

Case Study

Slovenian Institute of Adult Education

Who was involved in the partnership and why?

It is increasingly important that, after the end of formal education, people continue to educate themselves by attending various courses, workshops, seminars and training at their workplace (i.e. non-formal education) or improving their knowledge independently (i.e. informal education). Lifelong learning is not only important in terms of the economy, but also in the wider context of cultural and social inclusion in a modern, developing society and for active citizenship. It is crucial that we, as individuals, are aware of our role in the world and take responsibility for our actions. As a lifelong process, Global Citizenship Education (GCE) plays an important role in this, enabling us to understand diversity and equipping us with the knowledge, skills and values that we as world's citizens need to deal with local and global challenges.

Since 1991, the Slovenian Institute of Adult Education (SIAE) has been the main national institution in the field of adult education in Slovenia. Their mission is to make quality education and learning more accessible to all people living in Slovenia according to the principles of free choice and equal opportunities. Lifelong Learning Week (LLW) is a traditional Slovene festival of learning, which has been providing numerous free educational and cultural events for twenty-five years drawing attention to learning throughout life.

The festival has grown into a movement, which annually involves around 1,000 institutions, NGOs, interest groups and other stakeholders.

SIAE also runs a network of local, regional, national and thematic coordinators (e.g. libraries and Universities for Adult Education), who are then implementers of activities during the LLW Festival (schools, libraries, local NGOs, municipalities). The potential for GCE was big: 1) reaching a lot of people; 2) reaching different stakeholders on different levels 3) involving multipliers; 4) presenting GCE to new audiences.

Seeing the potential, the Slovene NGO platform for development, global education and humanitarian aid (SLOGA) decided to pursue the establishment of a partnership with SIAE. Patricija Virtič, Bridge 47 national officer for Slovenia reached out to Ms Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik, Head of Promotion and Information Centre and the LLW Project Manager about a possible partnership. During their research, SLOGA discovered a lack of GCE resources for adult education both nationally and at the EU level, despite GCE being a lifelong learning process.

Collaborative activities

Following an initial meeting, Ms Vrtič was invited to join the LLW coordination team and their regular meetings and was invited to present GCE and possible activities. In 2019, SLOGA became the festival's thematic coordinator for Global Citizenship Education (GCE) for the second year. As a first, GCE was selected to be one of the joint actions of that year's edition and more than 300 events were held under the title "We are all one world", bringing GCE to new audiences. The theme was proposed by SLOGA at one of the coordinator meetings and later approved by the LLW coordination team.

Of the selected themes for the Lifelong Learning festival 2020, two themes were connected to GCE:

- Migrations and challenges of multiculturalism
- Sustainable development – locally and globally!

Both were proposed and endorsed by SLOGA, supported by other coordinators and final decision made by SIAE.

In 2020, SLOGA also implemented two GCE training for SIAE staff and coordinators of the Lifelong Learning Weeks festival. The trainings supported the capacity building of representatives of SIAE and coordinators of the Lifelong learning weeks in the field of global citizenship education.

The training provided knowledge for the participants that can be used in their work and in preparing of the activities for the Lifelong Learning Weeks. Their knowledge of migration, climate change and GCE in general will be further used in their other activities through the year.

The aims of the trainings were to:

- Raise awareness on GCE among SIAE staff and coordinators of Lifelong Learning Week
- To deepen knowledge on two of the main topics of this year's LLW edition: 1) Migration and the Challenges of Multiculturalism and 2) Sustainable Development - Local and Global!
- To promote GCE and the SDGS.
- To promote Bridge 47 (activities and network)
- To mobilize participants to take action.
- To mobilize LLW coordinators and LLW activities organizers to implement GCE events/activities within LLW week and other lifelong learning activities throughout the year.

The first training (March 2020) was held in person. The second (September 2020) was online due to COVID-19 restrictions.

SIAE was also active in SLOGA's advocacy activities, such as a national advocacy event on GCE in June 2019. SIAE presented their work and activities, supported SLOGA's advocacy positions and showed support for further strengthening the GCE field in Slovenia. They are also supporting the inclusion of GCE in the new White paper on Education.

SIAE (Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik) was also participating in SLOGA's SDG Talk on Sustainable development Goals and inclusive education in January 2021, where they presented their positions and views on GCE, SDGs, lifelong learning, Envision 4.7 roadmap and partnership with SLOGA.

Benefits and Impact

Collaboration brought fruitful results and naturally lead to the signing of an official Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in February 2020.

By signing the MoU both parties committed themselves to continue the professional approach and activities in the fields of mutual interest, such as Global Citizenship Education, Sustainable Development Goals, adult education, climate change, migration, gender equality, poverty, education and lifelong learning. They will support each other and include the other partner in their activities, and advocacy work.

All aforementioned activities lead to a strengthening of the partnership and further actions beyond the Bridge 47 project. In January 2021 SLOGA, SIAE and Slovene Philanthropy held a joint event – a conference on migration. They are already planning activities for 2021 – for Lifelong Learning Week Festival, Global Education Week and possible joint actions during the Slovene EU presidency (July- December 2021).

“At the beginning our partnership with our first joint activities even our coordinators of Lifelong Learning Weeks festival were not sure what Global Citizenship Education is and why it is needed. We were able to build bridges that led to deeper understanding.”

Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik

“It is necessary that we are adapting our language. You have to be able to explain GCE in a simple, lifelike way - from goals, strategies, policies, to the individual. What it is all about and what are the benefits of him being involved in it?”

Zvonka Pangerc Pahernik

(SDG Talks, January 2021).