

Thematic working group "Learning and Guidance"

National overview, Slovenia

Notice: The report provides a picture of the current state of play in relation to university lifelong learning, learning and guidance in each country. Any views expressed are those of the author.

Lifelong learning in Slovenia

Lifelong learning (LLL) in Slovenia dates back to the mid 20th century, when first courses and trainings were organized for "general" public. These comprised mostly of language courses and specific skills training (such as cooking and sewing for housewives). However, LLL was not introduced and developed as such in Slovenia until the mid nineties, when influences of the EU policies grew stronger in this field. In 2007, Slovenia got its first complete document on LLL, called *Strategy of lifelong learning in Slovenia* (Strategija vseživljenjskosti učenja v Sloveniji,

http://www.mss.gov.si/fileadmin/mss.gov.si/pageuploads/podrocje/razvoj_solstva/IU2010/Sstrategija_VZU.pdf). It covers several different aspects of LLL, from accessibility to contribution to the nation's human (intellectual) capital and among the aims stated in the strategy the most important are to enable all different groups of citizens access to learning in all different fields to ensure their intellectual and personal growth in order to empower them with knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to form a knowledge society. It also states that all education should constantly be improved and modernized according to latest research and scientific findings in the fields instructed as well as on andragogical (pedagogic) level. Upon LLL Strategy, legislation concerning education on all levels was modified to include different aspects of LLL.

However, to tell the truth, it is just a way to formalize what has been happening in the field during the last decades and the implementation of acknowledgment of such knowledge in the labour market is not fully achieved, yet.

Extent of LLL in Slovenia

Lifelong learning has evolved and spread during the last decade in Slovenia. The main agents of LLL delivery are *People's university* which offers courses to complete or upgrade secondary and post-secondary education as well as accredited courses and trainings in several fields: languages, computer skills, art courses etc. There are other public (such as Andragogic Centre, Centre for Professional Training, University for the 3rd life period, different society clubs and organisations) and private/economic (such as national and regional chambers in different fields, language schools, computer education schools) institutions offering similar trainings. It is common for all of them that at the end of training, if all goals are achieved or accomplished by an individual participant, they get a diploma or certificate stating the field of training, the competencies achieved and the length and complexity of training. Mostly,



this information is also presented in form of ECTS points and thus transferrable to further education as well as to employment.

Statistical data shows that in 2010 16 % of adult citizens in Slovenia were included in LLL (<http://www.stat.si/doc/pub/lzobrazevanje.pdf>), which is above EU-27 average (9 %); see ec.europa.eu/eurostat).

LLL in Slovenia is quite spread and available to general public, however it is still not very popular on university level. Even though most of universities and self-standing higher education institutions offer different LLL activities, they are less accepted and popular than the ones on lower education levels. They are mostly frequented by university drop-outs, who want to pick up their studies or by people who want to achieve tertiary education but want to do it in their own pace. Usually, university LLL is also more expensive, activities last longer and are as such a greater burden for participants. However, they get certificates with ECTS points and competences stated and these certificates are usually valid and accepted in the labour market.

Future developments of LLL in Slovenia

The main challenge institutions offering LLL are facing is general acknowledgment of certificates in the labour market. Even though most of the trainings and courses are of high quality, including both, knowledge and instruction, most companies and even state-funded employers will not recognize an individual's LLL portfolio as a valid or even important document when applying for a work position or for promotion. In this regard, formal education is still a lot more valuable. This challenge is to be overcome by strengthening the cooperation between LLL researchers and practitioners that will have to continue offering high quality training and courses as well as start (and continue) promoting LLL as a vital part of an individual's employment (and personal) capital.