

Abstract on Lifelong Learning in Slovenia

What does LLL mean in your country? (Formal, non-formal, informal learning?)

Education – In education the role and activities of the individual (participant) are determined externally; emphasis is placed on the acquisition of knowledge, skills, habits, etc., which takes place as a process that is usually (but not always) officially defined by objectives, standardised, structured, object-oriented, and externally organised. As a general rule the process (of acquiring knowledge, etc.) is professionally organised in the form of instruction and supervised by the teacher. It is importantly determined by social circumstances and needs (Jelenc, 2007, p. 34).

Learning – In learning the emphasis is placed on the anthropological context, which goes beyond that of society and purpose by placing the individual at the forefront – it is “individualistic and individualising” (Jelenc, 2007, p. 34), as well as based on the individual’s needs and personal activities, without disregarding social needs. Learning is an extremely broad concept and includes many aspects: it takes place everywhere, covering every situation, circumstance and occasion; the contents are interrelated and thus not specifically object-oriented. Learning becomes an integral part of life; it is a flexible and lifelong process. We not only learn under professional guidance, but also from each other. Learning is marked by enhanced activity and autonomy of the subject (learner). With regard to the subject’s active role and the manner in which activities are organised, learning is divided into two basic sets: organised and unorganised learning (Jelenc, 2007, p. 34).

In view of the principles and strategy of lifelong education and learning the question arises as to what is subordinate to what – education to learning or vice versa. It is generally believed that learning is a broader concept and that education is one possible way of its implementation.

Formal and non-formal education and informal learning

Formal education leads to a formal and officially acknowledged educational attainment, such as a degree, diploma or professional qualification (Jelenc 1991, p. 30). **Non-formal** education, by analogy and contrast to the definition of formal education, constitutes education/learning that does not lead to a formal recognition, such as a certificate, diploma, officially acknowledged level of education or qualification, but to meet other education requirements and/or interests of the participant who wishes to acquire further knowledge or skill.

Both activities (education and learning) possess formal and non-formal aspects, but the distinction between the two becomes most obvious with regard to intentionality or the absence of it. Education is always intentional, whereas learning may be either intentional or not.

Incidental or random learning is a “lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experience, educative influences and sources in his/her environment – from family and neighbours, from work and play, from the market place, library, and the mass media” (Jelenc 1991, pp. 54–55). Learning takes place in a completely informalised manner (form-free, informally) and is, of course, not objective-oriented (unexpected, random). With respect to its basic characteristics **informal learning** is similar to incidental learning in that it does not take place in a formalised way, but differs from it in that it is at least partly intentional. It involves learning directly from the social and physical environment, learning from experiences and examples. It is an integral part of daily life and lifelong learning and education. It is also a social interaction and closely related to culture. It focuses on the personality of the learner.

What importance does it have for the public?

The Slovenian Third Age University is a good example of a lasting national intergenerational project. Founded 22 years ago, it started as a voluntary intergenerational project of elderly retired professionals, active professionals and experts in different fields, and young university students of educational sciences. It was a project that in those days focused mostly on cultural education. Essentially, the initial idea was to enable elderly people to strengthen their social identity through becoming aware of their cultural role in the society and to pass their knowledge, experience and culture onto younger generations. However, it quickly turned out that younger generations too had their own knowledge, experience and culture. Thus from the very beginning knowledge, experience and culture were also passed by younger generations on the elderly ones. Nowadays they strive for a better position of all generations in the society, providing educational, training and working opportunities for younger and elderly generations.

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The democratisation of education in Slovenia can be said to have actually started with study circles at the Third Age University. They brought the idea of "edutainment" (education with joy) on the Slovenian social and cultural scene and encouraged individual educational and cultural pursuits. Adults other than pensioners were thus given the opportunity to see the functioning of an individual-centered education that starts from and is adapted to the student, in contrast to the state-set programmes of instruction and educational coercion prevailing in their immediate environment.

Cultural mediators at the National Museum of Slovenia - an educational, training and civic engagement project initiated by the Slovenian Third Age University

What importance does it have in education policy? Is there a mission for LLL?

1. LLL at the University of Ljubljana

The University of Ljubljana has included among its priority guidelines the establishment of LLL programmes for adults (Strategija, 2006, p. 7).

One form of such programmes should also be developed for employees by taking into special consideration their specific needs, e.g. prior experience in a certain field. At present, however, many participants pursue further education in such programmes as “part-time students”, i.e. bearing the total cost of tuition. For them it might seem more appropriate to be provided with education “by parts of educational programmes” together with full-time students and loans on privileged terms, so as not to be required to work “part time” during their studies. Successful ones would obtain the status of full-time students. In accordance with the decision of the Senate of the University of Ljubljana this policy has been already put into practice successfully by several faculties.

Many shorter forms of education have been developed under the umbrella of the University of Ljubljana in the recent years which mainly attract faculty graduates who seek to upgrade their qualifications or refresh their knowledge. Therefore, in some fields, education is organised by professional associations, chambers, ministries, institutes, etc. in collaboration with the teachers from the University of Ljubljana. To this end, several faculties have well-developed units, e.g. the Centre for Pedagogical Education at the Faculty of Arts and the Centre for Management Development and Training at the Faculty of Economics.

2. Formal and non-formal adult education

The analysis of forms of **non-formal** further adult education on the basis of statistical data (Statistične informacije, No. 73/2007) showed that in the school year 2005/2006 seventy-eight percent (78%) of all participants in further education attended **programmes without public validity**. These are programmes that are not entered in the register of educational programmes at the relevant ministry. They vary in duration from merely a few to one hundred or more hours, and are implemented in the form of seminars, courses, lectures, professional consultations, study circles, etc. After completing some educational programmes without public validity the participants are awarded a written, but not publicly valid, certificate. Educational programmes may be intended for either all citizens or merely e.g. a small group of employees of a company, members of a society, retirees in the third period of their lives, etc.

Only thirteen percent (13%) of participants attended **publicly valid programmes** of professional education and training and specialisation, with the exception of educational programmes provided by private schools that were approved by the minister competent for labour in collaboration with the relevant expert council (Article 15 of the Organisation and Financing of Education Act). Nine percent (9%) of participants attended language programmes, one third of whom opted for publicly valid language programmes and the other two thirds opted for language programmes without public validity. Most interest was recorded for educational programmes in economics, followed by educational programmes in health care and social work, science, mathematics and computing. The lowest number of participants attended programmes in agriculture.

3. The analysis of forms of formal tertiary education (**Statistične informacije, No. 37/2007**) showed that the number of graduates of technical colleges and higher education

institutions in Slovenia has increased. 61.8% of them were women. A yearly increase has also been recorded in the number of institutions that implement publicly valid higher education and short-cycle higher education programmes. The University of Nova Gorica admitted its first students in the academic year 2006/2007. The University of Maribor was expanded by two new members. The students obtained the opportunity to enrol in two new independent higher education institutions: the European Faculty of Law in Nova Gorica and the Academy of Design in Ljubljana. An even more rapid increase in the recent years has been seen in the number of technical colleges. As many as 33 new schools were founded between the school years 2000/2001 and 2007/2008. More than fifty percent 50% of technical colleges are privately owned and they only call for admission to part-time studies. The percentage of the population participating in tertiary education is estimated at 48.2%, i.e. 7.3% more than five years ago. The percentage of women has increased, exceeding 50% of all enrolled students. The distribution of students by age varies appreciably, depending on the type of studies (short-cycle higher education, higher education, university, Bologna-based, etc.).

4. Within the newly established universities and faculties and private institutions

Seminars of higher education institutions are regularly organised as non-formal aspects of education. The certificate of education attained is a diploma that is taken into account by several institutions (e.g. the International School for Social and Business Studies in Celje) on enrolment in undergraduate and graduate study programmes. However, the usual route of applying for LLL funds is through Cmeplus and by submitting an outlined application for training programmes.

5. LLL concentrates on the non-formal aspects of education, on the tacit knowledge of people. Here we are facing the fact of the knowledge triangle policy-economy-education. The aim of LLL is to provide other skills and competences that are relevant for the promotion of science in economy and market.

Is there a strategy to involve more people in learning processes?

Work of young, middle aged and older generations can contribute towards maintaining and raising the employability of all generations. First, they offer younger generations a quicker access to labour market owing to non-hierarchised work opportunities they get within such projects. Next, they enable middle aged generations to experiment with their work better than they can in their professional working environment.

Finally, such projects offer the possibility for the elderly to evaluate their past experience and knowledge through working and learning in intergenerational projects and to upgrade them. In addition, all generations involved in intergenerational projects have significant opportunities to learn from each other on condition, however, that those who plan such projects are knowledgeable and able to, shall we say 'organise' opportunities for them to do it. A successful intergenerational project is to be carefully planned and conducted taking into account various aspects and goals and more importantly the need for exchange among generations.

Since the launch of The Third Age University in 1984, the following have been covered in the form of study circles:

- participants learn painting and each year they set up an exhibition
- participants learn translating and they have translated interesting texts to improve the life of the elderly. They have translated books on psychological problems of, for instance, hyperactive children, which benefits all generations
- participants study art history and they have taken on work of cultural mediators in museums
- participants learn research methodology and they have conducted research for the national museums
- participants learn about the media and they have produced their own magazine, a series of radio programmes broadcast on the national radio, a series of television programmes
- participants learn art history and local history and they have become involved in cultural tourism
- participants set up drama groups producing their scripts and they start performing for various institutions in the local community. Their work, of course, benefits everybody in the community
- participants learn transactional analysis and about the needs of grandchildren and they have set up a new organisation, 'Adoptive grandparents...', etc.
- participants learn about new technologies and they have started producing web pages for different civil organisations.

The study circles members meet once a week or a fortnight, at least ten times. The young, middle aged and older generations have performed numerous activities during the course of their joint theoretical and practical learning, their theoretical learning and learning by doing aiming at a tangible result (a survey, a book, an exhibition, a radio or a TV programme, a new temporary or a permanent activity, a service, etc.). Many others who became involved in the education for voluntary work have set up new civil organisations or joined the existing ones in the local community (help lines), etc.

The Slovenian Third Age University started in Ljubljana with six elderly students over 55 and a 32 years old mentor. Today each study circle hosts 10 members on average.

Which bodies are responsible?

1. CMEPIUS: Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Mobility and European Educational and Training Programmes.

SCHEME:



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Lifelong Learning Programme (LLL)

Comenius – Primary and secondary education

Erasmus – Post-secondary vocational and higher education

Leonardo da Vinci – Vocational and education and training

Grundtvig – Adult education

Transverse programme

4 core activities – policy development, language learning, ICT, dissemination

Jean Monnet programme

3 core activities – Jean Monnet action, European institutions, European associations

2. The Slovenian Third Age University Ljubljana (nationwide institution; voluntary; 35 universities in 34 Slovenian towns) / long-term provision

3. Slovenian universities (Ljubljana, Maribor, Primorska)

How is it financed?

- via submission of European Funds
- private coaching
- seminars and workshops (for subscribers)

What is your personal relationship/experience to/in processes of LLL?

Dr. Lucija Mulej has been held a LLL seminar at the International Scholl for Social and Business Study Celje in January 2009 titled “Personal development and insight into psychoanalysis of identity creation” .

Abstracts shall be available via website and should help devise a pedagogical strategy as well as the strategy for the recognition of informal learning outcomes.