



STRATEGY FOR LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE PODRAVJE REGION

STRATEGY PAPER

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Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Podravje Region

Strategy paper

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1. Regional development

1.1 Regional profile

Slovenia consists of 12 statistical regions. The Podravje region comprises a tenth (10.7%) of the Slovenian territory and is in the fifth place among the Slovenian regions according to size. The region lies to the northeast of Slovenia and is adjacent to The Koroška and Savinjska region to the west and to The Pomurska region to the east. In the north it borders the neighboring country of Austria, in the south the country of Croatia.

Naturally and geographically, the Podravje region is characterized by hills in the north-east, sub-alpine forested hills in the west and the Dravsko-Ptujsko polje by the river Drava. The region exploits water for gaining electrical energy and fertile soil for agricultural activity, since the region has the biggest agricultural areas in use in all of Slovenia. The region is the second largest contributor to the Slovenian GDP, behind The Osrednjeslovenska region. The biggest GDP part is generated by the service industry. The region has a rich cultural tradition where the carnival tradition plays a special part with the world famous Ptuj Kurent.

The Podravje statistical region consists of 41 municipalities, where 16% of all Slovenian population (322,900 residents) lived at the end of December 2008. According to the population density of 148.8 residents per km², the region is in the third place in Slovenia.

If we compare the educational structure of the active population, we see that the educational structure of The Drava region does not significantly differ from the Slovenian average. In the period evaluated we can also see a decline in the proportion of the population with lower education levels and simultaneously a rise in the proportion of the population with higher education levels.

Table 1: Population aged 15 years and over by educational attainment in 2006 and 2008 (%)

	Without education, incomplete primary or primary education	Lower, secondary vocational education	Secondary professional, general	Post secondary, higher
2006				
Slovenia	27,7	24,9	30,7	16,6
Podravje	28,5	25,6	31,4	14,4
2008				
Slovenia	26,4	24,8	31,2	17,5
Podravje	26,4	26,4	31,8	15,4

Source: Statistical office of the Republic of Slovenia

1.2 Unemployment rate and profile

The upward trend of employers' demand for workers and employees, which was present from the year 2004, stopped in the autumn months of 2008 and 2009 and turned into a negative direction. Due to changed economic conditions and shortage of certain activities there were fewer job vacancies available, simultaneously employers got more cautious when employing new workers, since in comparison with previous years, temporary employment, which has been the main form of employment for a longer period of time, increased even more.

In the year 2009 there were averagely 86,354 unemployed persons registered in Slovenia, at the end of the year the Employment Agency had 96,672 unemployed persons registered. The average number of unemployed persons increased in comparison to the year 2008 by 36,6%. At the end of the year 2008, there were 13,412 unemployed persons registered in the Podravje region. The registered unemployment rate in the Podravje region at the end of 2009 was 13,2%, which is 3,8% more than in 2008. In Slovenia, the registered unemployment rate was 10,3% in the end of 2009. In January 2010, there were 19,977 unemployed persons registered in the Podravje region (in Slovenia there were 99,591 unemployed persons registered overall). A high increase in unemployment is the consequence of the global economic crisis, which had its consequences in the Slovenian labour market as well. Production reduction, particularly in manufacture and construction industry, affected the increase of unemployment. Unemployment started increasing in October 2008, in 2009 there were more unemployed persons each month than the month before, only in August unemployment decreased by 0,4%.

The structure of unemployment changed. The percentages of long-term unemployed persons, unemployed persons with I. and II. education degree, women, first job seekers and persons of 50 years of age and over decreased. Structural percentages of other categories, mainly redundancies, debtors in bankruptcy and persons aged 26 to 39, increased. The age structure of unemployment also changed. After 2004, the percentage of unemployed persons aged 50 and over started to increase. At the same time, the percentage of unemployed persons, aged less than 26 started to decrease, with a one year delay. In the 2009 the structure changed due to additional labour supply, the percentages of older unemployed persons decreased, the percentages of younger unemployed persons increased. From 2005 onwards, the percentage of first job seekers among unemployed persons has been decreasing, in the year 2009 it was only 14,3%.

In the year 2009 employers registered 161,310 job vacancies, which is 32,9% lower than in 2008. In 78,1% of all cases employers sought temporary workers, in the year 2008 this percentage was 3,6 percentage points lower.

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When registering a job vacancy, employers list education as one of the criteria for worker selection, suitable for filling a job vacancy. According to the required education, employers registered 29,2% job vacancies for workers with I and II. level of education, 33,7% for III. and IV., 19,4% for V., 3,2% for VI. and 14,4% job vacancies for VII.-VIII. level of education. Employers registered 165 job vacancies (0,1%) for persons who completed the Bologna Study. Similar to the years before, the percentage of job vacancies intended for more educated workers increased and at the same time, the percentage of job vacancies for workers without education decreased. Despite the fact that the number of registered unemployed persons increased and that employers had more candidates for filling a job vacancy at disposal, the disparity between supply and demand on the labour market still remained. The employers' demand exceeded the unemployed persons supply in III.-IV. and in VI.-VII. level of education. The biggest percentage of unemployed population represent persons with I.-II. level of education, amounting to 39,4% of all unemployed persons in 2009. The majority of other unemployed persons has a V. or III.-IV. level of education; the percentage of the first group was 25,3%, the percentage of the second group was 25,2%. 7,0% of unemployed persons had a VII+ level of education in the year 2009, 3,0% of unemployed persons had a VI. level of education. The smallest group of registered unemployed persons had the Bologna Study completed, their percentage was 0,1%, but we can expect an increase of the percentage of that group in the following years, simultaneously with the inflow of those graduates on the labour market.

1.3 Structure of employees

Birth rate reduction, aging population and emigration is reflected in the decline of active population in the region. The working population will decrease, should such trends continue on a long term basis.

From an economic point of view the year 2009 was an extremely bad year, since the worst global economic crisis started already in the second half of 2008.

In 2009 there were averagely 858,171 working persons in Slovenia, which is 2, 4% less than in 2008. The number of the working population was increasing from 2004 onwards, but then company bankruptcies and dismissals due to smaller production caused a decrease in the working population for more than 21 thousand persons in 2009. December data also shows a rapid decrease of employment; in December 2009 there were 35 thousand less employees than in December 2008.

Among 858,171 working persons in 2009 there were 767,373 employees and 90,798 self-employed persons. In the Podravje region there were 129,887 working persons. Majority of the employed persons (699,436) were employees of juridical persons, 67,937 were employees of natural persons. Among self-employed persons the majority consisted of

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independent business persons (51,452), followed by farmers (32,290) and persons who perform a professional activity (7,056). In comparison to 2008, the number of employed persons decreased by 2,8%, the number of self-employed persons increased by 1,6%, the biggest increase is among independent business persons (+6,3%). The percentage of working population decreased in all months in 2009, the only exception being September, where the percentage increased a little.

The economic crisis affected the industry with the highest percentage of working population, which is the manufacturing industry. The average number of employees in this sector decreased at the end of 2009 by 10,1% in comparison with 2008. In the scope of manufacturing industry, the biggest decrease of working population occurred in smaller sectors. The biggest decrease of the working population occurred in manufacture of other transport equipment, by 54,2%. A significant decrease in number of employees was recorded in the manufacture of clothing, where bankruptcies and liquidation of some bigger companies caused a decrease in employment by 40,8%.

According to the percentage of working population, the second strongest industry of the Slovenian economy is the trade, maintenance and repair of motor vehicles, in December 2009 113,466 persons were employed in this industry. In comparison with December 2008, the percentage of employees decreased by 2,9%. In December 2009 the percentage of employed persons in the building industry was 7,0% less than in December 2008.

The percentage of employees increased in nine industries in 2009. The biggest increase was recorded in the electricity, gas and steam supply industry (+3,4%), the percentage of working persons in professional, scientific and technical activities increased by 2,7%, the percentage of employed in educational activities increased by 2,6%.

1.4 Available training and education (formal and non-formal)

Educated population is becoming an increasingly important factor in the development and provision of competitive abilities of individual regional and national economies, for an individual, a relevant education and training are important factors in successful access to the labour market. Knowledge is becoming an increasingly important factor in the competitiveness of the national economy. Increasing investment in human resources development is becoming a prerequisite for the transition to a knowledge-based society, reducing disparities in the labour market, providing the conditions for a better quality of life, better social position and social cohesion. The educational system, its development and flexibility, is one of the important factors of potential development in the region and its competitiveness. The focus of economic development passes to a qualified and highly educated workforce, secondary education is becoming the minimum educational level.

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Legislative changes introduce changes in the system of professional and vocational education and training, where particularly practical training should be mentioned (dual system), cooperation of the economy in the decision process, a bigger responsibility of employers when designing, financing and implementing programs of vocational education and training (social partnership) and introduction of diverse possibilities to acquire vocational qualifications. Educational level, obsolete qualifications and lack of demand for certain profiles indicate a need for the introduction or extension of various methods and measures for obtaining a formal education for adults (e. g., certification and recognition of qualifications acquired outside formal education and training, modular training, non-formal education, distance study etc.), mechanisms to ensure appropriate evaluation of non-formal education, training programs for the acquisition of key skills (information technology, communication, language skills, teamwork, entrepreneurship training, etc.) and various programs of retraining and re-qualification. It is necessary to expand the capacity of adult education and improve the program offer, both in terms of substantive redevelopment, educational process itself and the relevant regional deployment.

The needs for knowledge and skills of employees are constantly changing, requiring a rapid response by education and training programs. The present predominantly classical school system of vocational education and training is not yet able to respond quickly to changes in the labour market. Economy needs for skill and knowledge are insufficiently considered, therefore it is necessary to invest much effort in designing an appropriate, complex and flexible system of education and training at all levels.

The education and school system in the region are relatively well developed and comprise preschool education, primary, secondary, post-secondary vocational and higher education.

Recognition of non-formal and ad hoc obtained knowledge and skills is one area in education which has recently been strongly established and is recognized by the EU as primary in the scope of education.

The formal educational system remains a very important aspect of acquiring knowledge, skills and competence, at the same time it is complemented by new training workplaces (including the workplace) with rapid technological and information development. The formal system of education and training must adapt to the fact that individuals learn in different ways, allow the individual to enter and exit from the formal system and at the same time recognize and comply with knowledge and competences, obtained through other education forms. Rules on the assessment of knowledge in vocational and secondary technical education (Official Gazette of RS, no. 78/2007) introduce the possibility of recognition of formally and non-formally obtained knowledge and skills upon enrolment in the first year in secondary vocational and technical schools. The task of schools is to form measures and procedures, according to which it will recognize formally and non-formally, acquired knowledge and skills of the candidates, in accordance with the Rules.

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The secondary school system in the Podravje region comprises 27 schools, 5 of them being in the municipality of Ptuj. Secondary schools offer programs of shorter vocational education, vocational upper secondary education, technical upper secondary education, vocational-technical upper secondary education and general upper-secondary education – “gimnazije”, which are divided into general and technical “gimnazije”.

Interest in traditional professions, especially in fields of mechanical engineering and metallurgy among young people is decreasing, interest in technical “gimnazije” is increasing.

The Podravje region and the city of Maribor are increasingly consolidating their position as the second university centre in Slovenia. 12 faculties and one institution of higher education operate in the scope of the University of Maribor. Programs of post-secondary vocational education are implemented as well. Those schools offer two-year vocational programs, which are designed as a special form of tertiary education and contain a lot of practical training. Post-secondary vocational schools, which implement education in the Podravje region, are separated from higher education as an institution. The School Centre Ptuj also has a post-secondary vocational school, which comprises three programs: economy, mechatronics and country and regional management.

At School Centre Ptuj adult education is also implemented, both at Secondary Biotechnical School and Secondary School of Mechanical Engineering. Both schools offer programs of vocational upper-secondary education for adults, a program of vocational-technical upper-secondary education and a program of technical upper secondary education.

Adult education is also offered by the People’s University of Ptuj, where six different areas of education are offered. These areas are: training for obtaining an education, vocational training, general education, self-learning centre, the Third Age University and counselling centre Ptuj.

Despite the rich educational network, the education offer does not follow new demands for knowledge and training of the active population fast enough. Educational programs are still too rigid, insufficiently goal and problem oriented and insufficiently adapted to the needs of the economic and social development. The process of adaptation of the educational system, education and training programs contents and development of new programs, which would meet the needs of the economy, is too slow.

In the future we will have to associate education programs more closely with the needs of companies and especially improve their efficiency in terms of employing participants. Rapid development requires new, modern knowledge and the needs for knowledge are constantly changing in accordance with the development. New knowledge needs to be obtained fast, therefore it is necessary to expand the offer of programs, adapted to companies – »tailor made« programs. We need to know which knowledge and training levels of employees and

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future employees employers require and need. The results of the Education and Training Needs Analysis, carried out in the period between 1997 and 2000, show which of the following areas require training:

- **Company management,**
- **Communication skills,** as one of the crucial elements for successful company business,
- **Marketing,** where the most important is the need for knowledge of strategic marketing and marketing,
- **Foreign language** knowledge is nowadays the knowledge, which is essential to establish and maintain contacts with business partners and is crucial for integration in the European Union and for foreign market penetration. Companies from the Podravje region are aware of that, and despite the fact that educational institutions offer such programs in the Podravje region, the needs for such education are still high. Mostly English and German language knowledge is required,
- **Computer and information technology,** which stimulates development of new types of work and employment opportunities. There are requirements to strategically equalize supply and demand for information technology experts, either with close association between university centres and companies or with additional offer of other education types in the field of information technology,
- **Technology knowledge,** which will stimulate development and establishment of technologically sophisticated companies,
- **Human resources development** – promoting personnel function in companies with emphasis on the introduction of modern approaches and types of work.

Similar results were achieved at School Centre Ptuj in the project Job Rotation in 2008. We sent questionnaires to the companies in the region, with which we wanted to determine which employees' skills the companies required. We found out that companies mostly expected training in soft skills as well as training in their field of work. Mostly there were production companies involved who wanted training in CNC technology.

Adult education comprises education, further education, training and education of persons who completed school and want to obtain, update, expand and deepen their knowledge and do not have learner, pupil or student status. Persons who take part in adult education obtain adult education participant status.

Adult education can be divided into formal and non-formal education. Formal education enables to obtain an officially recognized education, vocational qualification or officially recognized certificate.

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Non-formal education is intended for obtaining, renewing, expanding, modernizing and deepening of knowledge, but it is not authenticated with a state approved document. Non-formal education is enforced and confirmed with the system of national vocational qualifications, which are new in Slovenia, but have a long-year tradition in Europe. National vocational qualifications give us possibilities to obtain new professions and qualifications without formal examination. It is possible to obtain some professions from the evidence of manual skills and work experience, on the basis of a portfolio, which contains evidence of experience of a candidate. For the development of a lifelong learning, national vocational qualifications are of great importance.

At School Centre Ptuj new work and method types will have to be introduced, like distance study, lectures with the help of video conferences, work with tutors, offering study help to unemployed persons in form of individual instructions, guiding, counselling and helping candidates to overcome problems.

1.5 Benefits and potentials

The system of formal and non-formal education is well developed in the region, which represents together with professional, developmental and counselling organizations for human resources development, a quality developmental potential of the region. The second largest university centre in Slovenia is strengthening its position with expanding the program offer and introducing new study programs in accordance with the Bologna declaration. The education structure of the population is improving in the region, the number of students coming from the Podravje region is increasing.

School Centre Ptuj represents the leading and driving force in the field of LLL in the region. The offer of payable (various programs of formal or non-formal education) and free programs (various education projects, co-financed by different EU funds) provides several options for the realization of the LLL concept. Further association and cooperation on the institutional and purely local level is the requirement for further development of this concept in the region.

The advantage of School Centre Ptuj is in readiness to carry out matters in an operative fashion, rich experience, tradition and visibility in the region. Particularly the personnel are very well aware of this field, very important for the future.

In addition to the general knowledge from general education lessons students also gain knowledge from the fields of economy, commercialism, baking, insurance, finance, securities, computer work, arranging and design. Students also develop the artistic-aesthetic

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sense, manual skills, creative fantasies, acquire entrepreneurship and management skills. Several extracurricular activities are carried out at the school, during which the students develop their creativity, interests, skills and hobbies. Students can participate in researches or projects, in competitions from various professional fields, in international projects and students and teachers exchange in the scope of the European Union.

1.6 General scheme and region vision – future competences

The necessity to invest into human potential development is incorporated into all developmental priorities of the region (see Regional Development Program of the lower Podravje region 2007-2013 – strategic and program part). In the **I. developmental priority (connected, successful and visible region)**, where the promotion of developmental partnerships (cooperation competences, the prerequisite for those is a high confidence level, associated with professional knowledge and the general education level) is pointed out, the vision is strongly reflected. In the **II. developmental priority (entrepreneurship, competitiveness and knowledge for rapid development)** the vision is reflected even stronger. This represents a wide range of competences in the field of entrepreneurship, increasing employability, increasing the competitive ability and investment in human resources development, including lifelong learning. The overall region vision in the field of LLL is most strongly reflected in the **III. developmental priority (balanced and sustainable development)**. Focus on the promotion of the principles and measures of sustainable development, environmental protection and sustainable energy, sustainable management of space and natural resources, promotion of social inclusion, information society, universal access to public infrastructure and the preservation of cultural heritage requires developing competences of ethics and ecology (not just in business but as a living ideology).

To develop those competences an overall flow of knowledge is required, which must be distributed from the private sphere (family), through institutional spheres (education and training institutions) to the sphere of work where useful to develop special skills to ensure employability of individuals. Therefore it is necessary to shift toward a dispersion of obtaining competences, which are predominantly formed in the formal or non-formal types of work. **Learning organizations** are crucial for obtaining competences. The aim of any modern organization is to operate successfully and maintain its competitive edge in the future. But the question arises, how to achieve that considering the increasing globalization of economic space and the growing consumer demand. The answer is in the approach of the concept of learning organization, which is already well known in Western Europe and the U.S.

The concept of learning organization not only represents a different relationship to knowledge in business, but profoundly affects the organization and the managing style of a

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company and the way the entire company reasons. In the learning organization the management has the role of mentor, advisor, stimulator of new ideas and innovations. A learning organization is based on a higher organizational culture, a different mode of communication, different dealing with knowledge and above all on respect of every employee. Employees know the mission of their company, are committed to common goals and strategies. Moreover, they also create the strategy together.

People with knowledge, the intellectual capital of every company, are crucial for learning organizations. The value of those people will need to be recognized. The company will also begin to develop such an organizational culture and climate that employees will feel comfortable in them and really want to work and be educated.

2 Regional LLL strategy

2.1 Main points of the regional LLL strategy

- Enabling all people learning and education in all life periods, in all areas of life and all environments. Particular attention should be paid to enabling possibilities for educationally disadvantaged groups. The problem is that people are not aware of lifelong learning enough.
- Enhancing the awareness, that individuals with learning increase their confidence, develop creativity, entrepreneurship and knowledge, skills and qualifications needed for inclusion into the economic and social life and for a better quality of life.
- Developing awareness in all people that they have the right to learning and education and strengthening their co-responsibility for it, increase the involvement of the population in lifelong learning and increase the use of national vocational qualifications.
- Enabling all persons to learn according to his/her level, this means that education and training try to adapt to the needs and demands of the learning person.
- Increasing the association of education and training programs with needs of companies, since schooling and economy are still not associated enough in the region.
- Developing a positive attitude of every individual towards learning and understanding the importance of lifelong learning at all stages of life, such a relationship must be incorporated in the curricula at all levels of education.
- Raising all literacy types of Slovenian people and using literacy for different purposes and different contexts.
- Developing a high-quality and flexible offer of options and environments for continuous learning, education and training and the possibility to choose between a variety of effective teaching and learning methods.
- Encouraging and enabling learning in all areas of life and activity. This should be made possible by an integral policy with relevant instruments. The policy must connect the economic interest with social and cultural goals.
- Ensuring a proper balance between investing in education and learning for improvement of the human capital (increased productivity, competitiveness and individual employability) and investing in education and learning for personal development and an active democratic citizenship.
- Facilitating the implementation and use of knowledge, skills and learning as the basic source and movement for developing local and regional areas and also for the development of social networks.

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- Promoting lifelong learning as the fundamental human value with all public means for communication and advertising.
- Facilitating the development of "a learning society" and "a society based on knowledge" and "a society of thinkers" as their evolutionary upgrades.
- Encouraging mobility in education and employment.

2.2 Measures for implementation of the strategy

We will be able to successfully implement the strategy of lifelong learning only by supporting it with appropriate measures in legislation, administration, finance, public network of organizations and programs for adult education, public services and infrastructure for adult education.

To improve the quality of education it is necessary to develop instruments for evaluation and self-evaluation and quality standards of education concerning lifelong learning, and strengthen the awareness that quality education must include elements of lifelong learning.

Current educational programs, knowledge catalogues and syllabuses must be taken under review in order to create opportunities for the realization of the elements of lifelong learning in these areas. More attention should be paid to types of skills and competences contained in the curricula, in order to achieve longer durability of the knowledge and to develop competences for further and independent learning. Pupils, students and other persons who are being educated and learn must be trained to plan their careers and to plan obtaining new knowledge and competences.

It will be necessary to encourage the development of teaching and learning strategies (didactics, methodology, modes of teaching and other educational activities) which enable and support lifelong learning, and incorporate those strategies in the curricula. This should be carried out both at the research and developmental level as well as with examples of good practice.

In undergraduate education, further education and in developing competences of teachers, professionals and other personnel (mentors, counsellors) programs for their training need to be developed in order to realize the goals of lifelong learning. Adult education programs should be updated and special postgraduate programs should be introduced in this field and in development of competences, required for leading and organization of processes for lifelong learning.

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Various programs, forms, types and ways will have to be developed which are dictated by the goals of lifelong learning strategy and which make the realization of lifelong learning possible.

A better integration between schooling and economy and the transfer of knowledge into practice will be required. The promotion of distance study will also be necessary. New education programs will have to be developed which will be adapted to the needs of the market and users. Appropriate teaching and learning models (e-learning, distance learning) for disadvantaged groups of people will have to be developed.

An easier integration into different types of learning will have to be made possible for learners, with various mechanisms, an appropriate tax policy, incentives for investing into lifelong learning etc.

A system of assessment and certification of various kinds of learning – formal, non-formal, a-formal, random or ad hoc – will have to be developed, and together with various kinds of learning also ways of recognizing different types of knowledge.

To achieve Strategy measures, an adequate infrastructure will have to be developed, for example training of holders of activity, users and professional staff, program contents and network, development of educational programs and material, consultation, a centre for identification and validation of knowledge, research and development, information and organizational infrastructure, installation of computer-information technology and equipment, promotional activity.

It is important to achieve efficient investment in infrastructure for lifelong learning and in doing so, particularly:

- establish a regional centre, which will connect the district level activities that enable or facilitate lifelong learning;
- train counsellors for lifelong learning;
- develop standards or minimum criteria for all consultants who will carry out this activity;
- create a network for evaluation and certification of non-formal and incidental or ad hoc learning;
- install a computer-information technology and equipment;
- enable access to organized education in the third life period;
- invest in research infrastructure – the creation of adequate research facilities, particularly in the development and research of adult education, which is in deficit now.

Ministry of Education and Sport is not organized so it could ensure objectives of the national program of adult education on the basis of annual programs of adult education, which are the legislative instrument for the implementation of the strategy. This would be possible

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only if the Ministry of Education and Sport reorganized in a way that the sector for adult education would be equitable and strong enough to care for the implementation of the national program according to the formal aspect. In addition to that, the sector would have to have additional personnel staff.

It is important to strengthen non-governmental and non-profit sector and to create and develop partnerships in this field. This is very important for the country; it is even one of the priorities. This partnership creates a better starting point for the country in negotiations for the acquisition of European funds, especially when it comes to national policy priorities. Non-governmental sector enables the inclusion of several partners in the strategy and its programs. This usually ensures constant innovation and competition.

Implementation of the lifelong learning strategy requires continuous and coordinated care and decision-making; this can only be provided by a special, inter-ministerial and professionally competent body such as the Strategic Council. The Council will be able to function successfully only if it has an appropriate formal basis, this means institutionalization. The Council connects all government departments (ministries) by content and organization with the central objective being to promote learning and education in all areas of life and work to effectively increase knowledge and develop a society based on knowledge. In addition to development and realization of the lifelong learning strategy in the national policy the Council's task is also the effective implementation of the strategy in practice.

The funding system on lifelong learning is based on cooperation between different partners; those are the country, employers, users, civil society and non-governmental organizations and others. The strategy can only be successfully developed if an adequate funding system is developed that will have to provide, for example: development of new programs and ways of learning, supporting students and employers for learning at the workplace, funding research and development of lifelong learning, financial incentives; e. g. with the tax policy, promoters; specific financial support is intended for funding higher education. The funding system must enable sustainable development. In particular, it is necessary to regulate the funding system of adult education as a field of lifelong learning at the local level. Although we have committees for human resource development on the local level, this field still remains unbridled financially and is more or less uncoordinated. Measures must be coordinated on the state level.

Employers will have to be encouraged with public funds (government) to enable education for people with lower education level, as employers do not usually invest in education of people with lower education level.

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Adoption and implementation of the strategy must be accompanied by stronger media support and promotion as well as special promotional events and projects, for example, Lifelong Learning Week, panels regarding the theme of lifelong learning, slogans (e. g. "lifelong learning for all", which were also used by UNESCO and OECD), exhibitions, leaflets, awards, prizes and other promotional materials.

Research capabilities of universities, economy, public institutions and education organizations must be connected.

The usage of national vocational qualifications will have to be increased, as these give us the opportunity to obtain new professions or qualifications without formal examination.

Centres for independent learning will also need to be designed, where people can learn independently or refine the knowledge they already have.

To ensure a quality development and research work it is necessary to provide appropriate institutionalized research capacities for all areas of lifelong learning – childhood, adulthood and higher education.

To research and monitor lifelong learning it is necessary to introduce statistical monitoring and develop and establish standard indicators to monitor the implementation of the strategy. The indicators must ensure international comparability.

Enhanced providing information will have to be enabled for residents and continuous learning will have to be encouraged at all levels. Adults who have fallen behind in formal education will have to be motivated.

2.3 Regional LLL strategy in conformity with the regional development strategy

The supportive environment does not work towards adapting the education and training programs to economy needs and encouraging the development of entrepreneurial thinking enough. Despite the diverse offer of education / training programs companies and other users find that the offer does not follow the need for new, advanced skills and competence of the population fast enough. The programs are too rigid, insufficiently goal oriented, insufficiently practical and problem oriented. Increased cooperation and integration between educational institutions and economy is crucial to encourage the development of joint programs of education / training and development projects that will encourage greater participation in the process of education / training.

The opportunities for training young researchers in the economy and in cooperation with the University are also not utilized enough. The opportunities of cooperation of educational institutions and the economy in the scope of international programs and research are also not fully utilized.

Despite the fact that lifelong learning is being promoted in the region and the share of population involved in lifelong learning is increasing, the awareness of the necessity of continuing education and acquiring new knowledge is still too low. The awareness that only advance in knowledge brings new opportunities and raises the competitive ability of the population in the labour market is still too low as well.

In the Podravje region the integration of the educational spheres with the economy is still too low, which is reflected in an insufficient level of adequacy and adaptation of education and training needs to the local labour market. Enhancing educational institutions with modern programs approaches and teaching methods, including modern techniques and forms of teaching, such as e-learning, will enable a high-quality offer of educational and training programs and greater involvement of individuals in the process of learning. By encouraging the development of agents for knowledge transfer, knowledge centres, university and other educational centres, by establishing an evaluation system of non-formal and ad hoc education and training, we will follow the developmental needs and opportunities of the region easier.

An insufficient integration between the educational spheres with the economy is apparent in the Podravje region, leading to inadequacy and inability to adapt to the education and training needs of the local labour market. Implementation of educational, motivational and animation activities to promote participation in the LLL in the region, despite some

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integration, is still carried out in an uncoordinated and disorganized fashion. The access to support is very different for target groups in individual local areas. Therefore, we will implement measures for greater integration and better accessibility of adult education, training, advice and information and strategic development of the concept of lifelong learning.

Promoting coordination of quality supply and demand in the labour market: A description of the measure: With the measure we will encourage the development of various forms and possibilities of education and training at all levels and ensure the introduction of plural education and comprehensive support system for lifelong learning, which will enhance by establishing mechanisms for the recognition of different forms of education and learning (formal, non-formal and casual) at all levels. The measure is directed in various ways to encourage and motivate the integration into different schemes of education and training.

In the field of vocational education we will strengthen the cooperation with social partners, create conditions for connecting schools with the economy at the local and regional level and seek to improve quality and increase the attractiveness of vocational education. With the measure we will also encourage the development of modern forms of training and education of teachers and other educators, as this will contribute to raising the quality of their work.

3 Conclusion

Despite the fact that lifelong learning is being promoted in the region and the share of population involved in lifelong learning is increasing, the awareness of the necessity of continuing education and acquiring new knowledge is still too low. The awareness that only advance in knowledge brings new opportunities and raises the competitive ability of the population in the labour market is still too low as well.

We must develop a system which will give every individual an opportunity to use his/her knowledge and skills obtained in the working process and life, so that the school recognizes knowledge and skills in a systematic and manageable fashion and therefore makes the admission of individuals into the education system easier.

If we want the system to be successful, all interested participants must cooperate in its development and implementation: employers, individuals, professional and educational institutions.

Establishment of lifelong learning systems is a necessity, arising from the Lisbon Strategy. The vision, inscribed in that strategy, defines the European community as the fastest growing economy based on a society of knowledge. But because the majority of development is carried out exactly in regions, the regional concepts of lifelong learning are the first priority. Unfortunately, we are still not efficient enough in establishing such educational systems on national and regional level.

Lifelong learning must be a challenge – priority of the SC Ptuj. In this strategy it is necessary to provide the greatest attention to establish the concept and to regulate certain system flaws. It is also necessary to spread awareness of how this is important for acceptance and implementation of the strategy. Our goals are reducing the number of unemployed persons, increasing the effectiveness of education (an education is effective if a candidate gets employed within three months after education completion), taking advantage of education, educating according to economy measures, preparing for the labour market. At the national and regional level we are not efficient enough in establishing a system of lifelong learning.

The concept of lifelong learning does not represent merely which knowledge we need today, but what will the future development look like, what we want to change and realize. The basis of a successful and overall regional development is knowledge and inventiveness of the residents of the region, therefore the establishment of the lifelong learning system represents an important development measure.

The lifelong learning strategy needs to be adapted to national and regional needs. For most skills and competences, needed for the invention production (new ideas), it is necessary to

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establish a national lifelong learning system. For most skills and competences, needed for the innovation production (conversion of new ideas into advantages) it is necessary to establish a regional system of lifelong learning.

It is necessary to adapt learning to the region. The national lifelong strategy can not be implemented in an economically and socially passive region, but is rather only a global direction. A regional development requires a specific lifelong learning strategy, adapted to needs; therefore adapting the national strategy to the regional level can only be basic and insufficiently concrete. On the national level, we must ask ourselves, how do we form a "learning society", how will continuous learning become a way of our personal and professional learning (motivation, awareness etc.) and with systematic solutions in the field of management, recognition and evaluation of lifelong learning.

To define the needs for education and to develop an adequate offer the connection between schools and employers needs to be encouraged, a review of main interests at individual areas must be performed and the system of social partnership must be upgraded; this will be the place for collection, evaluation and realization of the needs of employees and employers, the needs and interests of individuals, educational institutions and the local community.

School Centre Ptuj is the leading institution in the field of formal education in our region and also on the national level. With the offer of payable (various programs of formal and non-formal education) and free programs (various education projects, funded by various EU funds) there are several possibilities for implementation of the LLL concept.

School Centre Ptuj underwent a major transformation in the last years in the field of formal and non-formal education. So far it was involved in planning, implementation and directing formal and non-formal education, at various levels. In the field of non-formal education the School Centre Ptuj tries to achieve through projects a higher level and a greater involvement in the region, particularly for the needs of the labour market and the adaptation of the education to the measures of the economy. Education needs to be developed towards real needs of the economy, service sector, public sector etc. School Centre Ptuj must take the lead role. Initial forms of lifelong learning, offered by School Centre Ptuj, must be developed rapidly towards the real needs of the economy and service sector.

The advantage of School Centre Ptuj is in the readiness to carry out matters in an operative manner, rich experience, tradition and visibility in the region. Particularly the personnel are very well aware of this field, which is very important for the future.

A certain potential of the school is the knowledge of secondary education on the Slovenian level and the distinct entrepreneurial orientation. The challenge is in increasing the quality, level and in the exploitation of potentials of School Centre Ptuj. How to incorporate and use

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the entrepreneurial orientation in education of high school students and how to develop a Slovenian model is the challenge of the current structure in the city.

Target group

The participants were principals of secondary schools and of the vocational college of School Centre Ptuj, Mayor of Ptuj Municipality, manager of the science and research centre, a representative of the local economy and the manager of the school centre.

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