

Conference  
"Intergenerational solidarity and education of older adults in community"

### The Educational Offer for Older Adults in Different Municipalities in Slovenia

Sabina Jelenc Krašovec & Sonja Kump

Department of educational sciences, Faculty of Arts,  
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

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### Presumptions:

the offer of education for older adults depends on the level of well-being in the municipality;

the educational offer for older adults differs regarding the urban or rural character of the region;

the educational offer for older adults responds to different needs of older people (regarding the level of education, gender, age, abilities, etc.) in different municipalities.

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**Methodology** the basic research project "Care for the older people within Communities in Slovenia" (2011-2014)

a successive use of quantitative and qualitative methods

a **quantitative survey** of the state of education for older adults in the selected municipalities (24)

**3 interviews in each municipality** regarding the offer of education and leisure activities for older people in municipality

**90 interviews (12 interviews used for this presentation)**

**focus groups - to come**

the classification of municipalities according to their level of well-being was made (according to Rován et al. 2009):

four groups of municipalities with respect to their level of well-being in SLO

one municipality was selected from each group and from different Slovenian regions (**four selected municipalities for this presentation**):

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**Group 1:**  
**high well-being communities**

15 municipalities (9.4% of Slovenian territory); 36.5% of Slovenian population:  
high degree of urbanization; high standard of living; the highest values of economic indices; higher level of education; average registered unemployment rate; average number of social assistance recipients; lowest total fertility rate; highest number of divorces; higher crime rate

**Group 2:**  
**balanced well-being communities;**

56 Slovenian municipalities (39.8% of the Slovenian territory); 22.4% of the Slovenian population.  
most attractive living conditions; the highest population growth rates, the lowest rates of registered unemployment and social assistance recipients; above average level of education; live longer than other inhabitants of Slovenia.

**Group 3:**  
**moderate well-being communities**

70 municipalities (35.9% of Slovenian territory); 33.5% of the Slovenian population,  
moderate economic circumstances, the standard of living being slightly under average; the youngest population of all groups

**Group 4:**  
**low well-being communities**

52 municipalities (17.3% of Slovenian territory; 7.6% of its population);  
underdeveloped in economic terms, predominantly rural with an above-average number of social assistance recipients, a high registered unemployment rate, the lowest degree of education of the population; the highest number of suicides and abortions, the lowest rate of divorces and crime

Rován et al. 2009

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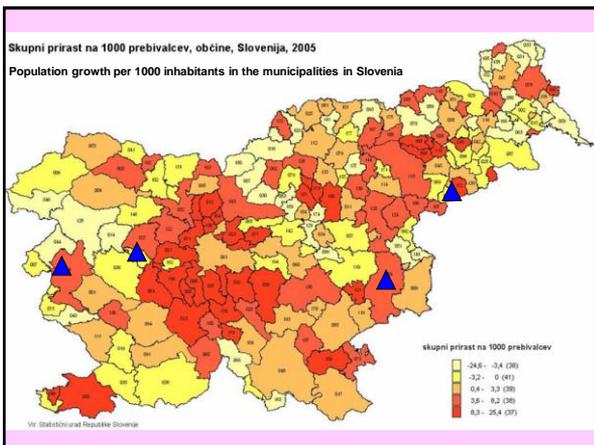
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'Well-being' is a complex multidimensional notion which can be defined as the state of happiness, health, and prosperity. In general, well-being differs considerably from one region of a country to another, which hinders social development, and may cause economic, social, urban-planning, environmental, and political problems.

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**NOVA GORICA (high well-being municipality)**

115 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>: higher population density than in the country as a whole (101 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>)

negative natural population growth/1,000 inhabitants (-0.7; in Slo 1.5)

the greater number of oldest inhabitants than the number of the youngest ones

43 settlements;  
app. 32.100 inhabitants

average age 43.1 years (SLO 41.4)




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**EDUC. OFFER FOR OLDER ADULTS**

city of Nova Gorica - the most abundant and diverse supply of education for older adults

UTA: more than 50 study circles; 11 locations

AEC: Open Learning Centre, the Learning Exchange, LLL points, Guidance and Counselling Centre + different courses for older adults + Day Centre for Seniors

69 societies in municipality where older people are members

11 societies of retired persons (educational circles, workshops, various lectures, hiking, excursions, and cultural and sport activities)

Intergenerational learning (Youth Centre, Karitas, the Intergenerational Self-Help Society)

Public Retirement Home: numerous leisure and educational activities (gymnastics, in-house library, tombola playing, chorus, workshops, excursions, home musical group, cinema evenings, exhibitions of products from workshops, and celebrations of cultural and national holidays) - FREE OF CHARGE

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A 73 year-old, retired woman with a higher-education degree in pharmacy:  
*"Obstacles exist, particularly the distance to the place of the Society's activities. As I have no driving licence, I depend on a friend who lives in Nova Gorica - if she doesn't go I can't go either. There are no other obstacles. I don't think I'm too old to understand lectures."*

The educational offer for older adults in Nova Gorica is extensive in the city in particular, while this cannot be said about the supply in rural settlements. The inhabitants of some settlements in this municipality mention inaccessibility of supply and lack of incentive for their participation in education

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**ŽIRI - balanced well-being municipality**      **rural municipality**

18 settlements;  
app. 4.900 inhabitants

100 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup> (SLO: 101 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>)

average age of the citizens was 39.9 years (SLO 41.4)

positive natural population growth/1,000 inhabitants (+ 6.1; in Slo 1.5)

Equal number of the oldest and the youngest inhabitants (rare in Slovenian municipalities).

The level of education (15 years or over) in this municipality was lower than the national average.

primary school or less: 33.5% (Slovenia: 33.0%),  
secondary school: 57.0% (Slovenia: 54.0%),  
post-secondary or higher education 9.5% (Slovenia: 13.0%).




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**EDUC. OFFER FOR OLDER ADULTS**

15 societies in the municipality

attendance of older adults in individual municipal societies is notably distributed by gender

only women in the Farm Women's Society; men only in the Firemen and Beekeeper Societies, etc.

Senior citizens - a minority in most societies, except in the **Society of Retired Persons**

sport activities, excursions, cultural events, own choir

payable courses of English and German (exclusively women aged between 60 and 65 years)

volunteers in the "Older people for older people" project (women prevail)

**Ivan Tavčar Library - professional lectures, literary evenings, and creative workshops (the more educated attendees prevail)**

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The "Older people for older people" project manager of the Žiri municipality's Society for Retired People was interviewed, she was convinced that:

- older adults knew about the educational programmes;
- there are no plans to expand the supply of education;
- that older persons in the local community have enough opportunities for education, socializing, and satisfying various interests;
- the reason for low attendance is their "narrow-mindedness".

A 69 year-old retired woman with 3-year vocational education, a member of the Society for Retired People:

"There is not enough offer in Žiri, you cannot choose what you want, and we only have computer and English courses. The neighbouring municipality has a better offer, but it is too far, you need transportation."

The supply in Žiri is quite monotonous, gender-segregated, not meeting the needs of older adults (needs are not being found out), and educational activities are uncoordinated.

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**KRŠKO - moderate well-being municipality**

158 settlements;  
app. 25.700 inhabitants

average age of the citizens was  
41.1 years (SLO 41.4)



90 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>; (SLO: 101 inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>)

positive natural population growth/1,000 inhabitants (+ 1.8; in Slo 1.5)

The number of the oldest inhabitants of this municipality was greater than the number of the youngest

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**EDUC. OFFER FOR OLDER ADULTS**

UTA (in the AEC) offers: seven free-of-charge study circles (computer, film, reading, art, digital photography, organic gardening, and medicinal herbs), and four payable courses of foreign languages

AEC: short workshops (e.g., cooking, healthy nutrition, clay), foreign language courses (from 280 to 375 EUR), "Open Learning Centre"

mostly women aged between 50 and 64 years, min. secondary school

Town library: a free-of-charge individual computer course for older adults (both men and women aged 65 years on average)  
free-of-charge "Book-Reading Meetings" for the residents of the Home for Senior Citizens  
literary evenings, exhibitions, various lectures, and numerous creative workshops

**The Home for Senior Citizens:**

lectures on health and nutrition issues, films, excursions, visits to exhibitions, self-help groups;

intensive collaboration with schools, kindergartens, school centre, cultural, and other societies (e.g., Tačke pomagačke Society, Ozarne Society etc.), youth centre, and independent performers and groups

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**The English course leader:**

- older people do not decide for education because of the lack of time and willpower; the main reason in their fear of educational process;
- she estimates the offer of education and socializing for older people in the community as modest;
- transportation should also be provided for older people - picking them up at home and taking them back at the end of the activity

Zetale is a small rural community with a little education for older people available; it is associated primarily with the contents of activities of societies.

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**Findings**

- The level of **well-being** in a municipality says **nothing** about the **educational offer** for older people in the community;
- The supply of **education for older adults depends more** on the degree of **urbanization** and individual factors;
- in more organized and long-term forms of education - **mostly women** and older people with **higher degree of education**, aged from **50 to 65** years;
- In rural municipalities with no providers of formal or informal adult education - **a considerable number of interest-oriented societies: a significant influence on the well being of older persons** who do not participate in more formalized education;

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**Findings**

- Education in societies is be more **action-oriented**, situated (Wenger 2009), informal (Lave 2009), and **problem-oriented**, taking place simultaneously with socializing and conversation;
- The **educational offer** in many municipalities **does not respond** to different **needs** of older people, it is **stereotypical and excluding**;
- The majority of education for older people is free-of-charge, and therefore the reason for low attendance must be other **obstacles**;
- in Slovenian rural municipalities there is **notable gender segregation** in the membership and participation of older people in educational activities of particular societies;
- The **providers of education for older people** in communities in Slovenia are **not well connected**: the result is imbalance in supply of education for older people, financial problems, spatial problems, etc.

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