong Learning Week and formed in the very first years of the festival the majority of organisations participating in the event.

2.1.2 Course content

This academic year the people's university is offering more than 20 programmes, half of them are programmes of formal education: primary education – primary education for adults (ISCED 1-2); upper secondary - pre-school education, administration, economics, tourism, shopkeeper, medical care (ISCED 3,4); undergraduate – management, public administration and postgraduate studies – management (ISCED 5). There are also programmes which do not give a level of education but give either licence or are recognised in the labour market. These are: driver of the fork-lift-lorry, national vocational qualifications, safety at work. In the non-formal sector the institution is offering Programme Learning for Young Adults, leading co-workers, musical workshops, computer literacy for the elderly, e-points, Lifelong Learning Week and study circles.

When asked which programmes/courses/classes are particularly helpful in giving adults with low levels of prior education confidence to either continue in education or contribute to their local community the opinion was – every programme can do this. *“I think that every programme gives one confidence, also when he participates in formal education. We notice that they participate more in other things as well. ... We thought that we had to proceed from what is already here, in the local area. We noticed that here in our area hobby theatre is very much alive. Also, smaller villages have plays, but above all they lack knowledge how to promote themselves, and the matter stops, because this is not there. ...Because here they are proving themselves in their immediate area. ... With a successful role in one of such plays... I think that bears many other things with it”* (A04-R1, p. 5, lines 13-23).

In this way people are linking and learning other things as well e.g. participation in local community, organisation, fundraising, making things, cooperation with others etc. Though the people's university would like to have a clearly defined role in the community by the municipality which is (are) its founder, this is not the case. It seems that the community, or at least the mayor and his council, as was added off the record, do not really know what to do with it. Therefore they do not seek its help either in fostering community leaders or

planning further educational development. *“No, no, this is not there. They even don’t think of this, even if we had frequently drawn attention to the matter, that if they needed anything we were there. This is not in their sub conscience. There is not such way of thinking”* (A04-R1, p. 6, lines 21-23).

2.1.3 Staff conditions

The institution employs seven people on long term contracts, actually indefinite time. They are those who make the institution run (management, accountancy) and bring about work (organisers of education). As for teachers their number depends on how successful the institution is either in attracting tenders (national, international) or participants. They are employed by a contract. The management dares not employ teacher on long-term basis since the income is insecure. *“All teachers are of course on the contracts. ...Nobody on long-term employment? ... Nobody! I don’t dare do this. I dare not take chances. Because tender is in autumn... For the programme where the calculation shows that the costs will not be met, we don’t deliver it, it is crossed out. ...And then we sign contracts”* (A04-R1, p. 6, lines 31-34).

The Respondent 2 has expressed her fear of loosing her job though she is employed by a long-term contract (indefinite time) but because of changed conditions her field of work is ever changing which gives rise to insecurity and fright. Under such conditions it is also difficult to find staff though they are annually collaborating with 120-150 teachers. This does bring some difficulties to the fore since *“I’d much rather have own people because then loyalty is quite another thing if you have another kind of contractual and employment relationship. ... Let me say one thing only, legally this thing is inadequate because we are aligned to public institutions¹⁰ where they have people employed for indefinite period And all these years we were unable to put through to them that there is essential difference whether someone teaches 10 hours a year at your place and has the same rights as those employed full time”* (A04-R1, p. 6, line 37, p.7, lines 1-9).

¹⁰ E.g. schools.

Concerning salaries those employed for indefinite time in people's university have an income comparable to that in formal education sector. Though *"you don't know for sure for anybody what her salary is. This is as our teachers have told us"* (A04-R2, p. 4, lines 34-35).

2.1.4 Target groups

There are no noticeable gender differences in those attending classes though women are the predominant group. But momentarily while the institution is running computer literacy programme for the elderly financed by European Social Fund (ESF), participants are older, over 65 and quite a few are attending as couples. They are coming from the home for older people as well as from the city on recommendation from their friends. The prevailing gender is male. The number of participants per group varies (e.g. 16 which is a norm for Study circles and computer programmes to 25) depending on the programme.

The institution is linking its work with another people's university which is at the moment coordinating Lifelong Learning E-point and is organising events as well as lectures. The respondent (head of general education) is quite satisfied with the response though the fear that this will die out as soon as ESF money finishes is very much present. In order to attract more participants from the defined target groups in Slovenia, among them older people and women, they are liaising with the University of the Third Age being well aware that programmes like computer literacy, foreign languages, painting on the silk, presents' wrapping are well attended if – free of charge. This year they were successful in attracting young dropouts and are running the programme Project Learning for Young Adults.

It seems the division of labour is well defined in this area. People's university does not offer any programme which is offered by a school. As the Respondent 1 says: *"We take very good care to offer only those programmes which are not offered by schools in our area. This is what I meant when I said we were trying to adapt to the needs. ... as soon as it happens that the school is offering a programme we absolutely have no chance to carry the same programme out because we can't be competitive concerning the price knowing the school has all the material costs covered, has a building ... We might have been more flexible and quicker in non-formal learning but since schools are facing lower enrolments they have become very flexible, they offer classes from flower arranging to cookery, really everything"* (A04-R1, p. 7, lines 28-40).

2.1.5 Connections to the formal education system

There are links to the formal education programme though these concern only programmes of formal education and recognition within those programmes based on measurable achievements which are recognised by the national curriculum. *“... our groups are quite varied. And let’s say if we have 25 participants in the generation there are 4 or 5 of them taking the programme from A to Z, all the rest have already done something, e.g. two years of upper secondary, or finished vocational school or three years of gymnasium and we recognise general subjects. ... everything based on school reports. ... non-formal education is very difficult to recognise. Because we don’t have the basis. In the written order of recognition we have to say where recognition comes from. ... We have tried something but only in National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and it moves very slowly. It is a tough nut to crack”*(A04-R1, p. 8, lines 14-31).

2.1.6 Recognition of prior learning

In Slovenia recognition of prior learning is not developed. Both respondents said it was very difficult. *“This should be an ongoing process now in upper secondary education, but very, very difficult. Nevertheless then this non-formality is lost, isn’t it? Then all these endeavours for the final paper ... all the same at the end there will be enumeration – what have you learnt, out of this how much in the formal system this ... it gets lost somehow”* (A04-R2, p. 6, lines 20-27). As seen from the text above the institution is dealing only with items which are supported by papers – measurable although the recognition of prior learning and NVQs could be a driver and a tool also for recognition of non-formal education and learning it is not perceived as such yet.

2.1.7 Outreach to marginalised groups

The programmes are advertised in various ways and through different channels. One of the ways is a direct address – a letter to every household. Then there are advertisements in various papers although this depends on the target group. In the case of computer literacy for the elderly a notice was published in their paper. Apart from this there are also presentations in various localities and in companies as well as telephone calls, the later mainly for companies. The partners on the other side are in this case HRM departments and

their personnel. In reaching underrepresented groups the institution also liaise with social work, employment offices and University of the 3rd Age.

The majority of classes are in the people's university venue since there are all the facilities. Nevertheless the programmes are organised also elsewhere depending on the programme, the needs of the group and requirements concerning the equipment. The classes are not free of charge as has been repeatedly mentioned by both interviewees. They are payable. The price depends on the programme and its requirements.

2.1.8 Tutor teaching methods

In Slovenia those who organise or teach in adult education have to have a university degree. There are some exceptions pertaining mainly to the practical work. As pointed out earlier (staff conditions) teachers are coming from various institutions, mainly from schools. They have the required education although it is not always in the field of adult education. As to the organisation of training: *"Gladly if they'd attend it. ... Basically we don't have instruments, we can only recommend them to go, but I don't have the possibility of sanctioning, we tried. ... Last year we prepared a lecture on the theme (education of adults, specificities of adults, adapting the programme to the needs of adults) things we thought they lacked but the attendance was very poor. ... The only thing we can do when recruiting is to look for the quality as much as possible"* (A04-R1, p. 9, lines 21-37).

The manner in which the institution is trying to ascertain whether the teaching meets the requirements is, in such a condition somewhat difficult. Nevertheless it is done and it is done in different ways. One of these is the presence of the organiser of the field in his/her office when lectures are carried out. In this way the learners have the opportunity to come and discuss the problem. The same goes for the lecturers as well. Next, there is attendance at lectures as an occasional student though as the Respondent 1 says *"we know that the attendance at lectures as an occasional student is an artificial situation. But it is information"* (A04-R1, p. 10, lines 12-13). Since the institution helps the lecturers to prepare the lecture this is one of the ways to see what principles they are using. But mostly the information comes from the participants. *"But I have to say that participants are very critical. You can learn easily from the participants. Because they are paying themselves they also know their*

rights. And, they want value for their money, and if this is not it, they come and tell quickly” (A04-R1, p. 10, lines 13-17).

2.1.9 Future developments

There are differences in perceiving future development arising from the position in the institution. While the organiser of general education sees the challenge in the increased enrolment in general and at the moment since she knows this field the best of older population in particular. For the Respondent 1 there is a wish to have a variety of programmes such as the people’s university was established for and also a little bit more general education because the university is an institution which knows how to run it and is capable of delivering. Apart from these there should also be programmes of formal education. It would help if the municipality had a plan or indications on where it sees people’s university in the future, but unfortunately it still does not know how to use the expertise and knowledge the institution possesses. Considering future challenges it would be good for the institution if the four founding municipalities had considered investing in tourism. There are ample possibilities to develop it, and ask people’s university to develop programmes and educate the population in this respect. But *“we alone are not enough, we are also too weak a player in this field to change things in the locality – this would have to be well linked, networked”* (A04-R1, p. 12, lines 23-24). On the other side the Respondent 2 would like to have more programmes for the retired since this is the population she knows the best. She thinks *“they could stimulate them to be active in this field for a long time and once they start attending through their friends, and if the state and ESF financed it, there would not have been a problem”* (A04-R2, p. 7, lines 26-32).

Concerning the challenges it is maybe, though difficult to say, to find the best way of organising the institution which would be the right one thus giving the best chances for it to be successful. *“Because now there is the extreme disparity between the way of financing and legislation regulating our activities ... this is momentarily the biggest hindrance. This would be a challenge for us - that they remodel us in a way which will enable us to work better”* (A04-R1, p. 12, lines 33-36). The biggest opportunities in the next five years are difficult to express since it is, judged from what was not said, an everyday struggle for survival and year to year bargaining for the core, though small, funding. The feeling can best be described by

the following: *“To reshape us so that we could work more easily. I don’t know another organisational form, and I don’t know whether a firm for profit or an institution instead of public institution. But if we are a public institution then we’d have to have possibilities that go with it, that they assure us funds, I don’t know, for material costs, for salaries, for all the rest, that we can then work as a public institution”* (A04, p.12, lines 36-40).

Considering the challenges for non-formal education in Slovenia in the next five year the opinion is affected by the crisis facing much more non-formal than any other education. As the interviewee says: *“...when crisis approaches the interest for general education diminishes. Because people considering education think how to secure themselves additional income. And they don’t see such possibilities in the field of general education. They see general education as something for the soul, something I enjoy in, for my free time. ... While the crisis is approaching they want something more, something to work in or to get employment”* (A04-R1, p. 13, lines 4-14).

2.1.10 Developing a strategy for the non-formal sector

Both interviewees were unaware whether there is a national strategy to develop the non-formal sector. Both think it would help and would welcome it. Slovenia does not have regions as administrative bodies, although there some geographical ones. Public sector, like education, health, social care have established regions which vary from sector to sector as to their number but do not play the same role as regions in other countries. At the moment there is a municipal strategy and there is also a strategy for the region where this particular people’s university operates. It includes ‘points of lifelong learning’ but *“I think that this is not enough, there should be more on adult education”* (A04-R2, p. 9, lines 5-7). Reflecting on the content of such strategy the Respondent 1 would expect some basis to be prepared, some programme basis already there so as not to start from the scratch because there is an enormous amount of time invested in the preparation of a programme.

In case somebody wanted to establish a non-formal education institution in the area both interviewees were of the same mind – have a large amount of seed capital to last at least two years, good venue, good programme and good teachers.

Non-formal education does have its strengths. Participants acquire knowledge and use it in the workplace even if this knowledge is not a formal one. Getting together, *“socialising, here we saw for the first time how much this means¹¹, I think it’s unbelievable”* (A04-R2, p. 9, lines 40-45). Its main weakness is – recognition of knowledge. *“Then, when searching for a new job or in promotion - how much do they take it into consideration”* (A0402119032009, p. 9, lines 45-47).

Children support for those *attending classes, though important, does not seem to be the barrier to participation in this case. “We have not perceived it to be a very big problem. .. No, the women they succeed. We have a kindergarten in the house, and this is very good ... and also the characteristic of our environment which is half rural, and there are mothers behind, therefore I think that childcare, as we had interviewed, is not the barrier to prevent participation”* (A04-R1, p. 15, lines 6- 13).

Recession was more or less constantly present in the interview. It has been referred to many times, mainly as a fear of future participation in non-formal education. *“... as I have said earlier I am afraid that if people loose jobs, and if earnings are reduced, the first thing they will cut out will be – education”* (A04-R1:p.15, lines 31-34). Both interviewees thought alike for non-formal education. *“In [our town] they had almost cut it out in the past. What was [needed]for formal education they have somehow managed to put together but now I think that it will also reach formal education”* (A04-R2, p. 10, lines 4-9).

2.2 INSTITUTION OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION 2

2.2.1 Background organisational context

The institution of non-formal education based in South East Slovenia celebrates 50 years of organised adult education in 2009. There was adult education in the area earlier but not in a manner of people’s university. It is an institution which combines education and culture and is, in the words of the organiser of adult education, one of the few of this kind in Slovenia. The institution served the needs of the environment and there were times when a lot of education was carried out for the needs of the political system. The needs have changed. In

¹¹ She is referring to the programme for older people.

late 70s and early 80s there was a swing of vocational education and training, then there was a break because of the legislation and at the end of 80s and beginning of 90s there was vocational and professional education. Now in the new millennium there is again a swing of non-formal education. In the school year 2007/2008 there were 1053 participants enrolled in various programmes and 940 users of the Centre for autonomous learning.

The aim of the Institute is “to offer a reality of lifelong learning to individuals and groups of people, willing to learn and develop. The Institute is known for its stimulating learning environment, a variety of cultural programmes and rich theatrical activities” (from their web page). The institute itself was established by the municipality in 1959. Though the founder was the municipality their funds given to the Institute in 2008 had for the first time reached 30% of the total income. Nevertheless it has to be pointed out that these 30% covered cultural activities as well. Breaking down the funding to different activities it is said for adult education only, the municipality gives approximately 10% of the total income. The rest is acquired through various projects, tenders, individuals, enterprises (approximately 20%) and European Social Fund (ESF). The yearly income of the Institute is around 170,000.00 Euros. The annual income is formed in the following way: 50% of the income from the tenders of various ministries and state bodies; 12% from the European projects and alike; 10% of the income is formed by individual contribution and 8% from the employers.

In the last few years the Institute has seen the increase of programmes and participants in the non-formal forms of education and the decrease of participants in the programmes of formal education. Among the participants, most in non-formal education, there are usually the representatives of the vulnerable groups, mainly Roma population¹². Apart from non-formal the also offer formal education (primary education, upper secondary and also higher education). *“We are developing new programmes all the time because with these target groups¹³ there are shorter programmes, especially those financed by the integral budget from the Ministry of Education and Sport are shorter, 25-hours programmes” (A38-R2, p. 2, lines 26-28).*

¹² The region is one of the three in Slovenia with numerous Roma population.

¹³ Vulnerable groups.

Comparing to the other similar institutes and peoples' universities this institutions has *“good partnerships in the environment and is positively outstanding in this respect compared to other institutions in Slovenia and we also have material evidence for this”* (A38-R1, p. 3, lines 19-22).

2.2.2 Course content

In the academic year 2007/2008 1053 participants were enrolled in various programmes the institution was offering. 11% of the participants were enrolled in the programmes of formal education¹⁴, 89% in programmes of non-formal, general education – out of these 17% were enrolled in language programmes, while 17% in study circles and in literacy programmes. Since the majority of participants are older the most popular programmes are those concerning health, exercise, trekking. But at the moment the most popular is computer learning. The demand is such that the institution is unable to take all who want to learn.

The institution is, according to its website, offering various programmes of formal (primary, secondary [three and four years] and higher non-university education) and non-formal education. Programme of primary education for adults is free of charge because the state is funding it. Those who are enrolling in the three year programme of formal education (shopkeeper) are paying 103 Euros for each missing subjects they want to pass. The number of subject varies from year to year but if one would wish to go from the star to the finish one would have to pass 24 subjects required in the curriculum for this profession.

The same principle is applied to 4-year upper secondary programmes (economics and tutors in pre-school education). Those who want to participate the whole academic year, the fee is 1058 Euros per academic year (economist) and 1140 Euros per year (tutor in preschool education). The institution also offers three programmes in higher non-university education. The fees for this are not advertised.

In the non-formal sector the institution offers NVQs, language courses (5 courses, fees differing from 215 Euros (50 hour course) to 340 Euros (80 hour course), computer literacy

¹⁴ which is higher than was the average for Slovenia in 2004 research (8.5%). This is also the region which according to the IALS has a lot of unused potential. In 1998 literacy survey the region had, on average, 75.9% of population at the first two literacy levels, while the average years of schooling reached 10.5 indicating the level of 8 years of primary education and 2.5 of vocational education.

courses (free of charge), study circles (4 groups, free of charge), Roma education, school for parents (free of charge) and literacy programmes. There were 18 programmes of non-formal education offered in the academic year 2008/9.

According to the Respondent 1 all these programmes are contributing to confidence building in participants. With Roma population, also in the programmes of non-formal education, there is stimulation and motivation for them to consider entering programmes leading to formal education. *“With them it is usually primary education for adults. With other target groups we don’t do this” (A38-R1, p. 3, lines 26-28). “We have the programme For Life’s Assurance (Challenges of the Countryside and My Step) which is intended for the participants to become more active in the society, therefore active citizenship and, in a way, participation once again in educational programmes. Maybe not so much in programmes to acquire formal education but more in the sense of additional activities to earn additional income and later to find employment or to participate in education” (A38-R2, p. 3, lines 15-21).* Nevertheless the institution tries to tailor the programmes to the needs of the participants, to contents which interest them. Some programmes are being carried out within families who themselves have special needs. Some with those from different social backgrounds which isolates people and then *“we try with programmes and approaches that they somehow open up to the community” (A38-R1, p. 5, lines 1-4).*

The institution has its own theatrical group which is producing plays for children and adults (three plays per year). There is also a folklore group composed of persons with special needs. It is a good one and they are attending various regional and national contests. Besides this, they are also involved in choir singing, drawing and handiwork. They cooperate closely with the day care and work centre in order develop programmes and skills appropriate for the participants.

There are various programmes contributing to the community development. A typical one is “Lifelong learning and rural development”, called popular partnership, since it is designed to connect in the environment for a common goal. *“Our common goal is, what is typical for our region, to sow flax, produce home spun linen ... and to make products for the market out of it” (A38-R1, pgs. 7-8, lines 33-36, 1-3)* so that people would be able to live from this. There are also other projects. One of them is connected with the regional park and another one

deals with developing models for counselling vulnerable groups. Apart from these they are working with several societies which are quite strong in the area, not to have *“a programme especially for the presidents but we go through societies. Let’s say the Society of Rural Women is very strong here, then Society of Invalids, Pensioners society... Then we also had programmes for Roma, for the presidents and leadership of Roma societies to help them prepare the tenders”* (A38-R2, p. 4, lines 21-25).

2.2.3 Staff conditions

Like the majority of peoples’ universities in Slovenia the institution employs only a small number of permanent staff. Usually there are eight of them in the year 2009 actually six since two are on the maternity leave. Teaching staff is employed on the contractual basis. In 2008 the institution collaborated with approximately 200 teachers who were working different length of time *“one might have worked the whole year while another one carried out only one three hours workshop ... those who work in programmes of formal education and those in programmes lasting more than three months – there are sixty or seventy of them”* (A38-R1, p. 9, lines 6-12).

Salaries are comparable to those in formal education sector. Since the adoption of the law on public servants the salaries are calculated according to the law which recognises formal education and work experiences. Educational structure of the staff in the institution is good since *“we have been very methodical – out of eight staff we are three with master degrees, the rest with university education which is very high average education”* (A38-R1, p. 10, lines 3-7).

2.2.4 Target groups

There are no noticeable gender differences in participants coming from the group of unemployed, migrants and persons with special needs. From older population more women than men are included and from Roma population, when it comes to programmes of formal education men are prevailing¹⁵ while in non-formal ones - women. *“With Roma it is a bit difficult because it has to do with their culture. Women should be at home taking care of*

¹⁵ This refers to primary education for adults where the prevailing population are Roma men.

children. It is not desirable for women to take part in public life. ... Then we do stimulate them in other ways because girls really give birth too early, leave school and have a family too early” (A38-R1, p. 10, lines 28-32).

The group which does not participate enough in education – are Roma. They have to be approached personally, talked to, and be drawn into a programme according to their needs, or as Respondent 1 says: *“...With Roma, yes. It is to go to the settlement and talk to people, identify the need...”* (A38-R1, p.15, line 35). One of the motivation factors for them to enrol in formal education is through non-formal education. *“There are also such variants to go first to non-formal and then to formal”* (A38-R2, p.:6, line 30). Another target group are women in rural areas. *“It makes much more sense to offer them programmes fit for their use than anything else ... it seems that this way they get more applicable knowledge and acquire knowledge more quickly”* (A38-R1, p. 11, lines 27-29).

The groups are not very large. The average number of participants in a group is fifteen (15), depends on the type of learning. In workshops there are ten (10) people. Also in programmes of formal education groups are nowadays smaller ten to fifteen people.

2.2.5 Connections to the formal education system

Previously there were literacy programmes, the old ones, which were designed in such a way as to render possible progression into formal education. *“The new ones are not set in such a way. ... Only with Roma you try when you see he feels well, you see he is eager for knowledge, that he is motivated and then you try to make him enthusiastic for inclusion in programme of formal education”* (A38-R1, p. 12, lines 5-9). As for recognition and what institutions of non-formal education should do in this respect there are not many ideas. It seems that people are more involved in thinking what their own institution should do. This one has obviously moved a step forward and is issuing certificates that show the contents of a programme and marks acquired by the participants. This way the formal education institution could recognise the knowledge straight away without the need for the person to return several times to settle the matter. Apart from this participants are made aware of the possibility within counselling as well as from the booklet which has been published informing them what to do to have their prior knowledge recognised.

2.2.6 Recognition of prior learning

The problem of recognition of previous learning is very much present in Slovenia either in formal or non-formal education. The same is felt in this institution as well. There is a feeling that much more could be done as has been done so far. This requires, at least this is what the interviewee feels, more cooperation¹⁶ among the institutions carrying out programmes of non-formal education. *“I think that in this field we have not ... I’m afraid that in this field we haven’t done enough, I’d say nothing. ... When I was at a seminar I realised that even under our own roof we aren’t giving certificates which could be then recognised in formal [education]. And we have done it then under our own roof”* (A38-R1, p. 12, lines 35-37.)

According to the new law on vocational education (Law on Vocational and Professional Education) and measures derived from there non-formal learning can be recognised. *“At the moment this non-formal knowledge is shown more in the field of language learning, maybe also computer learning”* (A38-R2, p. 7, lines 13-18). Momentarily it is not directly transferable yet, it relates more to the matter of demonstrating knowledge on the basis of certificates. *“I think that in formal education we are still at the beginning. Adult educators are probably a bit more flexible because we are used to these things from the practice. Some knowledge and experiences have been recognised before”* (A38-R2, p. 7, lines 19-23).

The main obstacles to establishing recognition of prior learning are in the view of the interviewee, the absence of papers certifying what a person has learnt in non-formal education and providers not giving any certifications at all or giving such that nothing can be gathered from them. These could be overcome by institutions giving papers certifying knowledge a person gained. But this would have to be supported by a framework giving

¹⁶ It might sound as if there is competition among peoples’ universities for students. This is probably not the case. One of the reasons is that they have been established under the principle – one people university in each municipality (this is from times when there were 60 municipalities in Slovenia instead of almost 240 today). What the interviewee is referring to is co-operation in the field of recognition of prior learning. Although peoples’ universities have annual meeting they do not discuss what they do in this field, how they can tackle the problem. In between the meetings they obviously communicate less among themselves because they have to look for financial opportunities. It is possible that if they had some core funding which would allow them a development officer the problem might be solved, though not necessarily. They might still think this is the work of the national research and development institute.

guidelines which *“knowledge to certify and how to certify it. That there would not be differences... And of course those doing it should be trained in order to be able to certify correctly, that there would not be injustices to the learners”* (A38-R2, p. 8, lines 25-29).

2.2.7 Outreach to marginalised groups

The marginalised groups, especially Roma are reached orally. A lot of them are illiterate or have low levels of literacy therefore written information is of no use.

The institution reaches people also in several other ways. One of them is inviting public administration and informing them of its work. Then they are able to go to the settlements and spread the information. Another way is communication through Roma societies and also through Roma activists, sometimes also through writing but mainly orally. This is how Respondent 2 describes communication with Roma: *“Above all, we are using personal contacts ... contacts and ... well, we are helping ourselves with people who have already participated or those who have some kind of power in the group...”* (A38-R2, p.9, lines 13-14) and further on: *“Roma by mouth to mouth above all. A lot of them are illiterate or functionally illiterate and we weren’t successful with written messages. ... We were successful in other ways. ... we have had public workers here who were quite often in the settlement and they had explained to people. Another way of communication is through Roma societies, the third one through Roma activists, but these are still not good enough. Therefore recently we also send something to the house and who can help himself, can ...not often, but. I don’t know. If you send to two hundred people at least two are to be found shouting why are we sending this to them, they don’t need this, in short they understand this in their own way, therefore with Roma by mouth. All by mouth”* (A38-R2, p.15, lines 8-18).

Adults with special needs are reached through day care and work centre, through the firm where they are employed, through the residence where they live, through societies and activists. Older people are reached by post. Migrants approach the institution themselves and institution approaches them through mutual acquaintances while rural women are reached mainly through the society, though also through presidents of local communities or local activists. The unemployed are reached through the Employment Office otherwise it is impossible to reach them. Other ways are public announcements, website and posters. Nevertheless *“we give importance to the personal approach. ... our research has shown that*

people learn the most about us when information goes from mouth to mouth, the participants are after all those who are giving us the greatest promotion” (A38-R2, p. 9, lines 3-5).

The programmes are free of charge for people with special needs and Roma. Programmes for older adults vary concerning the fees – some are free of charge while to others the elderly sometimes contribute to its realisation, according to the Respondent 1, a minimal share. The classes are held at the institutional premises e.g. computer classes and outside either within the municipality or in other municipal centres. *“We work a lot in societies’ premises to come closer to people ... in cultural homes, fire stations, meeting rooms of the municipalities” (A38-R2, p. 10, lines 10-16).*

The fees vary. There is an annual membership to the university which is 12 Euros per year. This entitles the members to information on what is going on and *“they have four lectures free of charge” (A38-R2, p.:9, lines 34-35).* Other examples of fees are as follows: four marches in the nature which take four mornings cost 10 Euros, gymnastics – 16 Euros. Fees for the workshops vary from 27 to 76 Euros, while basic bookkeeping programme, non-formal education, costs 356 Euros and the computer one 293 Euros.

2.2.8 Tutor teaching methods

“Our tutors and all other contractual co-workers are people who are already employed either in school or they work with the youth. The majority [of all tutors] now are such that lack pedagogical-andragogical education¹⁷ because they are something else by their profession” (A38-R1, p. 17, lines 8-10). The institution organised seminars on methods of adult learning, also on dealing with how to work with adults but it seems that as a rule those who were recognised to be the best teachers and the most successful attended. Those for whom seminars were intended usually did not have any wish to come. *“Concerning the methods there is something else, there is another mechanism. I still say that people have or have not the sense to work with people because this is very much connected with our personal*

¹⁷ According to the law, every teacher in Slovenia must have university education. If they do not have pedagogical subject they have to pass obtain pedagogical-andragogical education in order to teach in adult education. Exceptions are teachers giving practical education (trainers).

characteristics. If you like people, if you respect them, you'll be able to adapt to them and even if you don't master the theory of methods of work, you'll be able to listen to them and lead them in a way that they'll be satisfied. And then you have another group of mentors, tutors, teachers who theoretically have this knowledge but don't have adequate personal characteristics and, as a rule, this doesn't help them. And what finally happens – saying it crudely the market eliminates those who are not good” (A38-R1, p. 17, lines 13-20). Nevertheless the institution organises seminars, workshops and also takes some of the tutors with them to other, andragogical institutions, for their professional development. They wish to do more but there is a problem of willingness as was pointed out earlier and sometimes also money.

It was stressed that in non-formal education one has to use active methods, and especially in study circles the group has to define its own learning goals. It is impossible to have a workshop and be lecturing there. Things are changing also in formal education: “... *study circles ... But here we are speaking of active work, because these are types of workshops, here there aren't typical lectures ... although also in formal education there isn't just method of lecturing, there are various and active and with defined tasks, groups, teamwork and so on, aren't there?” (A38-R2, p. 32-36).*

The feedback is obtained in various ways – in formal education it is gained within class hours, in non-formal education the organisers come to groups and ask them about their feelings. They call this a way of direct information gathering. Another way of feedback collecting is by questionnaires. As the Respondent 1 pointed out the participants are “*are fed up with questionnaires. They get on their nerves, it's too much for them and they roll their eyes when they are given the questionnaires but they comply” (A38-R1, p. 18, lines 7-9).* The institution also stimulates the learners to come and tell how they feel. In case they feel uncomfortable they are stimulated to write their grievances and thoughts. All the staff which is employed also teaches and through teaching they are able to perceive what the problems are. At the end of each school year the institution prepares a self-evaluation report¹⁸. “*But*

¹⁸ The institution is involved in the quality project (Offering adults quality education - POKI) and is using the POKI questionnaire to various aims.

our involvement in POKI has given us a kind of maturity that all their remarks are not taken as a critique but as a proposal towards improvement. And we were so happy when they realised we didn't mind, that we were not offended but happy if somebody said that something was not going well" (A38-R1, p. 18, lines 15-19).

2.2.9 Future developments

In the future the Respondent 1 would like to have more Roma people in her programmes while the organiser of adult education is thinking more in lines of abandoning some of the programmes of formal education and orienting more towards tenders and projects in non-formal education. Roma are, for the Respondent 1 a challenge because for her education means a path towards a life decent for a human being. And Roma are uneducated. *"For me it is like, I'd say, a life's challenge to transfer to them that to be educated means to be liberated, that that what is of the highest value to them – freedom is supported by education and limited by the lack of it. We all wish to transfer ... our relation to education which would not negatively affect their culture but positively. They would be able to retain it more, respect it more, promote it more. Were they educated" (A38-R1, p. 19, lines 9-17).*

The biggest challenge in the next five years is how to remain as the institution, in the financial sense. According to the Respondent 1 financial situation unfortunately does not depend on good programmes, good staff but at the moment depends very much on legislation. Where will adult education institutions be placed since momentarily they are, financially, left to themselves. If there are tenders and projects there is work, because they are capable and able to get them and survive. In case there are not, as e.g. last year and a year before – they face closure. Therefore the biggest challenge is to settle the status not for the organisation as such but for the system of adult education organisations. *"This means that we need to settle the question of stable financing of our core activities" (A38-R1, p. 19, lines 30-33).* In other words there is a need to define the core funding and agree on what is a network of public institutions, define their tasks and assure adequate amount of money to carry out activities agreed upon. This is also the challenge for the whole non-formal education sector. Otherwise professionally the challenges lie in community education. What is it? What does it mean for this particular organisation, what for the municipality and other actors in the area? Reflecting on the distinct role of adult education institutions is

professionalism, continuity, quality and flexibility. In relation to institutions of formal education institutions of non-formal education institutions are seen as motivators, coordinators and harmonizers in the local community, also as stimulators and developers. Professionally the institution sees itself as a promoter of adult education and lifelong learning. *“Still, lifelong learning belongs more to us although lifelong learning is also kindergarten. It doesn’t cross our minds to speak of lifelong learning in the kindergarten, but we do. Now the research has also shown this that we are perceived as organisation which contributes very much to the lifelong learning, to its promotion and to stressing the meaning of learning throughout life”* (A38-R1, p. 21, lines 11-19). The Respondent 2 sees the distinct role of the non-formal sector in relation to people, people who have barriers. And, one can stimulate them with non-formal education to lifelong learning. Because the sector always offers something new, something that activates and not marginalises or isolates them. And by doing this it also affects the quality of their lives: *“Yes, this is it, because people have barriers many time. And in this way, by non-formal education, you can stimulate lifelong learning. That there are new things every time, that they can adapt to changes, to society, can’t they? That they are active, not marginalised, isolated. And that by this we try to affect the quality of their lives, don’t we?”* (A38-R2, p. 12, lines 28-31) and: *“A few years ago we have set up our vision, to become an organisation which would render education possible to different target groups, above all vulnerable groups. ... To give access to these target groups”* (A38-R2, p.2, lines 11-15).

2.2.10 Developing a strategy for the non-formal sector

The Respondent 1 of the centre knows there is a strategy of non-formal education in Slovenia till 2010 while the Respondent 2 thinks it covers the whole education field¹⁹. But there seems not to be a regional strategy on the non-formal education sector. If there was the main feature should be: accessibility.

For someone establishing a non-formal institution for the first time one would advise to have good people. They are the key to success and also to failure. On the other hand the Respondent 2 would advise the person to ascertain whether there are needs for non-formal

¹⁹ As seen in the introductory pages it actually covers formal and non-formal adult education.

education in the environment. Apart from need identification she would advise to secure financing as one, in the field of non-formal education, can not expect people to cover full fees.

Reflecting on strengths and weaknesses of non-formal education the Respondent 1 sees strengths in the facts that people can decide more quickly, more easily and that they themselves influence the education offer. Respondent 2 thinks that access to population is easier and in this way one is able to teach more people. The weaknesses are that once you start you have to assure finances to continue the work which nowadays are linked to the project money. And this is also one of the weaknesses of the non-formal sector - the dependence on these financial resources. Apart from these it takes time for people to realise what is the concrete use of their knowledge, especially so in the programmes which at first sight do not seem such. And finally if one prefers to be as near to the community then there is a question of adequate space and equipment for educational work. Especially the winter time in villages is problematic with inadequate rooms and lack of heating.

In relation to links of non-formal education with the workplace the opinion is that there is a lot of non-formal learning in the workplace which is in the care of employers and where adult education institutions do not necessarily have access to. At the same time it is thought that employers have their own logic. Nevertheless adult education institutions try to offer programmes which the workplace really needs. These enable the employers to adapt. At the moment the employers are looking (in this area) to computer learning and languages but are not prepared to give time for learning during the working hours. As the Respondent 1 said: *“our research has shown that employers have big educational needs which we are unable to satisfy. They relate to some very specific technical knowledge or something like it which is impossible to satisfy here In this case it is better for those few who need it to go to bigger cities and learn it there. But for larger target groups – we see ourselves and our mission here”* (A38-R1, p. 23, lines 21-35). From what was said it is obvious that employers expect some very specific knowledge needed by a few people. And this knowledge can be obtained in bigger cities nearby. This institution sees itself in the location where it is, caring for the local needs satisfying larger number of people.

In the opinion of the head of education the development of childcare is realisable. The problem she sees is how to assure funds to cover the tutor or space. On the other hand the Respondent 1 explained that apart from Roma, in other groups childcare does not seem to be the problem. But with Roma it is because of their culture and attachment of mother to children, *“wherever a Roma mother goes, there is no place on the earth, where the baby is not in the bundle and three behind her and three in front of her. ... We have tried but it did not work. ... Roma population does not give their children to kindergartens although those institutions try very hard to attract them”* (A38-R1, p. 24, lines 12-28).

The interviewees were of different opinions as to the effect of the recession on non-formal education. The head of education adhered to the prevailing opinion that there is going to be less money around and consequently less co-financing while the Respondent 1 does not know. *“And you know why I don’t know. In principle we don’t have any fees from people of these target groups and if we have, they are minimal. .. This means if there is a bigger unemployment this might mean more work for us. ... the state will have to do something with these people, will have to retrain them, give them new possibilities and this is an advantage for us and also new participants”* (A38-R1, p.25, lines 8-12). But she does expect a decrease in numbers of those who were paying themselves, also in culture and less theatre going. Otherwise she is optimistic. The institution has projects running until 2012 and there are no negative signals yet to the decreasing number of participants.

3 PRISON INSTITUTION

3.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: SECTOR – NATIONAL LEVEL

The work of prisons is governed by The Prison Administration that is situated within the Ministry of Justice. It was established in 1995 by joining eight authorities within a single, central entity. The prisons and the correctional institutions that until then had consisted of independent authorities within the Ministry of Justice became internal organizational units of the Prison Administration.

Its main mission is the implementation of various penal sanctions and detention. It concerns mainly the enforcement of prison sentences, work for the benefit of the community as an alternative to prison and educational measures implemented within a correctional institution.

The Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia performs administrative and professional assignments concerning:

- the enforcement of prison sanctions,
- the organisation and management of prisons and the correctional facility,
- ensuring provision of financial, material, personnel and other conditions for the functioning of the prisons and the correctional facility,
- personnel training for the needs of enforcement of penal sanctions,
- the enforcement of rights and obligations of the persons who have been deprived of liberty.

Prison sentences are executed in six prisons, at thirteen locations. The largest prison is at Dob, where male prisoners serve prison sentences from one-and-a-half to thirty years. The central institution for women prisoners is at Ig. This institution carries out all prison sentences. In Celje there is an institution for juveniles. In the regional institutions of Koper, Maribor and Ljubljana, sentenced persons serve the prison terms of up to one-and-a-half years. Satellite departments of institutions are set up in Murska Sobota, Novo Mesto, Radovljica and Nova Gorica; open departments are located at Rogoza, Ig and Slovenska vas, where the only remote, half-open department is located. Every institution has an open, half-open and a closed department that are distinguished according to their security level and the restriction of freedom of movement. Within the framework of the Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia, a juvenile correctional institution is also located (Radeče), where juveniles who have been committed to a correctional institution are sent.

All prisons are generally organised along the same lines. The basic two sectors are the same. The sector for treatment consists of the Education department, Department for security and Department for work of prisoners. The tasks of the education department are educational services provided by psychologists, educationalists, sociologists, educators, social workers, instructors and teachers of practical instruction (Article 244). Their role is to organise prisoners' life (work and education) during the sentence period. The organisational chart of the particular prison is dependent on the size and speciality of the inmates.

As of 31 December 2004, there were 798 civil servants employed with the Prison Administration of the Republic of Slovenia. Slightly over half of them were prison officers. The prison also provides treatment staff for the inmates, consisting of different experts such as psychologists, training staff, social workers, therapists, health care staff and the staff organizing the work of the prisoners, consisting mostly of instructors. The remaining services are concerned mostly with logistics.²⁰

3.1.1 Status and the extent of adult education in prisons

Education level attained by inmates is relatively low. From 2,048 inmates in 2008, 717 (35 %) had finished vocational school, 555 (27 %) finished primary school, 242 (11.8 %) vocational-technical upper secondary schools or gymnasium, 37 (1.8%) finished faculty or some other kind of post-secondary education. There are 219 (10.6 %) with unfinished vocational or technical school or gymnasium among all prisoners, and 11 (0.53 %) with unfinished post-secondary education. 267 (13 %) prisoners and juveniles, respectively are without school qualifications, 25 among them are illiterate.

Among those that were participating in educational programmes in 2008, 14.5 % were adult inmates (from all adult inmates) and 90.7 % juveniles (from all juveniles). Fifty seven prisoners and 4 juvenile were dropouts from education. The reasons for drop-out are most often lack of motivation, problems with drug addiction and learning problems. The majority of imprisoned population visited vocational or primary schools. 78.3 % of prisoners that were participating in formal education in the year 2008 were attending education within the institution while those that were enrolled in education in external institutions, participated in 4-year secondary or post-secondary education.

Three quarters of prisoners and juveniles (80 %), who participated in education in 2008, were financed by the state or EU funds. Free schooling is available to anyone that enrolled in

²⁰ Report 1995-2005 (2005). Uprava za izvrševanje kazenskih sankcij: 1995-2005 / [edited by: D. Valentinčič]. Ljubljana: Uprava RS za izvrševanje kazenskih sankcij.

primary education, and to juvenile prisoners enrolled in full-time education. In some prisons participants get refunds for some programmes or they pay only a symbolic fee. Some programmes e.g. “Bridge to Education (Most do izobrazbe) are financed from EU funds. One fifth of prisoners (20 %) paid for education either themselves or their families paid for them.

3.1.2 National policy documents on access to adult education in prisons

The main document that defines access to adult education in prisons is the Act on the Enforcement of Criminal Sanctions (Official Gazette RS, no. 22/2000). The key article concerning education is Article 102 which states that prisons must provide for the education and training of offenders, if all the security measures are met. Training can be organized in an institution or outside it, in collaboration with educational establishments and educational institutions. Special attention to education is specified for juvenile prisons, which should focus on completion of primary education (Article 115). The law says that in selecting an educational programme the prisoner’s abilities and preferences, the ability of the institution and other (security) circumstances should be considered. Prisoner can attend certain programmes for free (usually primary education and some short vocational programmes), but they can also choose a custom programme, but they must pay the tuition by themselves.

3.1.3 Background data to profile target groups for access strategies

See 4.3.1

3.1.4 Reduced fees

There are no specific national strategies for reducing fees for prison education, although some prisons do (co-)finance prisoners’ education as a means of stimulating their motivation.

3.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: INSTITUTION

3.2.1 Features of the institution / information on the interviewees

Prison was opened in the 1960's. In Slovenia “The Prison Administration” governs all prisons. The Prison Administration was founded in 1995 as a body within the Ministry of Justice. The prisons and the juvenile correctional home (institution) are the Administration's internal organisational units. It is ranked as high security level prison. At the moment of the interviewing there were 124 prisoners (overall capacity = 128) and 140 detainees. Prisoners are categorised as: sentenced prisoners, remand prisoners, and persons sentenced to prison in misdemeanours procedures.

3.2.2 Funding sources of the organisation

Prisons in Slovenia are funded from state budget; these are the only resources that are available for the Ministry of Justice and prison education.

3.2.3 Background data to profile target groups for access strategies

There was no access strategies available for this institution

3.2.4 Access strategies

No specific access strategies were found.

3.3 THE ACCESS OF ADULTS TO ADULT EDUCATION IN PRISON

3.3.1 Background features of the prison

Prison was opened in the 1960's and is ranked as high security level prison. At the moment of the interviewing there were 124 prisoners (overall capacity = 128) and 140 detainees. Prisoners are categorised as: sentenced prisoners, remand prisoners, and persons sentenced to prison in misdemeanours procedures.

Interviewees think that this prison is a typical prison, and regarding promotion of access to education for prisoners it is not different from other prisons in Slovenia. Access to education in all prisons is regulated by the same legislation. They think that possibilities for education for prisoners are opened, and prison authorities welcome any initiative for starting or continuing education. One of the respondents thinks that the main problems are prisoners themselves, because they are not motivated, are undisciplined, and lack learning and working habits: *"Yea, we have some difficulties here because the inmates are poorly motivated, the prisoners are .. they go, they don't go ... somehow they do, but they find it difficult to endure, at the beginning they decide, then they have difficulties in persisting so long, and they have poorly developed working and learning habits..."* (P-R1, p. 2, lines 1-3).

3.3.2 Education currently available in prison

The number of prisoners enrolled in education per year varies from year to year. It depends on the type of prisoners, the type and length of their imprisonment, their interests and personal characteristics. In the year 2008/9, prisoners were enrolled in programmes of primary education for adults, which were organized within the prison. In year 2009, no one was participating in this programme. On the other hand 12 persons attended UŽU programmes (literacy programmes, TSL – training for successful life). Two or three prisoners are individually enrolled in secondary educational programmes. "Individually" means, that their schooling started at the time when they were still free. They are now continuing their

schooling within the same institutions, but within prison. They can participate in lectures and take examinations at their primary educational institution. Prison approves those free exits.

Regarding the typical prisoner's profile, both interviewees agree that the main characteristic is person's age. Those who are at the beginning of their working life are more interested and prepared to undertake education. Respondent R2 also adds that persons who are serving their first sentence in prison and have shorter time of imprisonment are more likely to participate in education: *"Younger, younger, first time penalised, shorter sentences"* (P-R2, p 1., line 28).

There is no special list of classes or programmes. In general, prisoner can enrol in all education that is provided in the Republic of Slovenia. Of course there are certain security presumption (e.g. persons that committed the worst crimes are not allowed to exit the facility), but in general all prisoners can attend education outside the prison walls. The only formal education that is carried out within institution is primary school education for adults. This educational programme is available for all prisoners regardless of the nature of their crime. If person is granted with the access to outside-organized education, there is no time limit of his absence. He can participate in the classes as many hours as they are planned in educational programme that he attends. All prisoners can also use prison's library that has approximately 11,500 books²¹.

3.3.3 Background to prison education

Prison as a national institution carries out tasks, as they are declared and stated in the law. Its primary mission is to execute some kind of general prevention, executing punishment and preservation of law and order in society. The mission of the re-educational service that goes inside the prison is to enable all prisoners for active and constructive return in their lives after the completion of their punishment. This is their main mission. Prisons as institutions do not write their own strategic plans. They are written at a national prison administration body for all prisons in Slovenia. *"Here at the institution we only write annual reports. In these reports we describe life of condemned persons, their problems, our problems etc."* (P-R2, p. 2, lines 67-68).

All prisons are financed through state budget. Funds intended for educations are planned at a national prison administration body. This education is mainly non-formal. The majority of formal education is taking place on prisoners' individual request, and is usually delivered

²¹ This refers to the number of books available in this institution.

outside the institution (except primary education for adults). This also means that they have to manage their tuition fees privately, except again for primary education which is free of charge and funded by the state.

Historically, prisoners can participate in education for approximately 20 years. At the beginning prisoners mainly participated in literacy courses, because a lot of them were very poorly educated. In the last period there are some alternative forms for gaining primary educations (i.e. TSL - Training for Successful Life - Bridge to Education). They also collaborate more with universities. Some universities for example allow prisoners to take examinations in prison. For the last ten years, collaboration also takes place with other outside institutions that are having some non-formal programmes or workshop inside institutions.

Prison's staff value education as one of the primary enabler of individual's rehabilitation: *"Individual learning and studying of prisoners is enabled the whole time. We think that education is one of the key factors for successful rehabilitation back to society"* (P-R1, p. 4, 128-130).

3.3.4 Continuity of education

Prisons do not have any obligations and possibilities to enable or influence the continuity of individual's education after he leaves prison. *"Our job is not to follow a person after he is released from prison. It would also be a hard job to do because we have prisoners from all over the country"* (P-R1, p. 4, 137-38).

They do collaborate with centres for social works, though. This means that after the prisoner is released from the prison, the local centre takes over. However, their attention is not primarily focused on education.

They don't develop individual education plans for prisoners. Educational plans are a part of a larger planning of his life in prison. Every person must have an individual plan in which his staying in prison is defined with goals of his activities. Educational planning is part of this personal plan.

3.3.5 Distance education

Currently there are no possibilities for implementing distance-learning courses. In principle every person that needs a computer for his learning needs can have access to one. Nevertheless, because of security and technical reasons, there are no internet connections in prison.

There are plans to implement that possibility in the future, when a new prison will be build, and there will be more room and infrastructure for such learning to take place.

3.3.6 Support services in prison

There is no systematic testing or procedures for identifying prisoners with literacy problems or specific learning difficulties. Every condemned person gets to work with a pedagogue. Each pedagogue works with 20 persons. He or she talks to them, leads small groups and make individualised plans for them. In the process of planning, he/she tests certain intellectual and literacy abilities, and checks his history in formal learning. In this process pedagogue also indentifies any possible learning difficulties. This is a foundation for any potential participation in education.

But in prison – our respondent says – this is not a primary concern of pedagogue’s work, it depends on her/his goodwill: *“We are mostly dealing with learning difficulties. Every pedagogue helps persons with these problems individually. However, this is not his work obligation. He does that if he wants to, if there is time – he is not obliged to do that”* (P-R2: 3, lines 93-95).

The main focus of pedagogue’s work with prisoners is in their rehabilitation, and inclusion back to life.

As regard counsellors/therapists available for prisoners, beside pedagogue, there is also a psychologist and social worker. They are available to the prisoner upon request. In most cases pedagogue evaluate prisoner’s needs and directs him to see one or the other.

3.3.7 Prisoner profiles

Prisons in Slovenia are not “unisex”, so it is not possible to make any (case study) comparisons regarding the differences between male and female prisoners and participation in adult education in prison.

There is a wide variety of inmates in the prison of our study, from those entirely without education, to those with finished university education. In general our interviewees say that most of them have unfinished lower-secondary education. Most people come from urban environment, and are 25-40 years old.

There are no special problems with prisoners participating in education. Of course, in some cases there are some problems, behavioural in nature. However, our interviewees say that these problems are specific for prisoners that are enrolled in education. *“Very rarely, but it happens, e.g. one prisoner went to a shopping centre. However, cases like this are*

exceptional. Usually they are aware of the opportunity they are getting and play by the rules” (P-R2, p. 3, lines 108-9).

Prisoners that participate in education want to make a good use of the opportunity that was given to them. They are aware that an educational degree can change they life in a big way.

3.3.8 Tutors in prison

In Slovenian prisons, there are no employed tutors. Tutoring is happening (if it is happening) on a voluntary, non-formal and ad-hoc level. Often they are volunteer students, or in some cases also teachers that are willing to help some prisoners. Some time ago, there were students, who were coming in prison on Sundays, and they worked with persons who were in education. They coached and supported them for exams. In some ways, also the prison’s staff helps them to learn.

We can say that prison administration supports and allows tutoring, but there is no organisational support for this kind of activity. As the first says: *“I can say we are opened for these kinds of experiences, so we allow all kind of tutors (paid also), if someone has a need for tutoring. But, there are no organised tutoring services, unfortunately”* (P-R1, p. 5, lines 202-204).

This also means that the only way to get a tutor is by self-initiative, since no organized help of getting tutors is available. Voluntary tutoring is often organized through centres for social work.

3.3.9 Future directions

As their main obstacle they see a lack of space. They think that for the expansion of adult education in their prison, they would require much more space than they have available now. They are planning (together with the Ministry of Justice) a new building with more room for education, and better equipment. That would really be an improvement, because as for now all available places are used for the residence of the prisoners.

They also think that objective conditions are only a part of this problem. In their opinion prisoner’s personal characteristics are also big problem: *“... most common problems are connected with lack of their working habits, and interests, and poor intellectual abilities. In addition, I have to mention some personal characteristics connected with deviant behaviour”* (P-R1, p. 6, lines 220-221).

They think that education is already accessible enough, and that the inmates have all the possibilities for participation in education. According to their experiences, in most cases, it

comes down to their individual motivation to enrol in education: *“I think it is their maturity and responsibility to accept education. If in his youth he was not able to understand the necessity of education, here he has a chance to become aware of the importance of education to his life.”* (P-R2, p. 4, lines 132-134).

The interviewees are not aware of the influence that economic recession may have on adult education in prisons. To their knowledge, the only possible influence would be the financing of prisons and prison education, respectively. *“I hope there will not be any. I'm afraid that there will come to some decrease of available fund dedicated for education in prisons”* (P-R1, p. 6, lines 225-226).

4 GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT OFFICIALS

4.1 BACKGROUND INFORMATION: NATIONAL LEVEL

4.1.1 National policy documents on access to adult education in prisons

Adult education in prison is not subject of any policy documents on adult education in Slovenia. Right to education is a constitutional right and is as such respected everywhere, also in prisons, especially when it concerns compulsory primary education. Other levels of education are stimulated as well as shown in item 3 of this report.

4.1.2 Background data to profile target groups for access strategies

Officially, lifelong learning concept is one of the basic concepts pinpointing the development of education system in Slovenia. It is reflected in the White Book on Education in Slovenia (1995) and in respective education legislation. It is operationalised in mid-term and short-term policy documents at the national level. However in spite of all legislation and policy and strategic papers in practice there are no significant changes indicating any more substantial transformation of the national education system towards the principles of lifelong learning. With the sharpening of the economic crises, the state and employers alike considerably reduced the budget for adult education in spite of generally accepted acknowledgment of the importance of investment in improving and upgrading knowledge. Similar to other European countries the evidence shows that Slovenia is quite high on the list of European countries regarding the share of adults participating in lifelong learning, however more detailed data on social groups participating in lifelong learning suggest that most educationally deprived groups of population are also most underrepresented in adult education and learning. National research on participation in adult education (Mohorčič Špolar et al. 2001, 2006, 2007) shows that population with less than 4-year secondary education, older generations, unemployed and persons outside the labour market are the groups underrepresented in formal as well as non-formal education.

Attending either primary or (upper) secondary education is in line with most important official goals defined by basic national strategic documents in the field of adult education and lifelong learning, just to mention the Resolution on National Programme of Adult Education to 2010 adopted by the national Parliament in 2004. It is thus expected that all social actors would undertake all possible measures to ease access of educationally deprived adult population to upper secondary education and transition to tertiary education after finished upper secondary education.

According to the Slovenian Constitution primary education is compulsory. The state guarantees free primary education as a second chance to those adults who for various reasons have not obtained the certificate on primary education in their youth education; the improvement of once attained level of education in adulthood is to certain extent supported by the state but also left to individuals and to their employers when it comes to the employed population. According to the national legislation and strategic documents the groups that should enjoy special support of the state are as follows:

- population with low basic skills,
- population with less than 12 years of schooling,
- unemployed and those threatened by unemployment,
- older population,
- ethnic minorities (Roma),
- migrants,
- persons with special needs.

Following the available national evidence, a large fraction of adults enrolled in formal education gets educated at the tertiary level. Participation of adults in tertiary education is usually self-initiated and self-financed. It often does not mean re-entry into education in order to progress in educational hierarchy but the continuation of education that started prior to entering the labour market. Those re-entering formal education either want to realise something they were not able to accomplish at the time of youth or to support the occupational career development, a minority also enjoys learning new things. There is no atypical access to tertiary education. It seems thus justified to argue that participation of adults in tertiary education is more strongly directed to private interests either of individuals or employers.

4.2 GOVERNMENT UNIT(S) ADMINISTERING FORMAL ADULT EDUCATION

4.2.1 Introduction

This case study is based on data collected by three interviews with three Government department officers: two interviews were conducted with high level public officers at the Ministry of Education and Sport and one at the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology.

4.2.2 Background information

In Slovenia, the state administration in the field of formal adult education follows the pattern characteristic of youth education: the Ministry of Education and Sport governs

primary and secondary education of adults and – for the time being – short higher education programmes while the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology governs formal higher and university education of adults. It is the Ministry of Education and Sport that is governing and coordinating lifelong learning. Its main tasks related to this are:

- define national policy on education and sport as well as on structuring and funding the entire system, including the management of publicly-run institutions, inspection procedures and financial aid,
- propose educational legislation and is also responsible for implementing laws in the field of the entire education and training system covering primary and secondary education and adult education,
- in addition to formulation of life-long learning policy and adult education policy in general in cooperation with other stakeholders Ministry of Education in particular covers the field of formal education and the development of general and key skills and competencies of adults.

Within the ministry has been established a special unit for adult education – an adult education sector that is responsible for designing national policy and legislation in adult education and executing administrative tasks regarding adult education. It is placed in the Directorate for secondary and post-secondary education and adult education. Main tasks assigned to the adult education sector are as follows:

- Preparing strategic as well as medium and short term adult education policy measures (green and white papers),
- drafting laws and by-laws and statutes and amendments pertaining to particular areas of adult education in its authority,
- assuring adequate environment supporting the development of adult education in terms of infrastructure (networks of providers and programs, incentives, information system, human resources and their development, etc.),
- taking care of sustainable financial framework of publicly financed adult education,
- allocating public funds earmarked for adult education,
- maintaining and improving inter-sectoral cooperation,
- providing suitable administrative framework for the system of adult education.

The Directorate is lead by a general manager. It is typical that holders of this position usually have experiences in youth education – mainly secondary school management, whereas the head of the adult education department is disposing of extensive work experience in organising and administering adult education.

Since the enactment of the higher education, reform in 1994 formal tertiary education legislation has distinguished between regular education and irregular education. Participants in irregular higher education are all those who get enrolled in part time study in order to be able to participate in the labour market or carry out other roles in the society but also those young people who do not fulfil criteria for enrolment in regular studies and are ready to pay tuition fee for their higher education. One might even argue that the main difference between regular and irregular tertiary education provided in public sector is that those enrolled in regular studies do not pay the tuition fee. Irrespective of that virtually a quarter of all tertiary students are irregular students no separate unit/person is charged with tasks related to this large group of students - let alone adult education - within the higher education ministry. The Directorate of higher education is dealing both with regular and irregular higher and university studies. Its main tasks extend to:

- Planning, directing higher education activities, students homes and higher education libraries,
- drafting starting points and goals of higher education policy, monitoring and analysing the realisation of objectives stated,
- preparing and monitoring National programme of higher education and evaluation of its effects,
- drafting legal documents pertaining to higher education,
- approving allocation of study programmes and study places,
- analysing socio-economic issues of students,
- participating in designing information system in higher education,
- other expert tasks connected to administration of higher education.

4.2.3 Structural issues

Committees or other bodies dealing with issues such as social inclusion, access of underrepresented groups to education activities, lifelong learning, literacy, the non-formal education sector in the education ministry

From the information handed out by Respondent 2 it may be found that an inter-ministerial group called Council for the realisation of lifelong learning has been established most recently. Its task is to monitor the realisation of the National Programme of Adult Education to 2010. The Council is composed of experts from respective ministries; no other actors were invited to participate. When the need arises, ad hoc expert working groups are formed but they are more characteristic of youth education and are usually not established in adult education. Respondent 1 confirmed that working groups are established at various levels dealing with individual groups of pupils but they usually cover youth education. He also

underlined that no other representatives besides experts take part in these groups. Both interviewees agreed that involvement of representatives of respective target groups would make sense. In some areas, this has already been taken into account. *“We – youth education - are just now in this period of designing the politics of the school system, school networks and we have attracted also representatives of providers, associations, communities etc.”* (MSS-R1, p.1, lines 27-29).

There is neither special post nor special person assigned tasks related to the improvement of access to education of any of underrepresented groups. All issues related to the provision of education for educationally deprived adults are dealt with by the adult education sector. More specifically, the head of the sector is formally responsible for designing and proposing measures and schemes creating learning opportunities for these groups of adult population. *“There is a sector for adult education within the Directorate that covers practically all those fields... the head of the sector coordinates the work”* (MSS-R1, p.2, lines 5-6, 9). Such organisation of work was confirmed by the head of the sector: *“... the whole department is practically intended for this, the very person is the head of the department..., is responsible for those issues and also for the realisation of annual programme [where annual tasks are operationalised]”* (MSS-R2, p.1, lines 37-39).

On the contrary the respondent from the Ministry of Higher Education answered that working groups existed dealing with various questions related to student population. However, she pointed out that social issues including those related to underprivileged groups of students are coordinated by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, other ministries are just taking part in those activities. According to her, these would mainly be *“... issues concerning social state aid, support for those studying, and there are of course various target groups, those who are enrolled in full time (regular) as well as irregular (adult formal) education.... There are questions of meal coupons, transportation,... anyway more or less subsidies”* (MVS-R1, p.1, lines 20-23; 30-31).

In higher education ministry there is also no special post or person charged particularly with issues related to groups underrepresented in tertiary education. In general the Directorate for higher education does not pay any special attention to »real« adult students as they are just a small population. *“To have those proper part-time students, when one re-enters in the context of lifelong learning, or when you traverse as a marginalised person, because you had been, let’s say thrown out, or you had have yourself thrown out and return after so many years, this we do not detect to such an extent”* (MVS-R1, p.2, lines 29-32).

Differently from the Ministry of Education and Sport, whenever dealing with particular issues of higher education student population representatives of the target group in question are always included which at least formally satisfies the situation. *“In the context of tertiary education students are always an obligatory partner”* (MVS-R1, p. 2, line 4).

Government Board for student’s matters has been reactivated that would touch upon an array of issues concerning the student population.²² Among them are: scholarship policy, students with special needs, but not so explicitly other social questions as they are mostly wrapped in scholarships. As underlined by the respondent the Board gave priority to issues related to regular students. *“But it is true that the impact has been so far mainly on the issues of regular students studying at the first and second Bologna cycle”* (MVS-R1, p.2, lines 16-18).

4.2.4 Communication structures at the strategic level between regional, local and national level

The implementation of the educational reform, particularly in vocational education and training initiated establishment of regional bodies composed of social partners and most important local interests, as well as local developmental agencies which were supposed to deal with the development of VET in line with local needs and requirements. There was an idea of the developmental coalitions but it did not survive its experimental phase. Adult education has remained centralised. Contrary to youth education where the National Education Institute established some regional/local offices no formal structures of such kind exist in adult education. Nonexistence of strategic communication structures between different levels was confirmed also by our interviewees from the ministry of education and sports. One of them mentioned that the Association of the Peoples’ universities may currently play such a role. However, peoples’ universities as well as their Association communicate directly with the adult education sector at the education ministry (MSS-R1, p. 2, lines 19-22, 25-26). Respondent 2 called attention to the fact that in line with current legal regulations all questions related to adult education are the matter of the state although they concern a particular region or local community. Some local communities do not take on any agency when education needs of their members are in question while some are very active and provide strong support to some adult education activities. But irrespective of their actual involvement local governments do not represent any systemic intermediary communication structure in the adult education field as has been pointed out by

²² There is very strong Students organisation of Slovenia, which represents all students irrespective of the way of study (regular, irregular). It is highly professionalised in terms of the establishment as well as the way of acting, which is quite unique in comparison to other European countries.

Respondent 2: *“Not at the moment. With the preparations, when it was said that this local level will start, there was talk. At the moment – we also miss this, between local and national level, therefore almost everything comes directly to the state there is almost no turning to the local level. This is not a thing with people they see that everything is a matter of the state which is not true. In the majority of cases it is the matter of the local community but our regulation is now such, that also the matters which concern local community concern the state”* (MSS-R2, p.2, lines 7-13) and also further on: *“ What we can see, practically a direct support goes to these groups. All that we finance, we finance practically almost directly. Local community in some tenders where providers must assure some funds also from others. As we see from the reports local community does not act in a considerable way, much more there are others as investors or financers or supporters, also other organisations, groups, more than local community, although much depends. Some local communities give nothing at all, some much. This is, basically I’d say we have links directly with providers not through local community and from providers we demand in a way to seek elsewhere not only from the state”* (MSS-R2, p.2, lines 19-27).

In socialist times workers' universities represented a special type of community education centres established by municipalities to deliver qualifications to industrial workers besides they provided socio-political education and education for self-management. During the transition period some workers universities have been transformed into private adult education organisations and some have remained in public ownership. Local communities as owners act very differently. The extent to which they exercise their role of founders often depends on their economic power and other local actors. With the post-socialist transformation of Slovenia we witnessed extensive fragmentation of municipalities. A large number of small communes with very small economic resources were established. These small communes have no capacities either in financial terms or in terms of human resources to get involved more strongly in the development and provision of community education, although this is foreseen in the existing policy documents (note: ReNPIO). Also workers' universities have lost their specific role and have become one among many adult education providers that compete for public financing. Public funds earmarked for adult education at the national level are distributed by the ministry to local providers of adult education programmes and activities through public tenders. *“All that we finance, we finance practically almost directly... As we see from reports local community does not act in a considerable way, instead there are other actors who act as financers, supporters, investors in adult education at the local level”* (MSS-R2, p. 2, lines 22-24).

The possibility to make use of European Social Fund (ESF) as financial fund supporting further development in adult education opened new chances for the development of community education. Pilot regional lifelong learning centres have been established within initiatives financed by ESF.

Similar model of communication with the local/regional level applies to tertiary education. Direct links between the ministry and higher education institutions exist. But the Student's Organisation of Slovenia has strong communication with regional initiatives and some associations which are regionally conceptualised and are strong and loud enough or have activists with strong individual agency. Indeed those are civil society activities and not activities of the state but they may be quite influential (MVS-R1, p. 3).

4.2.5 Cooperation with other ministries

So far Ministry of Education and Sport (MoES) and Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs (MoLFSA) have established regular communication and developed common approaches at increasing access of vulnerable groups to adult education through national and ministerial strategies and policy measures and schemes, mostly in the framework of the active labour market policy with the goal to improve individual employability. As respondent 1 pointed out: *"...then we have at the level of inter-sectoral connection, therefore Ministry of Education and Sport and Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, at the level of vocational education, national vocational qualifications. This I think is this formal part"* (MSS-R1, p.1, lines 19-22). By and large MoLFSA provides funds and strategies directed to the issues of social equality in education.

4.2.6 Strategic issues

National/Government strategies covering access of underrepresented groups to education and learning

As already mentioned in the SP 1 report, in Slovenia adult education has become an autonomous subsystem with the educational reform enacted in 1996. The foundations were provided by the White Book on Education in Slovenia (MoES, 1995) and enacted by the Adult Education Act and Act on Organisation and Financing of Education in Slovenia (passed the Parliament in 1996). The last two documents have laid down the basic principles and legal basis for further development and provision of adult education. However, defining policy and concrete measures and programmes is a matter of policy papers proposed by authorised ministries. Interviewees from the education ministry pointed to the National programme of adult education to 2010, passed the Parliament in 2004. They claimed that this document is covering all the issues from social inclusion to lifelong learning and literacy

improvement of the population. In addition to this central policy document there are also strategies adopted by the education minister that define goals and measures related to particular marginalised groups such as Roma people or particular issues, for instance, improvement of basic skills of adult population. There are also strategy papers prepared by other ministries that deal with particular issues in their wholeness. In particular MoLFSA prepared some strategies addressing social inclusion of particular groups such as Active aging strategy, Programme of active employment policy which is also important for the field of adult education. *“Actually there are strategies for all these fields... and they are linked together. Now it is only the matter of how this strategy has successfully captured all the segments and whether it has been realistic to the extent that it can be implemented in everyday practice”* (MSS-R2, p. 2, lines 37-40).

Both respondents argue that the main goals and objectives stated by the national strategic documents are defined in a way that makes it possible to monitor and measure their realisation. *“Yes, especially in the part where we are measuring the number of participants in individual programmes...”* (MSS-R1, p.3, lines 10-11). *“At least as far as ours is concerned, in the Resolution on the National Programme of Adult Education, all those goals are measurable. ... There are other partial strategies e.g. for literacy, lifelong learning strategy, as well as various strategies adopted by the MoLFSA. ... and it is only a matter - it is only my estimation - how successfully we touch the heart of the issue to be able to realise it”* (MSS-R2, p.3, lines 3-9).

The interviewee from higher education ministry pointed to the National Programme of Higher Education also adopted by the Parliament. The document strongly emphasises equal opportunities in higher education. *“There is a strong emphasis on equal opportunities because these are also basic I should say philosophical and political principles which are ever present in the field of higher education, especially from the viewpoint what is higher education – is it public good or not and to what extent it is public good”* (MVS-R1, p.3, lines 38-40). However, she explained that the realisation of this principle to a large extent rests with Universities, as they decide on matters such as opening up the enrolment conditions, traverse conditions, possibilities of progression. As far as students are concerned there is not just the issue of financial support but as well how the study is organised by the University and what the enrolment conditions are. She evaluated this as follows: *“...our traversing and progressions are a kind of... taking into account differences brought about by life long learning, classically very closed and adjusted exclusively to regular study and to relatively closed vertical traversing”* (MVS-R1, p. 4, lines 4-7).

No quotas for non-traditional students and for underrepresented social groups are set at the level of tertiary education. The interviewee confirmed that there are enough study places for all interested to enrol in tertiary programmes but the problem arises when it comes to the realisation of individual choices. Everyone interested who passed matriculation examination can enrol in tertiary education however not according to her/his first choice study field but perhaps only to the third one. And the third choice is usually taken by young people only to get the status of a student and bonuses that go along with the status. This is actually the problem. *“The possibility to realise one's first choice... It's impossible regardless of the social environment one comes from. Realisation of the third choice which as we know is quite weak and is more a way to assure the status definitely is possible”* (MVS-R1, p. 4, lines 22-25). She does not see that the quotas idea could be realised in Slovenia, at least not under current regulations according to which first and second cycle of the Bologna studies are free²³ for regular students. In addition they get subsidies for meals and accommodation. This should to certain extent accommodate social problems stemming from individual socio-economic status. If so, what can then be the basic criterion to define marginalised /underrepresented groups? Current practice has been that students with special needs such as a physical disability have been dealt with individually while the matriculation examination achievements are those opening the door to the regular study in one's first choice study programme and not other characteristics/factors. So far special quotas exist for Slovenes living across the border (Austria, Italy, Hungary and elsewhere). At the time of war in ex-Yugoslavia, there was a special agreement related to the study of refugees but it does not exist any more.

4.2.7 Financing the realisation of the strategies

In Slovenia there is a strong tendency to keep adult education regulated by the market. Yet, given the national regulation mechanisms and strategic documents there are areas of adult education which cannot be and are not regulated by the market. Strategies and measures addressing access of underrepresented groups and most vulnerable groups of population to education and training are, besides the funds earmarked in the state budget and allocated by the education ministry and those intended for financing active employment policy, financed by European Social Funds (ESF). Apparently this is crucial but also the only additional fund financially supporting formal education of underrepresented groups although there are severe problems connected to the utilisation. *“At the moment we are using ESF and these are as a matter of fact quite good support on one side although on the*

²³ “Free” means that no tuition fee is charged.

other side they have their deficiencies because of the administrative procedures..." (MSS-R2, p. 3, lines 17-19).

According to the estimates of respondent 2 the majority of public funds yearly allocated by the annual programme of adult education, are allocated to non-formal education and only between one fifth to one third to formal education (MSS-R2, p.3, lines 26-31). She argued that the education ministry takes special care that underdeveloped parts of the country have priority while allocating funds. But at the same time she pointed to the fact that some basic conditions have to be fulfilled in the local environment to be eligible for funds, such as a network of adult education providers, partial co-financing by the municipality. Local environments that are not able to prove any of these are not eligible for funding.

At the level of tertiary education there are separate funds for scholarships, subsidised transportation, subsidised sustenance, that are administered by the MoLFSA. Subsidies are also available for housing in students' homes and private room rents, and learning materials. However all these are state financed subsidies. For the time being no private funds have been established. The respondent believes that financial problem is not a real obstacle to participation in formal tertiary education; the real problem is lack of motivation of young people: *"I don't think there are, I think that apart from the fact that someone would have to remind them that this has to be done, there aren't any obstacles. Also, at the moment it is not so bad with financing, it is possible it could be worse the next year, but momentarily there should not have been any obstacles"* (MSS-R2, p.4, lines 18-21).

4.2.8 National policy – long term sustainable measures

Slovenian education system has no experience with the reservation of places for students from particular social environments. No incentives are available to encourage that certain number of places would be reserved for people from underrepresented groups such as ethnic minorities, traditionally disadvantaged groups to get trained for teachers or other professions connected to education and community development and then return home and engaged in local community education and development. In fact some of our interviewees think that this should be the concern of local communities themselves. In general young people from these groups have priority in access to scholarship schemes, indeed conditional on their school achievements. This goes especially for minorities. Curiously enough none of the interviewees from the ministry of education really saw any obstacle to such initiatives; they were more inclined to think that such ideas have not yet emerged. *"I think that apart from the fact that someone would have to propose this could be done there aren't any obstacles"* (MSS-R2, p. 4, lines 18-19).

It was a tradition in Slovenia that school premises were in the time when they were not occupied by youth used for adult education and respondents from the education ministry do not see any reason not to retain such practice in the future. *“I think that this already exists, especially in smaller places... I know concrete examples for upper secondary schools and primary schools which have been used for many years in afternoons for adult education”* (MSS-R1, p. 4, lines 26-30).

But respondent 1 proposed that the ministry has to take care of that the schools would not take a market stand and define such politics in this field that will prevent competition or try to improve the budget through renting out their premises on commercial basis. With the diminishing young generations schools have become afraid of closure due to too small number of pupils. Some of them see a solution to this problem in attracting adult population. To this end they try to keep an advantage through controlling the use of school premises. On the other hand the respondent from the higher education ministry claimed that higher education institutions have their premises occupied over whole days and often also on Saturdays therefore they cannot make them available to the education needs of the local community.

All three interviewees suggested that increased unemployment may for various reasons negatively affect participation in adult education. Still, one of them expressed some optimism: *“It seems to me that adult education either formal or non-formal is nevertheless becoming somehow an integral part of peoples' lives and is also used by the employed for their personal career reasons and I think that sooner or later we should integrate adult education in a common branch, where it will only be divided on formal and non-formal”* (MSS-R1, p. 5, lines 1-16). At the same time the higher education ministry's representative sees an advantage in the quality of knowledge of graduates from the Slovenian universities. *“What has been our greatest advantage in my personal view, has been that ... our study is still organised in a classical way, which means that a sound basis is given and if you have sound basis you can upgrade specialisation”* (MVS-R1, p. 6, lines 37- 40). She sees the way in which the Bologna reform has been implemented as something what may endanger the quality. *“Bologna reform has brought with it fights for hours not for quality... I am afraid that we have taken the fragmentation downward and not upward”* (MVS-R1, p. 7, lines 1- 4).

4.2.9 Future development of non-formal education sector

The progress in the non-formal education sector and support by the national policy

Representatives of government departments were asked about the following dimensions of the national policy on developments in non-formal education sector:

- the main responsibility for funding of adult education organisations,
- state of art in comparison to 5 years back,
- future developments from the point of view of national support to personal development classes to reach groups most alienated from the mainstream education system,
- future development regarding government support for community development classes to reach the abovementioned groups.

To start with the funding of adult education organisations, the main responsibility of adult education providers is, according to the interviewees from the education ministry, not an easy question if the story of public and private sector and public-private ownership is considered. While regarding public financing the primary responsibility is with education and labour ministries. However there are also other state departments which should contribute their share e.g. ministry of economy, agriculture, transport, etc.

Interviewees from the education ministry seem to agree that a substantial progress has been made in non-formal adult education sector in the last 5 years. They assert that in the past the development was initiated by theoreticians while today the state itself has become aware of the necessity for its furthering because of accelerated technological development and other changes in the society, mainly the demographic changes. Formal education cannot adjust and follow these changes fast enough. It is accepted that permanent learning is necessary, but unfortunately it has not yet been interiorised that each person should have access to learning opportunities in every period of life (MSS-R2, p. 6, lines 1-9). Significant step further is also seen in the direction of discussions on recognition of non-formal and informal education and learning in formal education (MSS-R1, p. 6, lines 8-14). Taking all this into consideration they find it curious that most recently the participation in organised adult education has been in a kind of stagnation. They suggested the key issue that has to be raised is how to motivate people for participation, not just in a financial sense. Similarly providers should be encouraged to offer training programmes in fields which now are underrepresented in the training market.

They expressed their belief that a decrease in generations of young pupils will force schools to search for new opportunities and they may be expected to turn to the development of training offer for adults. This may be an important way how to fill in school premises. *“If the trend continues, generations will diminish also in formal education. Then I expect that individual providers will look for their opportunities also in non-formal education”* (MSS-R1, p. 8, lines 12-14).

Unfortunately, our interviewees believe that it depends on Government in power what kind of policy towards non-formal adult education will promote and carry on. While being asked about next government support to motivate underrepresented groups to participate in education and learning we got the answer that the support should be very strong but no concrete measure/activity were mentioned *“We know that there are 4-year mandates and concerning the sector and the profession – we have the plan how, but will the politics realise this or not is the matter of politics”* (MSS-R2, p. 6, lines 36-38).

They see further support of the community learning and development through further implementation of local lifelong learning centres that started to developed within the financial perspective 2004-2006 with the ESF financial support. But they suggested that establishing provisions was just one part, the other one concerns motivation mechanisms and incentives for making use of learning provisions. *“In my opinion we will have to invest in motivating people to learn. I really think this is one of the most demanding projects since the average age is 41, which means we are very close to the age when we more or less stop participating in adult education activities”* (MSS-R2, p. 7, lines 7-10).

None of them saw the introduction of services such as provision of child care at the time of organised classes when kindergartens and crèches are closed as an incentive. They connected such service with social welfare provided for by MoLFSA and not as part of the whole education package delivered to participants in adult education.

On the contrary the interviewee from the higher education department does not see any development in non-formal education to the level of higher education. The priority was the Bologna reform, and all other themes were postponed. *“I think there are things still to be happening and the holder will be mainly the MoLFSA and not the MoES”* (MVS-R1, p. 10, lines 9 - 11).

In her view it may be expected that in the near future higher education institutions will organise an offer of professional development programmes based on identified training needs. Some faculties, more open to innovations have already started that. However this development has nothing to do with the improvement of access of underrepresented groups to tertiary education sector. It will upgrade already attained tertiary education.

On the other hand, the consideration to link tertiary education with community education has not advanced very far although there are no formal barriers to that. It is more or less on the site of higher education institutions to initiate such activities.

4.2.10 Recognition of non-formal learning

Recognition of prior learning has been an issue dealing with in Slovenia for more than last 10 years. Only more recently formal education system started to open up to accommodate this activity. Legally it has been possible to consider certificates obtained in publicly accredited formal and non-formal training while recognition of non-formal and informal learning was legally introduced in the education system only with the laws passed after 2004. All three respondents stressed the importance of recognition of prior learning for facilitating access of educationally deprived groups of adults to education and learning. They consider recognition of non-formal learning as an important motivation mechanism, and they urge for the next step – the development of standards against which non-formal education and learning could be validated and integrated in formal education (MSS-R1, p. 6, lines 8-14). They do not see any formal barriers to the further development and implementation of prior learning recognition in the formal education sector. They believe that people need to change their comprehension about how knowledge and skills are developed: *“Actually I think that the main, basic, problem is, as I have said earlier in the fact, that to motivate for education and learning is also the problem in the heads of people themselves or, in us all. Knowledge is not perceived as a category which can also be obtained outside organised, one way or another, forms of formal or non-formal education. We simply can’t think in another way. The knowledge of an individual is valued through the process which he is capable to master, not through the actual knowledge he possesses. And as long as we view the knowledge through formal education then we have problems and we will still have them”* (MSS-R2, p.7, lines 20-28). Until we do not accept that learning occurs in different settings and formal educational setting (schools) is just one of them we will have problems in this domain. *“Knowledge is not perceived as a category which can also be acquire outside organised [one way or another] forms of formal or non-formal education. ... The knowledge of an individual is valued through the process which he /she is capable to master, not the actual knowledge and skills he/she possesses”* (MSS-R2, p. 7, lines 22-26). In the opinion of respondent 2 we need to invest in changing of the culture of learners and employers alike: *“actually to prepare from the infrastructure and at the same time to change the way people are thinking. This means culture, therefore to change the culture which is the most difficult and takes approximately 10, 15 years. And, if we succeed to do it in 15 years, then this is a lot. It is a fact that we simply do not let ourselves understand that you don’t have to go to school to have certain knowledge, not education, knowledge, but when we will know how to accept these things as possibilities then it will not be problematic any more. Now it is also a matter of the employers if they will – if the employers accept this possibility, to take in the individual with only his knowledge and not education, then the mentality will change very quickly. If the employers will still take people in with education, then such a mentality, such a culture and tradition will*

be preserved” (MSS-R2, p.7, lines 32-43). As long as employers select workers on the basis of certificates and diplomas obtained solely in schools it is difficult to expect such changes.

The interviewee representing higher education ministry relates the development in the field of recognition of prior learning with the implementation of the European Qualification Framework. She expressed the expectation that changes in higher education act would lay the foundations. The most important will be the pressure of young people acquiring knowledge and skills abroad. Some aspirations have already been expressed. According to her at the end universities will have to define, together with the higher education ministry, adequate procedures to accommodate this requirement. At the same time she did not see the possibility that recognition would apply to prior learning taking place outside higher education space in Slovenia. The main problem is in the fact that universities are actually not willing to develop and implement the system and there is no outside pressure on them. All in all it will take quite some time to implement any such changes: *“Well the foundations will most probably be laid by the law on the changes of the Higher Education Act where the context brought by the European Qualification Framework, not to mention that Lisbon convention has brought it already – it will have to be incorporated and fathomed in a way, how this is going to work. I doubt that the law on the qualification framework itself will bring it, if there is no regulation. I think, there are still considerable dispersions. Otherwise the main pressure will come, not from within Slovenia, but from young and diverse candidates bringing such knowledge and skills from abroad. Aspirations to recognise and validate already exist and we are finding out where we are on the short side. Let’s say now or in the near future we will sit together with the University to finalise who and in which way, and we will check together with them, and this will proceed in the context of recognition, but still...”* (MVS-R1, p. 10, lines 36-43; p. 11).

4.2.11 Future plans

Interviewees from the education ministry saw as main impediment to greater participation of the underprivileged groups in education and learning their low motivation. In line with this they stressed as important the measures promoted by the state, such as informing, counselling and promotion. They were also convinced that the responsibility for motivation activities addressing the employed population should be shared with employers. Employers should provide employees with the experience that education and learning is linked to individual career development, whereas the state is responsible for introducing incentives aiming for groups outside the labour market (MSS-R1, p. 11, lines 5-11).

It is also acknowledged that it is not sufficient just to participate in organised education activities; one needs suitable environment to learn. This includes physical space at home

where students can learn. Slovenia has developed centres for autonomous learning and more recently lifelong learning centres which provide learning places. According to respondent 2 there are adequate free of charge capacities in lifelong learning centres – 33 are currently dispersed across the country; if the demand for learning places increases some new may be established (MSS-R2, p. 12, lines 38-43). Public libraries were also mentioned as places where people may learn without disturbance. Libraries may provide students also with learning materials. And what is perhaps even more important, libraries are not schools and are not connected with unpleasant experiences from the time of youth education. Unfortunately libraries in Slovenia are administered by the ministry of culture. *“The only problem I see is that this is another sector and this are now two fields, every field can have its own policy, its own strategy... nevertheless libraries could carry out in full... could be used in this respect... nevertheless infrastructure definitely goes together and can be used where there are no upper secondary schools...”* (MSS-R2, p. 13, lines 33-36) There are also other limitations, above all that in small more remote rural areas there are no libraries at all or they are mobile or located in primary schools... This is also the framework within which we can think of the development of distance learning in libraries.

The duty of local communities in regard to the provision of learning places for marginalised groups is stressed by respondent 1. In his opinion the state can issue some recommendations but tools for the implementation are in hands of local governments. In addition to spaces for learning, learning equipments have to be provided. Those in ICT courses do not always have computers at home to practice. It is thus necessary to provide them with access to the Internet. Further support to the development of free infrastructure at the local level is thus needed (MSS-R1, p. 12, lines 1-7; 16-18; 23-27).

Given that the national policy documents have defined upper secondary education as national educational standard the education ministry will launch activities to assure that participation of adults in secondary education will be equally accessible throughout all life periods. Activities developed with the support of ESF will be sustained also after the financing from ESF is terminated.

Indeed Government officials lay great hopes in demographic changes and their effect on the extension of work into late age. In their opinion these changes will automatically stimulate all groups of people including underrepresented to participate in life long learning. Not just labour ministry also education ministry will have to assure educational provisions for these groups (MSS-R2, p. 8, lines 33-40). They suggest that in addition to the group of elderly people also the number of migrants will increase considerably in the future. Currently the ministry of the interior affairs has been mostly taking care of migrant education but one may

expect that in the future the ministry of education will have to take on a large share of these activities, not just for the sake of improvement of basic and general knowledge and skills of these groups to turn them into high quality labour force but to empower them to participate in the society on equal terms.

In the future the MoES will also have to pay more attention to the education of Roma population. Roma people and elderly are at even higher risk as they often live in rural areas with scarce opportunities for education and learning and, are much harder to reach. Special outreach programmes will have to be developed in connection with organisations and actors that are close to these groups, e.g. Church, social services: *“The other one I see is also Roma one. This population needs a special attention either in education or in culture, that is to say at all levels, migrants and the elderly, these are groups in rural environment and they are all, are elderly, women, less educated, extremely hard to reach and actually, sometimes it sounds funny, but I think one would have to link with the church to come to those peoples, to try to encompass them in this, because they only trust the church. Up until now, I’d say we have had an easy job, easy in the sense that whatever we did was well received, now we are coming into the next stage, where we will have to deal with really the most demanding, we will deal with the most needed, most hard to reach (we can not reach them).*

Researcher: concerning this one would have to pass special measures. Do you think it is realistic that in the next five years some of the following measures will be passed: reservation of places, we have spoken about earlier, for the population to return back to primary and upper secondary schools? Is it realistic to expect anything like this in our case?

Official: yes, this can happen very quickly, nevertheless it depends on needs. These incentives have to come from the local communities. If they feel they ought to get people back, then they will also stimulate this and this will be done. The state has to receive an incentive since it designs a specific policy, but the politics has to come from below (bottom up) and not vice versa and actually if it will, then this will not be a problem at all” (MSS-R2, p. 9, lines 21-42, p.10, lines 1-2). Within this context it may be possible to introduce some quotas for certain groups of adults which will assure the provision of adult education offer through which they can reach people from underrepresented groups. Moreover they do not see any problems regarding organisation of child care if the needs were expressed. Similarly they believe that the well established local network for information and counselling can easily be extended to higher education population. “Higher and university education is using this structure which is developed in adult education anyway and I think that it could also be used at higher education level... Centres for lifelong learning are fit for use by everyone. It is only the matter

of Centres for information and counselling now to gather the data and essentially expand to this field [the field of higher education]" (MSS-R2, p. 10, lines 23-28).

On the contrary the information obtained from our interviews suggests that prisoners are not the group for education of which MoES would feel responsible. They delegate the responsibility for developing education in prisons to the Ministry of Interior with the explanation that it is about specific circumstances. They consider education of prisoners as an individual matter. Whether they are able to attend or not depends on what type of prisoners they are. (MSS-R2, p. 10, lines 35-41) They strongly emphasised that not just education but a whole programme of re-socialisation has to be available to prisoners before they return from prison. To provide them with a qualification is the easiest part but it does not suffice without adequate employment opportunities *"This means the whole procedure from education to finding a job... only education, only one segment can't actually influence... Can do a lot but if this person has nothing to live on, he will return to old ways..."* (MSS-R2, p. 11, lines 19-22).

We may notice diverging opinion among those administering adult education at the national level when it comes to the question of participative approach to the preparation of curricula and definition of goals of education for underrepresented groups. Respondent 1 sees curriculum as something that is the matter of experts, and expresses strong doubts that involving representatives of target groups of particular education programmes/activities would work in practice (MSS-R1, p. 11, lines 18-22) while respondent 2 claims that it would be the right way to invite prospective participants to join in preparation. In her view goals and contents should be based on learning needs of target groups and not set from top down. She mentioned the emerging practice that curricula are prepared with the use of focus groups where various interests are represented: *"now, this would absolutely be the right way, that this way is emerging actually the need has to arise, we have to know that this the need is, since otherwise there is no sense, this means that the normal way is such, and also professional institutions preparing programmes, usually do this in such a way, from focus groups to first realisations or to give in the evaluation. The normal procedure is such and the need has to be felt, it is not possible that the state feels the need. Usually it is the other way around, reaction to the felt needs in one or other way"* (MSS-R2, p.11, lines 42-43, p.12, lines 1-6).

The representative of the higher education sector also claimed that activities to increase access of underrepresented groups to tertiary education will have high priority in the future: *"Researcher: And what about the future plans? What, in your opinion, is your department's*

priority issue to improve access to education for those groups most at risk of underrepresentation concerning higher education?

Official: This will be quite in the fore when changing the law on higher education. Because we have already ascertained that traverses were thought out when Bologna reform has not been put into force yet. Now we see that these traverses are essentially very closed and limited, some only for entrance, not in between, and we will try to put in some way that Universities and faculties should keep this in mind. From here onwards the mechanism is soft which means that all that is needed is persuasion and bringing the content straight in front of their eyes. The initiative of the special needs is especially welcome. They are physical and psychic, more physical in this context, but nevertheless, you have something you can cling to and say – look, these are so special, that if university has in its approach, vision this group it is a humane University, a progressive University thinking of Oxford, Cambridge or Netherlands universities or Nordic ones, there it is understandable and also written that those groups will be taken special care of, and that these are not only mother-only families and top sportsmen. Therefore this, fundamental part of the law is ours, but from here onward we shall try, together with examples of good practice, international meetings, conferences tell them and make them understand, that the care is primarily on their side, and that it is not necessary that it costs much” (MVS-R2 p.11, lines 35-43, p.12, lines 1-13). She agrees that higher education is quite closed and transitions are difficult: ““Now we see that these traverses are essentially very closed and limited, some only for entrance, not in between, and we will try to put in some way that Universities and faculties should keep this in mind. From here onwards the mechanism is soft which means that all that is needed is persuasion and bringing the content straight in front of their eyes” (MVS-R1, p.11, lines 41-43, p.12, lines 1-2). Universities and faculties have to be aware that they need some changes however, it cannot be expected that mechanisms will be implanted from top down... “The mechanism is soft meaning that all that is needed is persuasion and bringing the content straight in front of their eyes. [...] Fundamental part of the law is ours, but from here onward we shall try, using examples of good practice, international meetings, conferences, tell them and make them understand, and that the care is primarily on their side” (MVS-R1, p. 12, lines 1- 13). But she was not very optimistic about that things may change considerably in next 5 years especially speaking about measures such as reservation of places for underrepresented groups or child care at the time of classes: “Researcher: Do you think that within five years something of what we have been talking about can be realised – reserved places, as we spoke, for diverse groups? Official: No, not at the moment. The system we have and there is no way this system to change, I do not expect it” (MVS-R1, p.12, lines 15-19). It does not sound like following lifelong learning strategy has to do with a conscious decision of higher

education institutions but more with the economic conditions and political ideology. *“If the concept of social state prevails also after elections and economic growth will be let's say simulative... I think it anyway that child care has to be changed”* (MVS-R1, p. 12, lines 28-31). Providing information and career guidance services to students by universities and faculties appears more realistic measure as *“some sort of career centres are emerging already”* (MVS-R1, p. 12, lines 36-37).

From the information obtained we may realise that universities and faculties are autonomous in setting their rules, the impact of the state goes as far as to make them aware of certain issues. According to the law on Higher education (article 6) universities are autonomous scientific, research, artistic and educational institutions of higher education with a special status. They are assured, above all: a) freedom of research, artistic creation and educational transfer, b) autonomous regulation of internal organisation and activities in concordance with the statute and the law, c) passing measures for elections into university titles such as HE teachers, scientific workers and HE co-workers, d) electing into those titles, e) selecting into those titles, f) preparing and accepting HE study programmes, setting up the study regime and determining ways and periods of examinations ... etc. (Law on Higher Education, article 6, Official Gazette 100/2004, 13.09.2004). As can be seen, our universities are very autonomous regardless of who pays. The answer to our question about the strongest barriers to widening possibilities for participation of underrepresented groups in tertiary education was that these will probably remain the current rules on how enrolment for particular study programme/faculty are defined. *“Even if there are entrance exams, those will be regarding historical and social back up which in Slovenia is geared again towards productivity, that is to say towards demonstrating achievements which are numerical, numerically assessed”* (MVS-R1, p. 13. lines 18-22).

ICT gap

The Resolution on the National Programme of Adult Education to 2010 (2004) has placed computer literacy in first priority area - non-formal general education. Training of various target groups of adults in ICT skills has been in the last decade strongly supported by funds from national budget as well as from European funds (ESF). Our interviewees agreed that ICT skills are as essential as basic literacy skills (i.e. reading and writing). Following respondent 2, teaching people how to read and write is not real literacy strategy; for her the real literacy strategy is to teach them digital skills. No doubt, increased investment in ICT training directed to most deprived groups may significantly contribute to overcoming this problem. She provided the information that the education ministry will earmark a large sum of money (in 2009 about 900,000 Euros), targeted mainly to the elderly and retired people. Respondent 1 also sees the solution in free of charge training provided in local communities

and supplemented with established ICT points where people may use what they learn in classes. *“Learning 'on stock' ICT... if it is not used... the effect is small or none”* (MSS-R1, p. 12, lines 17-18).

As regards higher education the interviewee from the higher education ministry believes that in Slovenia there is rather good care for »hard ware«. Unfortunately, higher education institutions are weak in “soft ware”. They lack learning materials of high quality and adequately skilled teachers and trainers. This is where Slovenia should invest. It would require some additional funds, also ESF to organise offer directed to various target groups (MVS-R1, p. 15, lines 19-36).

4.2.12 Lifelong learning development and the economic crises

Some available hard evidence has been signalling that with the accelerated economic crises public funds for adult education have been reduced. It appears that at least for some of our interviewees the reduction of national funds is in recession times a natural thing which is not disputable. They - referring to the recommendations of the European ministers - claim that education may represent a solution of the crisis. Respondent 1 hopes that the reduction in national funds will be replaced by European funds. Namely, the education ministry has until 2013 negotiated large sums of money from the ESF to facilitate the implementation of lifelong learning. Problems may arise if the state is not able to use this money or to use it to the advantage of the development of lifelong learning (MSS-R1, p. 12, lines 31-34; p. 13, lines 1-3). In contrast, respondent 2 is mostly concerned with the question whether people are motivated for participation, whether they see any advantage in participation in education. Is it worth to invest? The acting director from the science ministry also expressed hopes that the crisis will not reduce funds for education too drastically. She also joined the hopes of colleagues from the education ministry that ESF would somehow help overcome such measures, especially considering that the Government defined education and research as the means for overcoming the crisis (MVS-R1, p. 16, lines 1-2).

Contrary to the interviewees from the ministry of education who maintained that adult education is in the market she was talking more explicitly about public-private partnerships. *“... this partnership is not such as we imagine it to be... For instance, the municipality offering space, university giving a lectures there, but is brought down to the individual and to the input of individuals. My personal estimation is that as individuals, as families we invest a lot. It is also true that this investment is disproportional in relation to the age of young person. Younger the person is, higher the investment”* (MVS-R1, p. 16, lines 13-15).

4.3 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS OF THE ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

Interviewees from government departments were asked to comment the following empirical findings in light of effects of the national policy:

- About 80% of adult education providers included in the study reported lowering fees this way enabling participation of groups of adults with limited access to education; how has national policy contribute to that?
- 39% of providers of adult education reported to have places reserved for underrepresented groups. Is this an effect of a deliberate national policy?
- Could national policy contribute to greater participation of tertiary education institutions in lifelong learning week activities?
- Could some national measures alleviate the problems related to travelling costs of those adults who participate in primary education courses?
- Almost 100% of adult education staff is participated in in-service training. Did systemic measures at the national level contribute to such a high participation rate?

Lowering of the tuition fee was in eyes of respondent 1 from the MoES a result of planned national policy, more specifically, of public co-financing of training programmes and has nothing to do with deliberate decision of training providers to promote access of underrepresented groups to training. Respondent 2 also suggested that a decrease in the demand for training made providers lower the enrolment fees. With this measure they would like to make their training offer more attractive not just to underrepresented groups but to any prospective consumer of training. As regards the impact of the national policy she in the first place referred to the way how the expenses of publicly (co)financed programmes are defined. In such cases the state limits the highest costs being paid from state budget for a person participating in the programme. The basic rule is that the highest costs of the education organised for adults should not surpass the costs in youth education. Since there are less hours of organised teaching process the price has to be lower (MSS-R2, p. 15, lines 6-16).

Reduction of fees for irregular students in tertiary education is an open question which is according to the higher education ministry interviewee - understood divergently, depending on the stakeholder. *“The stance of the students is that fees should include only expenses not covered by the state, the position of universities is, and unfortunately the previous minister Virant (note: public administration minister) has also given his official opinion, that adult education is a market activity of universities. The opinion of our ministry (note: higher education and science ministry) is similar to the one voiced by students”* (MVS-R1, p.17, lines 1-9). The preparatory courses reported by 38% of providers of adult education to be

provided in order to enable access of underrepresented groups are commented on as a result of the general generation gap. Some faculties do not have enough students and this is a means to attract new students. She stated that the enrolment conditions are very rigid in the Slovenian tertiary education. *“How very rigid we are can be seen from the fact that in the field of scientific (previous) Master studies, i.e., second Bologna level, ten years of work doesn’t not count at all. You have to pass exams and pay for that”* (MVS-R1, p. 18, lines 6-8).

In similar way respondent 1 from the MoES explained the reservation of places at training providers for these groups. The fact is that the available training places have not been occupied and there is no problem for marginalised groups to get enrolled. Because of the unoccupied capacities providers look for an increased demand and those groups may provide such demand. *“Our capacities in formal education exceed the demand and up from 1000 to 2000 places more are available, but we don’t claim that we have these places reserved for particular target groups but they have the possibility to enrol, these groups”* (MSS-R1, p. 13, lines 17-22). He confirmed that no quotas are foreseen by any short-term or mid-term adult education plan.

What adult education providers declared as reservation of places is - according to respondent 2 - more likely representing places in programmes for underrepresented groups such as elderly, migrants, minorities, special needs, which are financed by the government (MSS-R2, p. 15. lines 37-43, p. 16, lines 1-3).

Regarding the finding that travel costs cause some problems to adults participating in primary education since not all of them have access to primary education courses in their local environment, respondent 1 representing MoES does not see that any intervention mechanisms whatsoever can be introduced enabling reimbursement of those expenses. Because of the small size of this population he also does not think this may be a major problem just now but it may escalate in the future with increased migration processes: *“this is a relatively small population which was allocated to some 24 locations in Slovenia, to peoples’ universities. There were some more in the past. Now I do not know exact data on what the trends are and what the expenses, but at the moment no provision is being made for adults in systemic legislation to reimburse travel expenses. I don’t know this might be some additional solution, nevertheless it is true we do not know what is going to happen in the future also with foreigners in primary education and this number can turn very quickly”* (MSS-R1, p 14, lines 27-31, p. 15, lines 1-2). Respondent 2 was sharing these arguments. She explained that because of small number of participants in primary education classes are not organised in certain local communities. She sees the solution in changing the rules underpinning calculation of costs of the programme. *“This traditional approach to calculate*

costs of education will have to be changed as the rules are too rigid just now and cannot accommodate changed circumstances” (MSS-R2, p. 16, lines 26-39).

But respondent 1 was rather deliberate in his explanation of the high share of adult education staff participating in in-service training. He maintained that it was a result of systemic measures as well as individual endeavours to secure promotion at work. To be awarded a particular professional title in the hierarchy of professional titles in the education sector depends on scores collected through participation in in-service training. But he also admitted that there has been a wide range of training programmes available to adult education personnel since 1990 onward which have been closely related to the implementation of changes introduced by the educational reform. Respondent 2 agreed as well that a strong link of in-service training to promotion may be an important motivation mechanism. Still, it is not just about collecting scores. *“A fraction always attended education and training, those who wished to retain...It is very stressful for a teacher if he/she has not...if the pupils know more than he/she does ... if not at all fields you have to remain on your own and to say that what you don't know is not from your field and ask somebody else if you dare to say this, then you have to know your field very well..., and this is what I think forces people... teachers to attend...” (MSS-R2, p. 17, lines 16 - 25).*

Further more, interviewees from the education ministry believe that expected smaller future generation in tertiary study will make higher education providers to search for new ways for their promotion. Lifelong learning week certainly is an event where they can effectively present and promote their programmes and benefits they deliver, and inform prospective students about the available study opportunities as well as measures alleviating access and progression in the course of study.

5 RECOMMENDED MODELS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Practices presented here as models of good practice are either carried out or made use of in many adult education institutions. Because they were developed by the national adult education institution and funded by the government as a part of national policies and initiatives to increase access and motivation to adult learning they are described in separate section.

5.1 GUIDANCE CENTRES FOR ADULTS IN EDUCATION

5.1.1 Objectives of the practice

Counselling activities are important measure linked to the enhancement of participation of adults in education and learning. In addition to general counselling there is counselling related to specific areas. Provision of counselling services for adults in every mode of education in every region, including education for personal and other needs not related to work activity is also important.

5.1.2 Target group

Guidance centres are oriented toward all adult learning population that needs some kind of counselling and stimulation in their participation in educational programmes.

Target groups of special concern are:

- the unemployed,
- inactive persons,
- adults with a negative attitude towards education,
- potentially active persons,
- employed (since 2009).

5.1.3 Funding sources

Since the year 2008 guidance centres are funded by:

- European Social Fund (85 %).
- Ministry of Education and Sport (15 %).

5.1.4 Background of the model

Issues such as how to acquire knowledge, how to use the possibilities available in adult education and learning, and various forms of help that make learning successful and effective in today's world of information, ample choice of educational programmes and educational organisations are becoming more and more important in adult education. Access to knowledge, the chances to learn how to learn, and how to plan lifelong learning,

all this can be made easier with the support of organised and wholesome information-guidance activities for adult education and learning.

Fourteen local guidance centres for adult education have been established in folk high schools. However, they act as independent and autonomous units. Grounds for the development and the implementation of local guidance centres have been set by the 1998 research on demand for the development of such services in Slovenia, based on experiences of other European countries in the field of adult education information and guidance as well as the general Information and Guidance in Adult Education (IGAE) model developed by SIAE in 1999. It has been adapted to fit the needs, characteristics and potentials of the participating institutions' environments.

A short timeline of the project development:

- 1998-2000 – the theoretical basis and development of a general model,
- 2001-2005 – implementation of the general model of local guidance centres for adult education in 14 selected local communities,
- Support – Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Project IIZ/DVV EBIS - The Stability Pact for South East Europe and Programme Leonardo da Vinci - Mobility II, Leonardo da Vinci – Projects, European Social Fund.

5.1.5 Number of service users annually

Forty counsellors in 14 guidance centres gave information and guidance services to 19.428 individuals and 350 groups in 2008.

5.1.6 Location

This activity is spread over a number of institutions all over the country encompassing

- 14 regional guidance centres for adult education,
- Educational organisations for adults,
- Employment services (12 regional offices; 25 resource centres for vocational guidance),
- Companies,
- Regional development agencies,
- Private employment agencies / private career development agencies,
- Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Chamber of Craft.

5.1.7 Perceived strengths and weaknesses

Some issues with coordinating of guiding centres work arise that are at the same time strength and a weakness. IGAE is trying to find the right balance between centralisation and

decentralisation in the coordination of work and objectives of the guidance centres, and collaborating institutions. The guidance centre is the focal point of the network, but cannot by itself provide guidance /counselling help in the areas that are not directly connected to counselling for education (vocational guidance, material problems connected to education, family problems etc.). Besides that, there are already institutions in the local environment, which develop such activities. There is a general agreement that only professional connecting of all those that work in a certain environment – counselling centres and other institutions – can improve the accessibility of guidance/counselling for the entire population, enable quality and wholesome counselling activity, complementary work of various institution and contribute to creating equal opportunities for different marginalised groups.

5.1.8 Priority needs for expansion of the service and the impact of recession

It looks like recession will have a positive impact for the development of the project. IGAEs see an increase in demand for guidance services, and new target groups gain importance (e.g. employees). In the future, they plan to focus on developing new approaches and tools for guidance in adult education with special attention to specific target groups – as are the employed. The plans are to develop guidance services in the workplace with collaboration with employers, trade union representatives, training managers and human resource managers in small and medium-sized companies.

5.2 PROJECT LEARNING FOR YOUNG ADULTS

5.2.1 Objectives of the practice

The basic aim of the programme is to support young people to acquire such experiences, knowledge and skills that would enable them to continue education or advance the career they have chosen. It is also essential for them to develop the competences needed generally in education and gain positive learning experience. The Project Learning for Young Adults (PLYA) wants to help them in defining and articulating their career and life aspirations. Through learning, they develop their ability for critical, flexible and problem-oriented thinking.

The Project Learning for Young Adults has been established to encourage young people to take creative and active part in society. The programme wants to motivate participants to re-enter the process of formal (regular) education and/or teach them how to become more competitive in the labour market and thus increase their employability. By project oriented learning the programme creates reflection upon majority of everyday social contexts in which young people are invited to experience and learn from several different social

discourses, became more familiar with many different professions and occupations and get ideas about "what, who, where, how is doing" and how to approach to become part of those social networks. These experiences at the same time enable them to enlarge and channel their interests, discover and develop their talents that otherwise might have stayed undiscovered and consequently unrealised.

Main objectives of PLYA are to:

- prevent harmful consequences of social isolation of young people,
- reintegrate them into the cultural environment of peer groups,
- reduce social problems in the environment,
- change the environment's negative response to them,
- facilitate establishing mutual links and self-help among young people,
- develop motivational mechanisms for returning to school,
- help them to improve some of their everyday habits,
- learn about learning.

5.2.2 Target group

The PLYA programme is publicly verified non-formal educational programme targeted to unemployed young people between 15 and 25 who discontinued their schooling. Poor education and the absence of appropriate work experience push them into the category of those unemployed who have severe difficulties in finding the job. Their social status is determined by being poorly educated, and unemployed.

At the beginning when they enter the PLYA they usually have fairly distorted perception of work and employment, very low motivation for education and poorly planned professional career as a consequence of an inappropriate choice of secondary education at the end of primary school. Thus, a lot of youth cannot enrol in their favourite school programme and are less motivated for learning in other programmes.

PLYA students meet many other problems in their life, e.g. they do not have any supportive adult person and it was found out that failure in school in most of PLYA students is a complexity of several disadvantages in which students need help to be overcome.

Unemployment and other negative consequences of failure in school lead them into social isolation, which in turn brings out the lack of opportunities for creative and satisfying communication in society. Social isolation sometimes leads to marginalisation of youth and reflects in drug abuse, criminal and/or self-destructive behaviour.

5.2.3 Background of the model

The Project Learning for Young Adults began in the nineties (1992/93) when the number of young unemployed people increased considerably due to economical and social changes in Slovenia. In that time it became obvious that almost thirty percents of each school generation dropout from school or do not continue their education. Originally, the programme was carried out experimentally as the Centre for Young Adults. First group of youth started with learning in October 1995. After two years of practical experiences that has been permanently monitored and evaluated the programme was partially supplemented and titled as The Project Learning for Young Adults. Its implementation began in the spring of 1998. In 1999 it was adopted by Ministry of Education and Sport.

In the following three years the network of organisations that carried out the PLYA grew bigger. There are eight PLYA organisations in eight Slovenian towns: Ljubljana, Slovenj Gradec, Celje, Murska Sobota, Radovljica, Ajdovščina, Maribor, and Koper. In 2005 four new organisations are intended to start and in 2006 two or four more in the regions where PLYA still does not exist.

5.2.4 Funding sources

The Project Learning for Young Adults is funded:

- two thirds by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport,
- one third is supposed to be provided by local communities in which the programme is carried out, yet this is not regulated by the law.

5.2.5 Perceived strengths and weaknesses

The basic finding of the evaluation study is that the programme Project Learning for Young Adults has long-term positive effects of social integration. The reasons for positive effects can be found in the goals, contents and methods of the educational programme and in the training of mentors who carry out the programme. Among weaknesses there are:

- The last third that should be funded by local community is rarely realised. This in particular causes the lack of finances for realisation of the whole programme, e.g. production project work is rarely realised.
- The knowledge student gain in the programme is not accredited in other education institutions or in the market which can be an obstacle for some students to join the programme at the very beginning.
- In some regions there is still lack of support by other agencies (e.g. Labour market agencies, schools) authorised to direct youth into the programme.

6 COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON THEMES AND CONTRASTS ACROSS THE INTERVIEWS

6.1 INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE

No school, either upper secondary or that of higher university or non-university education, are aware if there are any persons from underrepresented groups employed there. They hire people because of their professional achievement and skills and not because the employer's decision to take on somebody from a specific group. Moreover there is no practice of positive discrimination but in case of invalids who have priority when contesting for a job and showing the same knowledge and skills as other applicants. Nevertheless one of the higher non-university education institutions is aware of advantages of having a diverse student population like positive contribution to formation and dynamics in a group, students supporting each other and connecting. It also has positive impact on teachers. The institution of higher university education on the other hand speaks about the openness and availability for evening and summer events for the local community and/or target groups. It gives profit or non-profit organisations alike premises when they are not occupied free of charge. When this institution was building up new premises companies and other organisations donated money for furniture, equipment or building and it is possible it feels it owes the community this service.

6.2 OUTREACH

As expected neither upper secondary school nor institutions of higher university and non-university education have developed any outreach activities specially directed to recruit the underrepresented groups. As in higher education the target group are adults who are able and ready to pay for their study they design their promotion activities so as to reach those people. Obviously the school does not organise any activities that could facilitate enrolment of students from marginalised groups as long as they have those who can pay.

The idea to facilitate the community learning is likely to be alien to the upper secondary school and also, to some extent, to the institution of higher education. The interviewees claim that the upper secondary school premises are fully occupied during the week and often also on Saturdays. Consequently, there are no real opportunities for such cooperation. Sometimes school premises are rent out to the government services, mostly in mornings. It

is somewhat different in the institutions of non-formal adult education. Both institutions are open to the community.

Outreach can also be expressed in terms of access both geographical and economic. In both institution of non-formal education the majority of classes are in people's university venue since all the facilities are available there. Apart from this programmes are also organised elsewhere (in village halls, fire stations, schools etc.) depending on the programme, the needs of the group and requirements concerning the equipment.

With regards to the economic part of outreach the programmes in all institutions under observations are payable, except for those programmes in non-formal education institutions with are financed by project money from various national and European tenders. In order to attract more adults in programmes of formal education institutions offer, not discounts or reduction of fees, but prolongation of payment by instalments.

There are no special strategies to reach marginalised groups in formal education since they are considered the part of the whole learners' population. Therefore they use the usual approach – open and informative days (upper secondary and higher education institutions), and sometimes presentations in schools (higher education institution).

It is somewhat different in non-formal education though one could not say that they have any special outreach policy in respect of the underrepresented groups either. The policy is probably more the 'survival' one. Both institutions use somewhat similar channels - direct address – a letter to every household, advertisements in various papers although this depends on the target group, presentations in various localities and in companies as well as telephone calls, the later mainly for companies (HRM departments and their personnel), website and posters. In reaching underrepresented groups the institution also liaise with social work, University of the 3rd Age, societies, associations and clubs. The unemployed are reached through the Employment Office otherwise it is impossible to reach them. In cases where marginalised groups, especially Roma, are concerned, they are reached face to face. A lot of Roma are illiterate or have low levels of literacy therefore written information is of no use, though this means is sometimes used because of 'synergy effect' when those who can read are able to explain the contents thus bridging the differences among various families and also practising their literacy and management skills. Another way is inviting public

administration and informing them of the institutions' work. Then they are able to go to the settlements and spread the information.

Adults with special needs are reached through day care and work centre, through the firms where they are employed, residences where they live, through societies and activists. The institution which has migrants, and we suppose the same is valid for all, is usually approached by them or they are approached through mutual acquaintances. Women rural areas are reached mainly either through their society, also through presidents of local communities or local activists or directly by mail or word of mouth.

6.3 SUPPORT

The answers given by all institutions indicate that support is quite limited. In upper secondary education the school organises various activities in order to help pupils to deal with their own personal problems and those of their school mates. Apart from this the school regularly organises various workshops, while pupils also participate in projects as it is assumed that this way they may establish better communication with outside experts. The counselling service organised in the school premises provides pupils with vocational guidance and counselling when needed. To this end the use of outside providers' services is also sought. The school is open to the local organisations and initiatives. An individual learning plan is introduced to help less successful pupils. Teaching staff, parents, counselling service and the pupil concerned are involved in its preparation. Actually there are few groups of pupils who use this service: the pupils on pedagogical contract because of health or some other problems, repeaters who have the right to perform some tasks from successive class, those who have to repeat only certain topics, and those who passed to successive class but did not reach national minimal standard.

Activity which is organised by all schools in Slovenia, and is a must, according to the law, has been identified by upper secondary institution as the one supporting pupils to remain in education longer. This concerns various extra curricular activities, some obligatory some voluntary but all organised in such a way as to be interesting and enabling choice. But no extracurricular activities are organised specifically for the pupils who are at risk of early school leaving.

The situation is somewhat different in institutions of higher education though there are differences even there. In this research the institution of higher non-university education which is a part of a larger school complex is using the services of upper secondary school which is in the same building. They have an agreement with the counsellor who occasionally presents the students possibilities of counselling on learning and organisation of study. Afterwards it mostly depends on an individual student's initiative or interest if he/she will make good use of this opportunity or not. The experiences show that what students seek out most is planning and approach to study. So far in there was no need for psychological or psychiatric help. In higher university education there is Students' service office. There students are advised where to go and whom to turn to.

The institution of higher university education is, in this respect, more or less the typical representative of higher university education in Slovenia. There are no specific career, academic, access, literacy, or financial support services. The main, and more or less the only, support service is "Students' service office" where information and directions about every aspect of study programmes is given. Students occasionally attend job-fairs, and listen to lectures about employment. Guidance related to emotional or behavioural problems is most often detected by the staff in student services office. No institution of higher education consciously supports social interaction or networks. These are perceived as matters which regard the student population itself though in SP4 subproject the educational environment was identified as one of the important places of social networking.

Concerning support services in prisons there is no systematic testing or procedures enabling identification of literacy problems or specific learning difficulties. Although there is a pedagogue who works with inmates, educational problems are not his/her obligation at all. It is non-compulsory and done when there is time, or, one could say, it depends on the personality and preferences of the person. Nevertheless since every condemned person has to work with a pedagogue he/she tests certain intellectual and literacy abilities, and checks the history of formal learning which enables him/her to identify possible learning difficulties or aspirations which afterwards form basis for any potential participation in education. The inmates have access to counsellors/therapists, psychologist and social worker beside pedagogue. They are available to the prisoner upon request. In this respect they are in the

same position as students in higher university and non-university education. They have to take action and show interest.

6.4 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

The problem of recognition of prior learning is very much present in Slovenia whether in formal or non-formal education. This has come through also in the interviews. Regardless of the level of the educational institution or field (formal, non-formal) the recognition is first and foremost based on hard data - something that can be “proved on paper”, and is certified by institution e.g. other faculties or schools. There are exceptions to the rule – in some cases various subjects can be tested and recognised and students exempt from lectures. In higher education the question can be settled and agreed upon with the lecturer. The only one which works in every case is the one regulated by law – work experiences and practice. By the Slovenian law, if someone worked longer than three years, the school must exempt the person from practical work (it lasts 10 weeks) when he/she enrolls in the programme. Practical work is obligatory for other students not reaching this standard or, if they are enrolling as regular students.

Drawing on the interviews it seems that the main obstacle to recognize prior non-formal learning is transparency and standardization of acquired knowledge and skills as well trust in each other. On the other hand, as one of the interviewees pointed out, the non-formal sector should do more. It should give out description of what was learned and gained in their courses. Therefore improvement of non-formal certification would be an option as well as preparation of some national directives in this respect. Looking at the organisations and associations all institutions are part of at least some inter-institutional or sectoral agreement should be made about giving proper certificate about knowledge and skill gained in non-formal education to be recognised in the formal one. This of course leaves out recognition of informal learning which is a matter not yet anchored in the current thinking.

At the moment no institution evaluates or assesses literacy skills. As for higher non-university institution assessing prior learning is, according to the interviewees, not necessary (e. g. like in artistic academies etc.). But students from general (non-technical) secondary education are told that some additional technical knowledge will be required. A diverse

approach is in the other higher non-university institution which has developed opportunities to account for prior learning of the students. According to the interviewees many students are exempted from participation in some parts of study programmes. The assessment and recognition procedures are established at the institutional level. Recognition of prior learning attested by formal certificates has been practiced for quite a while whereas validation and recognition of non-formal learning has just started. The body authorised to carry out the procedures is the study commission. In addition the school principal and the subject teacher participate as well. In this respect the problem of adequate assessment tools to assess knowledge and skills not attested by any evidence was pointed out. This especially applies to the assessment of work experience and self learning – how to properly define and measure knowledge and skills in such cases not just recognise the duration of work experiences.

Judging from the responses the main obstacles to establishing recognition of prior learning are the absence of papers certifying what a person has learnt in non-formal education and providers not giving any certifications at all or giving such that nothing can be gathered from them. Apart from this, with exception of one institution who is working in the area, institutions think that there should be defined criteria that would allow systematic and system-wide recognition of prior non-formal learning and work experience which would apply to as wide range of situations as possible in order a) not to do injustice to anybody and b) have the same approach in every part of the country.

As for recognition and what institutions of non-formal education should do in this respect there are not many ideas. Some are waiting for instructions in order to do something while others are active in this respect themselves. The research covered both sides. And at least one of the institutions of non-formal education has moved a step forward and is issuing certificates that show the contents of a programme and marks acquired by the participants. This way the formal education institution could recognise the knowledge straight away without the need for the person to return several times to settle the matter. Nevertheless in many cases participants are made aware of the possibility within counselling as well as from the booklets and other published materials informing them what to do to have their prior knowledge recognised.

Apart from what was gathered from the interviews one could add that there is not enough communication among diverse providers of formal and non-formal adult education. It might help if there was a meeting where the solutions available in various educational institutions could be discussed, forming thus the basis for further work. It would not be amiss to establish a committee or group to deal with this matter at sectoral and national level.

6.5 TEACHER/TUTOR TRAINING

Permanent investment in competences of teachers for coping with new requirements posed in front of schools in constantly changing economic and social circumstances is strongly stressed in various policy documents. Especially when it comes to adult education some evaluation studies suggest that teachers lack adequate competences to successfully deal with concrete circumstances. In Slovenia those teaching in formal (primary and upper secondary education) and the major part of non-formal education have to have a university degree. There are some exemptions concerning those teaching practical skills.

Nevertheless teachers are formally entitled to 5 days per year for in-service training. The whole system of teacher promotion is also closely connected with investment in training. However it appears from the information collected in the interviews that in-service training is primarily meant for the improvement of professional competences while soft skills needed for conflict solving, participative learning and the like appear to be more related to individual personality. It was gathered that some institutions organise workshops where teachers learn how to deal with such problems, the rationale behind it being that not just in-service training but social learning and experiential learning in concrete environment and knowledge sharing within the school and outside in various working groups significantly contributes to the development of skills needed for successful resolution of problems as well as learn new approaches to teaching and learning.

In non-formal education the teachers are coming from various institutions, mainly from schools. They have the required education although not always in the field of adult education. In this case the institutions organise workshops, seminars and lectures dealing with adults: education of adults, specificities of adults, methods in adult education and adapting the programme to the needs of adults. Summarising from interviews those teachers who are well received by adults and are good are attending those events while the

others are not interested. The only lever the institution has in its hand is not to renew the contract next year. Teachers employed by contracts are one of the reproaches often heard when referring to the quality of non-formal education. But, as expressed in interviews, only administrative and managerial staff is employed permanently. Teachers are not because of the insecurity of financing. This could be solved by adopting the policy used in higher education, i.e. combining teaching in various institutions. This would solve the problem of teacher's in-service training but not reduce insecurity of the job in the non-formal sector due to project financing.

In most educational institutions in-service training is a matter of the law. The situation in prison is a very different one. It can be said that prison administration supports and allows tutoring, but there is no organisational support for this kind of activity. No tutors or teachers are employed in Slovenian prisons. Tutoring is happening (if it is happening) on a voluntary, non-formal and ad-hoc level, often by students who are volunteers, or in some cases also teachers that are willing to help some prisoners. Previously there were students, who were coming in prison on Sundays and working with persons participating in education. They coached and supported them for exams. In some ways, also the prison's staff helps them to learn. The only way to get a tutor is by self-initiative or through centres of social work which often organize voluntary tutoring.

Organisation of education in prisons in Slovenia, as in many other European or non-European countries, is a matter not taken into account. There is no national strategy of the field and no communication between ministries in charge of either education or justice.

6.6 DISTANCE EDUCATION

The schools are well²⁴ equipped with computers and the internet and they strongly promote their use in the teaching and learning processes. By the end of 2008/2009 school year all classrooms the institution of upper secondary education will be equipped with Internet. According to interviewees the school is well equipped with "hardware" but has no adequate "software" to develop distance education. The school has been promoting internet

²⁴ Several years ago computerisation of school has been carried out as a special project of the Ministry of Education and Sport.

classroom as a desirable way of working with pupils. It has become rather common practice of many teachers to create internet classroom where learning materials are available. The same is true for one of the interviewed institution of higher education although the dean does not think of it as distance education. The school has also a forum with e-mails for electronic communication. However there are still pupils who are not skilled enough to take this opportunity.

A different situation can be seen in the institutions of higher non-university education. One of them began with distance learning in the academic year 2001/2002, carrying out a programme as a blended learning: approximately 50 % of lectures are held on dislocation and 50 % online. Nowadays they have six e-learning programmes that are carried out in eight dislocations (study centres). Online learning process is mostly dedicated to discussions, chats, downloading learning materials, live presentations etc. Moreover expansion is in progress to connect online experience with more sophisticated ways of learning and videoconferencing. In one institution the personnel support is assured since there is a person employed full-time on support to distance students, and is available to them practically 24 hours a day while the other has plans to implement e-learning in the near future which will not be 100% online, but blended.

What is interesting is the fact that no institution with programmes developed for distance learning is linking distance education programmes with disadvantaged groups or areas. These programmes are thought of more in the sense of accessibility e.g. for those adults who live in locations and regions where previously there was no educational offer or intended for a wider audience of adults that are interested to participate in education.

As expected prison education is different. Currently there are no possibilities for implementing distance-learning courses. There is obviously also a problem of equipment and because of security and technical reasons, there are no internet connections. Nevertheless there are plans to implement that possibility in the future, when a new prison will be built. Then there will be more space available as well as infrastructure for such learning to take place.

6.7 EFFECTS OF RECESSION

Concerning effect that current recession might have on adult education there two diverse opinions: pessimistic and optimistic one for the future and the third which registers no influence at the moment.

The pessimistic one concerns more non-formal education which in the eyes of one institution is abandoned first when money is scarce. The benefits of non-formal learning are not seen immediately or taken into account when applying for a job. The recession will quite probably effect formal education as well by reducing the number of students in programmes whose tuition fees are paid by the employers and learners themselves, or in the case of prison education it will reduce the money for this purpose.

The optimistic view sees the recession as an opportunity for formal and non-formal education. The lack of jobs or unemployment will even increase participation or have at least some positive impacts because it will be in the interest of adults to engage in education in order to retain jobs or to move forward in their careers. On the other hand interviewees think there will be an increased demand for formal education because of government's active employment policy. This might happen also in the non-formal education sector. Another cause for optimism is, in one case, projects which are already running and will continue until 2012.

7 ANALYSIS OF THE INSTITUTIONAL INTERVIEWS IN LIGHT OF THE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS' INTERVIEWS

7.1 POSITIONING OF ADULT EDUCATION

Government representatives seem to be more prone to uncritically accentuate the market nature of adult education although all national strategic documents underline the necessity for improving the educational attainment of the least educated adult population to at least upper secondary education (12 years of schooling), needless to mention the most recent Communications from the EC on adult learning²⁵. At the same time providers of formal adult education realise that provision of training programmes should not be based solely on short-term market demands as this clears the market of the programmes that are not supported by private interest but are of special significance for marginalised social groups. Adult education should be treated as a public good and adequately positioned within the education system. It may be the fact that in Slovenia participation of adults in formal education is strongly connected to the employment and individual career development which places it as predominantly private investment.

7.2 ACCESS

According to the available research results obtained from national studies there is 42.7% of the adult population (Mohorčič and al., 2005a) that is not ready to participate in any type of education. Among the barriers to participation the most often cited are: lack of time, financial reasons and family obligations. Moreover, we can also point to the fact that adults participating in formal education mostly bear the costs of education. This goes particularly for the employed while those unemployed have their education financed by public means within the active labour market policy programme (Vida Mohorčič Špolar et al., 2006).

While speaking about easing access of underrepresented groups to formal education through the eyes of providers and representatives of corresponding ministries, they in the first place point to financial constraints. Most providers of adult education underline that – especially when participation in tertiary education is under discussion – they make it possible for participants who pay their study, to do this in instalments. In case they have material problems the payment may be negotiated in line with one's economic situation. Providers do not have any spare money to reduce fees. It is the matter of national policy to

²⁵ It is never to late to learn; It is always good time to learn

take into consideration social situation of participants. From the interviews of government representatives we may find that the groups eligible for publicly subsidised education and training and the types of training are defined by the National Programme of Adult Education. In line with this financial means are allocated by the annual plan. Educationally deprived groups are prioritised. The labour ministry is authorised to provide for the realisation of this policy within the active labour market policy measures.

In general primary education of adults is provided without tuition while secondary education is publicly financed for the unemployed and employed who are threatened by redundancy, and for additional groups in line with the Annual programme. The rest has to pay the tuition. The care is also taken that less developed and underdeveloped regions are considered. However it is worth mentioning that in a number of cases participation of the municipality is required. As stressed by one of the interviewees from the education ministry without such participation providers cannot pursue the right to subsidies.

As regards tertiary education with the exception of the unemployed adults have to pay for their study. In addition to the capability to pay for the study enrolment in tertiary education is often restricted by not having adequate prior qualification. Legally only those with matriculation examination can enrol in tertiary programmes. This is stipulated by law and providers and state administration alike take it as final fact. Nothing like atypical students exists in Slovenia and it is not likely that this will change in a due time. Traditional ways of advertising study places is used such as announcements in media and web pages. Traditional higher education institutions organise information days for secondary education pupils. Higher adult education providers underline the importance of personal delivery of information.

Representatives of the education ministry strongly rely on the ReNPAA whereat they do not pay enough attention to the fact that the document was adopted in 2004 and was not revised later on although changed socio-economic circumstances might have justified revision of certain goals and objectives.

7.3 OUTREACH

The results do not suggest that lack of adequate programmes, too demanding courses, lack of self-confidence and the like would be among highly ranging factors hindering participation.

As for the most important drivers they are in one or another way connected to employment and occupational career. Improving one's employment prospects, better performance, career promotions, better pay would significantly increase individual motivation for participation. The findings further confirm that individual attitudes towards education as well as the attitude of the reference group play significant role. In general external constraints such as employers, demand by unemployment office; seem to be most effective in this respect. Representatives of the education ministry stress that investment in motivation of social groups underrepresented in education should have high priority in the future. However looking at our findings from the analysis of interviews of formal adult education providers one may conclude that they most often use various forms of written information to access people who are a target group of their education activities. Neither schools nor other adult education providers do not report any activities meant to encourage marginalised groups to participate in formal programmes. Typically schools and tertiary education organisations do not make outreach strategies part of their students' recruitment strategies while some adult education providers think about that, but they do not find enough interest on the side of consumers. Representatives of the education ministry suggest that national strategic documents as well as the instruments for their operationalisation (Annual programme) provide that educationally deprived groups are prioritised in terms of the distribution of finances as well as measures supporting access. Programmes for the development of basic skills are developed for various target groups. Well developed local network of local information and counselling centres is important in providing adequate information and guidance. In additions pilot regional lifelong learning centres have been introduced recently that may provide learners with adequate learning conditions including room for learning. Significant share of provisions has been launched by the labour ministry within the active labour market policy. They admitted that ESF has enabled the development of various activities which should primarily facilitate access of educationally disadvantaged groups. Some secondary schools make use of this source to provide free secondary education to adults.

Reserved places for underrepresented groups do not make part either of strategic documents or existing practices. Government representatives for primary and secondary education of adults and non-formal education do not see any reason not to introduce them

although they do fail to see any reason for that as there are enough places at schools and some of them remain unoccupied. On the contrary the government higher education representative believes that study grants deal with this issue. In her eyes defining criteria for the groups for which quotas should be defined represent the most difficult question since the basic principle of the Slovenian higher education is providing greater equality in access to higher education. Study grants provided by the state, and other subsidies such as housing subsidies, meal coupons, transportation costs subsidies etc. are all defined in the way which should support greater equality.

Providers of adult education observed in this study do not involve representatives of target groups in preparation of education programmes and courses. In relation to this question representatives of education ministry are of diverging opinion. The director of the directorate – having in mind formal education - is sceptical about the possibility of such participation while the head of the adult education department supports this idea and argues that in certain environments this has already become a practice. It may be supposed that participative approach to the development of training programmes and activities is more likely in non-formal adult education since their programmes and activities are much less standardised and thus much more flexible, open to the adjustment to the needs and interests of participants/target groups.

Representatives of the education ministry point to low motivation of marginalised groups for participation in education and stress that in the future more attention should be paid to motivation activities where the responsibility should be divided between the state and employers. Employers should motivate the employed population through creating a supportive learning climate in the organisation and showing that it is worth investing in education and learning through providing career development opportunities as well as other more symbolic forms of valuing learning. The state should promote motivation activities for those outside the labour market. These are primarily seen in terms of provision of information and counselling and promotion activities. Representatives of the education ministry are very optimistic about positive effects of the prolongation of the retirement age. This should automatically stimulate people to enrol in formal education to be fit for work.

Concrete forms depend on the target groups and the needs they are to satisfy through education and learning. On the contrary representatives of providers, especially those providing tertiary education, above all stress the possibility to get a job/ to improve one's career after finished education.

7.4 RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING

Implementation of procedures enabling validation and recognition of prior learning is stressed by representatives of the education ministry as a measure which will significantly contribute to the access of underrepresented groups to formal education and learning. No doubt is expressed in this sense and no problems are raised. They see the main barrier to the further development in the absence of NQF and on more symbolic level in schooling culture strongly anchored in the Slovenian population. Accordingly it should be invested in changing the belief that the only proper setting for the development of skills and competences is the formal education setting. Schools and adult education organisations on the other side express more pragmatic approach to this issue. Above all they are missing methodologies and tools for assessing and validating learning that is not documented by publicly recognised documents but they are lacking human and financial resources to develop those by themselves. Adult education institutions display greater interest since most of them provide various types of non-formal education and learning. Recognition of non-formal learning in formal settings could attract more participants. They search for ways how to document non-formal and informal learning to make it more transparent.

On the contrary, the representative of the higher education ministry openly admitted that recognition of knowledge, skills and competences obtained outside higher education domain may represent a big problem. Two things will make them do one step further the development of the NQF at the tertiary level and the pressure of students for the recognition of learning abroad. In spite of legal regulations stating the demand that each new higher education and university programme has to provide the validation and recognition plan when in the accreditation process this does not happen; higher education institutions taking serious account of the demand to establish assessment and recognition rules and procedures are rare. Private vocational colleges are more ready to provide this opportunity to their students as they see this as a competitive advantage. However they admit that validation and

recognition of non-formal and informal learning and work experiences is for the time being limited to certain study programmes such as informatics/computer sciences while recognition of knowledge and skills that are documented has already become an established practice.

Validation and recognition of prior learning takes place after enrolment in particular education programme and applies to individual teaching units. Neither representatives of respective ministries nor providers think about replacing required formal certificates as a condition for enrolment by the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

7.5 FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Providers of adult education diverge in their view on the effects of economic crises on the course of adult education. On one hand they believe that the crises may be a challenge, especially speaking from the point of view of employment and career prospects. Especially tertiary education institutions believe that people will recognise that more education may create better career opportunities and will tend to increase their educational attainment. At the same time they look at the realisation of their training needs in the light of deterioration of the economic situation of middle class people which can force them to postpone their decisions. They suggest that non-formal education may be more affected, especially the part pertaining to personal development of individuals.

Government representatives are aware of the reduction of national funds for adult education but they see the crises as a challenge as a way out of the crisis. Nevertheless low level of motivation of adults because they do not recognise the benefits of education may increase negative effects of the reduction of financial funds. They hope that the reduction effect will be counteracted by European funds negotiated by the education ministry until 2013. The capacity of the state to make use of European funds appears more important for further development in adult education than the reduction of national funds. Unfortunately it is forgotten that European funds are directed to projects which will expire by the end of 2013 and there is no national strategy on adult education development after 2013.

It is typical that adult education providers look to the state for new strategies and developmental incentives while representatives of the education ministry refer to leading

political forces suggesting that final decisions about further development of adult education lies with main political interests.

8 MAIN FINDINGS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 MAIN FINDINGS

1. Looking at the main features of the Slovenian education system, one may quickly realise that the lifelong learning strategy has mostly remained on the paper, without any real support for its implementation. We still have two disconnected education subsystems: youth education and education of adults. When speaking about formal education of adults there are few quite distinct dimensions that speak against the affirmation of lifelong learning in Slovenia. The most outstanding one is the fact that formal adult education is carried out as irregular formal education. It is delivered by schools as additional activity based on commercial basis with subcontract teachers carrying out teaching process. Institutions providing formal education to adults are likely to be aware of that but within their authorisation they can only inform responsible authorities about factors that negatively affect access of adults to formal education as well as the quality of the execution process.
2. There is a difference between public schools either those delivering adult education additionally for money as a commercial activity and/or private adult education providers, especially at the tertiary level. They invest more in innovative approaches to the organisation of the education process and the education process itself starting with recognition of prior formal and non-formal learning in order to attract more students. However these providers do not pay attention to the marginalised groups if their education is not financed from public funds. It has to be added that groups entitled to special attention are defined either by the Resolution on National Programme of Higher Education or on National Programme of Adult Education or, in some cases, e.g. foreigners, the Government.
3. Government representatives seem to have accepted a neoliberal stand towards adult education; they keep accentuating its market nature although all national strategic documents underline the necessity of upgrading the educational attainment of adult population (to at least 12 years of schooling), not to mention the most recent Communications from the EC on adult learning (It is never too late to learn; It is always good time to learn). At the same time providers of formal adult education realise that provision of training programmes should not be based solely on short-term market

demands as this clears the market of the programmes that are not supported by private interest but are of special significance for marginalised social groups. Adult education should be treated as a public good and adequately positioned within the education system. However the fact is that in Slovenia participation of adults in formal education is strongly connected to the employment and individual career development which places it as predominantly private investment.

4. There are no special bodies at the national level dealing with questions concerning underrepresented groups in adult education, since it is felt that this should be the main task of the adult education unit established within the ministry of education. Similarly institutions providing either formal or non-formal education do not have any special bodies/services to deal with issues how to most successfully bring these groups to education and make them stay. The management does not think about that hiring staff from among marginalised groups could contribute to that. The staff is hired because of their professional achievement and skills and not because the employer's decision to take on somebody from a specific group. Moreover there is no practice of positive discrimination but in case of invalids who have priority when contesting for a job and showing the same knowledge and skills as other applicants.
5. Representatives of different target groups are usually not involved in the preparation of education programmes and courses, especially so when it comes to formal education. There is some scepticism from the policy makers if adults have sufficient background for this. Still some practices appear in non-formal education where programmes for individual target groups are developed with the support of focus groups, where representatives of targeted population take part as well.
6. At the national level strategies for underrepresented groups are determined in the National Programme of Adult Education and are realised through annual plans. Educationally deprived groups are prioritised. The ministry of labour is authorised to provide equal opportunity measures in terms of material support of educationally deprived categories. However such measures address only certain vulnerable groups such as low educated unemployed population, early school leavers, groups with special needs such as mental and physical disabilities, and belong within active labour market policy measures. Apart from this there are also separate strategies (e.g. Roma) but none

at the level of individual institutions since these groups are considered a part of the whole learners' population.

7. Reserved places for underrepresented groups do not make part either of strategic documents or existing practices. Neither government representatives nor representatives from formal education institutions at all levels see reasons to introduce them as there are enough places at schools and some of them remain unoccupied. Policy makers believe that study grants provided by the state and other subsidies such as housing subsidies, meal coupons, transportation costs subsidies etc. deal with this issue. It is believed that they are all defined in the way which should support greater equality; it would be difficult to justify any additional measures. Apart from this policy makers think the issue should rest with municipalities and their policies.
8. In principle institutions of formal and non-formal education are opened and available for evening and summer events for the local community and/or target groups. Some give profit or non-profit organisations alike premises free of charge when they are not occupied, some charge rent. This fact is of concern for policy makers who are afraid of over marketisation of public institutions.
9. There is no outreach policy for underrepresented groups at the level of individual institution though there is nothing to prevent it. Institutions are expecting the state to provide a national policy and then act accordingly. On the other hand policy makers feel the need for such a strategy but have not yet acted upon it. One may again notice differences between formal and non-formal education providers. Though non-formal adult education providers do not have any special outreach policy in respect of the underrepresented groups either they reach them through different channels. The policy is probably more linked to the 'survival' of the institution than to a systematic approach to the issue.
10. Neither institutions of non-formal nor institutions of formal education apply policy of fee reduction. Moreover they do not form funds for this purpose. Institutions of formal education that provide adult education on commercial basis usually offer, not discounts or reduction of fees, but prolongation of payment by instalments. Education is free of charge when it is provided within the active employment policy measures or European Social Fund. Similarly non-formal education organisation provide free of charge learning

when the programme is paid by project money acquired from various national and European tenders or European Social Fund.

11. There has been too strong dependence on the money from the European Social Fund and project money in recent years, at least in non-formal education, which gives rise to some concern regarding general non-formal adult education which might become a luxury affordable only by well off learners.
12. Support in terms of Emotional Support services, Career/Academic Support services, Access Service, Literacy Support Services or any Additional Academic Support Services is practically non-existent for adults at the level of adult education providers. There are two separate systems in this respect – adults and youth (irregular and regular students). In some cases where sharing the same building adults are allowed to use support services in place for the youth as well. In tertiary education there is a Student's Service Office which gives some of the services (concerning studies etc.) but only to 'regular' (full-time) students. In this respect one faces or one can speak of lifelong learning in the sense of 'youth-long learning' and of adult education as truly irregular. However a strong network of local information and counselling services for adults has been developed aiming at supporting underrepresented groups in their access to education and learning.
13. The country does not have reliable statistical data on dropouts either from youth or adult education at all levels as well as no data on the social background of students or pupils²⁶. Such data can only be obtained by special research. This hinders identification of underrepresented groups and disables preparation of targeted policy measures.
14. Childcare as support for adult learners is not an issue at the national level. It is felt that matters are systemically regulated even if pointed out that this refers to the morning arrangements and not to afternoon or evening ones. That the lack of it does not affect adult learners either was substantiated by educational institutions as well. When child care was organised or offered it did not attract any interest. Previous research (Mohorcic et. al., 2004) showed that this was not an issue either for women or men.
15. Educational institutions do not promote social network supports neither among their students nor among students from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds. They

²⁶ It is true that such data is not required by the law but if institutions decided so they could have it with the consent of participants or students.

actually do not have such evidence or if they do have it they do not use it. But they neither hinder networking. This is left to students themselves. Nevertheless there are non-formal groups of adults supporting each other in their studies in various ways (sharing information, text books, studying together, lifts, notes etc.).

16. Prison education is a separate world. It is split between two ministries – justice and education. There is no special unit for education or person in charge of it. Moreover, there is also no systematic testing for literacy skills or educational needs. Literacy problems are detected within general testing procedures. Nevertheless this does not mean that education of inmates is not possible. However it depends on the interests and activities of the prisoner him/herself. But it has to be said that attitude towards education in prison differs from institution to institution. Some actively stimulate education while others leave it to the inmates themselves.
17. Recognition of prior learning is supported by the law but there is an implementation gap. Implementation itself is left to educational institutions themselves. Regardless of the level of the educational institution or field (formal, non-formal) the recognition is first and foremost based on hard data - something that can be “proved on paper”, and is certified by institution e.g. other faculties or schools. There are exceptions to the rule. The main obstacles to the implementation of recognition are, according to the interviews, absence of methodologies and tools for assessing and validating learning that is not documented by publicly recognised documents, transparency and standardization of acquired knowledge and skills, mutual trust as well as adequate descriptions of what had been learnt in non-formal education. In many cases adult learners are not aware of possibilities to have their prior learning recognised and can therefore not force the institutions to do more in this respect. If institutions of formal and non-formal education showed interest in tackling the problem or recognition, institutions of higher, university education were not ready. Here the issue is left to the knowledge and activity of adults themselves.
18. Teachers are formally entitled to 5 days per year for in-service training paid by the institution which gets the money from the Ministry of Education and Sport. Even if the whole system of promotion is closely connected with investment in training it seems the in-service training is primarily meant for the improvement of professional competences while soft skills needed for conflict solving, participative learning and the like appear to

be more related to individual personality. In non-formal education the teachers are coming from various institutions, mainly from schools. They have the required education although not always in the field of adult education. When workshops, seminars and lectures dealing with adult learning (education of adults, specificities of adults, methods in adult education and adapting the programme to the needs of adults) are organised their interest is not strong enough.

19. According to interviews institutions are well equipped with “hardware” but have no adequate “software” to develop distance education. The situation is somewhat better in tertiary education but less favourable at secondary educational level and in non-formal education. Nevertheless even if distance education is developed no institution is linking it to disadvantaged groups or areas but to accessibility (e.g. for those adults who live in locations and regions where previously there was no educational offer).
20. Currently there are no possibilities for implementing e-learning courses in prison education. There is a problem of equipment in the institution which was interviewed as well as a question of the gravity of the sentence. Because of security and technical reasons, there are no internet connections. Nevertheless there are plans to implement that possibility in the future.
21. Concerning effect that current recession might have on adult education there are two diverse opinions: pessimistic and optimistic one for the future and the third which registers no influence at the moment. The two diverse opinions on the effects recession might have on adult education - the pessimistic and the optimistic one or, as it might be expressed, as a drawback and a challenge. The pessimistic primarily concerns non-formal education which is usually abandoned the first when money is scarce. It might probably effect formal education as well by reducing the number of students whose fees are paid by the employers and learners themselves, or in the case of prison education it might reduce the money for this purpose. The optimistic view sees the recession as an opportunity for formal and non-formal education. Because of lack of jobs or unemployment there will be an increased demand for formal education either because of government’s active employment policy or because of better employment possibilities higher level of education might offer.
22. Adult education policy has undergone major changes and is currently influenced too much by a small number of people who are in positions to influence adult education

policy. Issues are not always supported by research and development work. Moreover, there is too much dependence on EU directives and not enough on the identification of own, specific issues and problems.

23. As yet there is no national strategy on the future development of adult education apart from the one defined by the new Financial perspective 2007-2013 and the Human resource development programme intended to support the use of ESF. Taking into consideration that National Adult Education Plan is reaching its end (2010) evaluation of its targets and attainments of its goals and aims should have been well underway to pave the way for the next decennium or to the conclusion that another one is not needed.

8.2 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Adult education is not just a factor of human capital but more and more importantly a factor of social and cultural capital. It should be therefore treated as a public good and adequately positioned within the education system and national strategies.
2. Monitoring the realisation of activities funded by European Social Fund should be established enabling policy makers to identify gaps in the perceived policy and to see its benefits. At the same time monitoring will also serve planning purposes to ensure funds which will cover the loss of ESF funds and ensure the continuation of programmes developed within this strand.
3. Because of its close links with the community adult education and learning should be linked more strongly to the regional and municipal level accompanied by adequate funds enabling the realisation of the development plans.
4. Drop out in youth education are in many instances the result of wrong educational decisions. The most important systemic measure to prevent wrong educational decisions would be a high quality system of vocational guidance and counselling at the time of decision making as well as during their studies. It would stand to reason also to reflect on the selection criteria from primary to secondary education level.
5. Recognition of prior learning is embedded in the laws. Nevertheless this is not enough. The development work should be re-started at all levels of the system. Communication among various educational levels should be the norm in reach inter-institutional and sectoral agreement. Criteria should be defined that would allow systematic and system-

wide recognition of prior learning (formal or non-formal) and work experiences which would apply to as wide range of situations as possible in order to do justice to everybody and to assure the same approach in every part of the country. It might help if there was a meeting where the solutions available in various educational institutions could be discussed, thus forming the basis for further work. It would not be amiss to establish a committee or group to deal with this matter at sectoral and/or national level. In order to facilitate the work institutions of non-formal education could all move a step forward and start issuing certificates showing the contents of a programmes adults took and marks acquired by the participants.

6. In many instances adults are not made aware of possibilities to have their prior learning recognised. All educational institution should make it their policy to acquaint their participants with such a possibility. Increased demand for this would additionally stress the need for solutions in this field.
7. Though paid in-service training is the norm in the whole education system there are some discrepancies in the non-formal education where managerial and administrative staff use the opportunity, while teachers usually employed by contracts and working-full time in the institutions of formal education are not always interested enough to learn more of the specificities of adult learners. This impairment could be solved by adopting the policy used in higher education, i.e. combining teaching in various institutions. This could solve the problem of teacher's in-service training but the insecurity of the job in the non-formal sector would still remain due to the predominantly project financing of the non-formal sector.
8. There is a need for closer cooperation on the issue of prison education between Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education and Sport either with regards to the education (formal or non-formal itself) of inmates or to the preparation of an adequate strategy of the field. Since no tutors or teachers are employed in Slovenian prisons the solution formerly used by higher education institutions would indeed be welcome. Students tutoring on voluntary basis or as a part of their studies e.g. as a part of field or practice work.
9. Participative approach to the development of training programmes and activities should be enabled though it is more likely to start in non-formal adult education since programmes and activities are much less standardised and thus much more flexible,

open to the adjustment to the needs and interests of participants/target groups. Nevertheless in formal education such participation should be stimulated as well within the requirement of adapting educational programmes to the needs of adult learners.

10. The Ministry of Education and Sport or other ministries should excuse providers in educationally underdeveloped and less developed regions of securing additional funds if they are applying for funds enabling them to carry out aims identified by the National Adult Education Plan.
11. It has to be secured that Instruments and criteria for the distribution of public funds intended for increasing access of underrepresented groups to education and learning should be used in a way that enables this. Refunding costs of education to participants after they finish education is not a way to do it since vulnerable groups are usually also financially compromised and thus not able to pay the costs and then wait for refunding.

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