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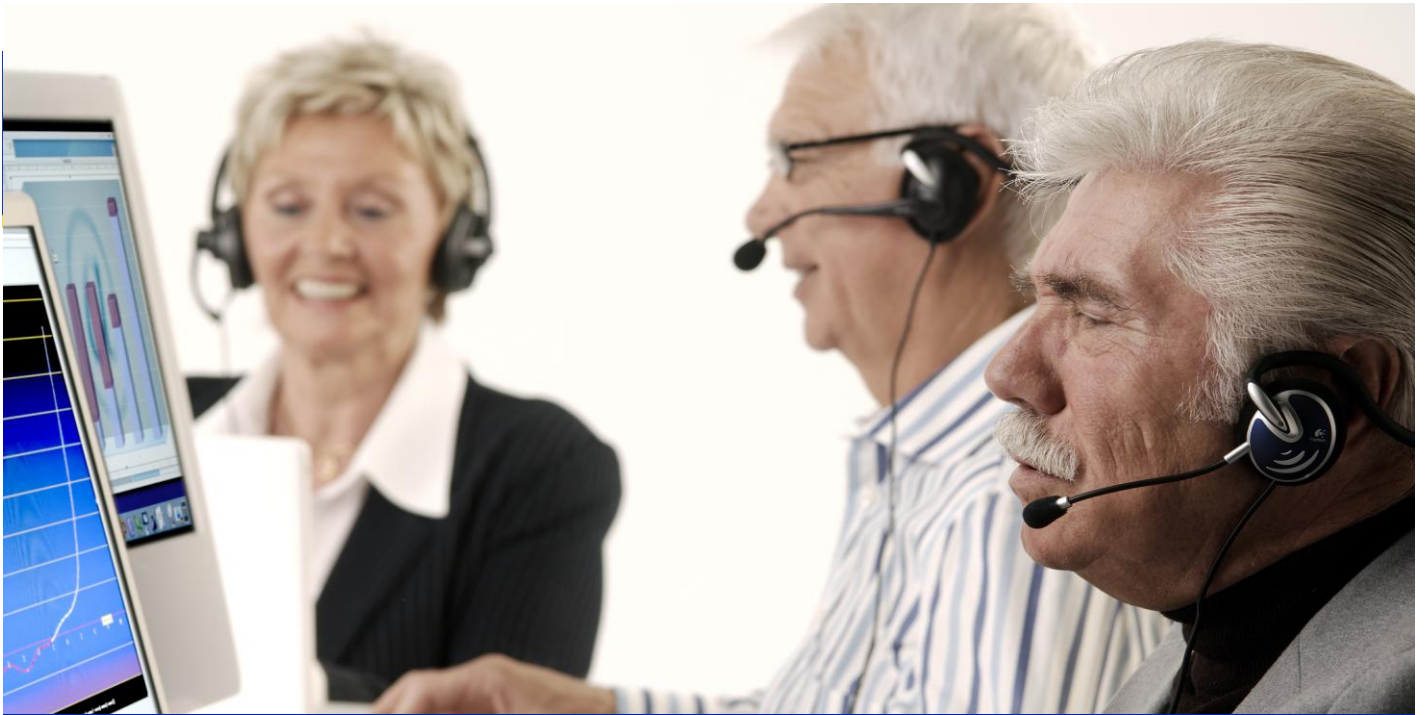
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# LOCAL ACTION PLAN

MUNICIPALITY OF MARIBOR, SLOVENIA

## 1. Introduction

With a population of over 130,000, Maribor is the second largest city in the Republic of Slovenia. It is only 18 km away from the Austrian border and has for centuries been an important junction between the north and the south, as well as between the Eastern and the Western Europe.

The Podravje region is the fifth biggest region in Slovenia, as it covers 2,170 km<sup>2</sup>. In June 2007 it had a population of 320,863, which represents 15.8% of total population of Slovenia making it the second most populated region in the country.

The number of the elderly in Podravje is higher when compared to the Slovenian national average. The Slovenian population is old (the share of population aged 65+ is relatively high, while the share of young population is modest) and the impact of population ageing is clearly slowing down the

growth of Slovenia's population. At the last census in 2002 the share of the young (0-14 years) hardly exceeded the share of persons aged 65+. This trend of the share of the third generation (i.e. older and the oldest population) surpassing the share of young generation in the total population is most obvious in the Podravje, Zasavje and Goriška statistical regions.

As mentioned, the rate of the elderly in the Podravje region is above the Slovenian national average. In July 2010 the share of people aged 50 or above was 38.0 % and had increased from 34.3 % in 2003. It was also above the Slovenian national average, which was 37.2 % in 2007 and 33.1 % in 2003.

The number of people aged 65 or above and their share among the total population of the Podravje region has been constantly increasing during recent years. Consequently the average age and the ageing index have also been rising. All these indicators for the Podravje region are above the Slovenian national average. In 2007 in the Podravje

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Region, 16.5% of the population belonged to the age group 65+, the average age was 41.8 years and the ageing index was 127.7.

Current projections show that by 2050 the share of people in the 65+ group in Slovenia will reach 31.1 % and their number will double. Another alarming indicator is the elderly dependency ratio, which represents the relationship between the elderly and the active population. In 2004 the coefficient was 21.4, increasing to 24.9 in 2010 and it is projected that it will more than double itself by 2050 (to 55.6).

The aging process will always have a significant influence on the increasing number of elderly and retired, as well as on reducing the number of economically active citizens. From year to year fewer people will contribute to social and health security of the state's social, pension and healthcare systems, increasing the share of the dependant population, which will need social and health security.

The proportion of "the active elderly" in the labour force is increasing, but employment among the age group 55 to 64 is still too low. The employment rate of older people in Slovenia is clearly on the rise, but is still below the EU average. Among the 55-64 age group, recorded in 2009 (source: EUROSTAT) only 35.3 percent are employed (32.8 in 2008 and 33.5 in 2007) due to early retirement in the nineties.

In 2006 the average retirement age in the EU was 61.2 years (EUROSTAT) and Slovenia was lagging behind with the average retirement age of 59.8 years. At the same time we must keep in mind the Lisbon Strategy objective of raising the retirement age to 65 years by 2010.

Raising the employment rate of older people in Slovenia is also one of labour market priorities and the data on employment shows slow but steady increase of employment rates of older people. In recent years the employment rate of older women increased very slowly, in 2009 it was 24.8% (2008 – 21.1%; 2007 -22.2 %), while the employment of older men was 46.4% in 2009 (2008 – 44.7%; 2007- 45.3%).

A comparison of registered unemployed persons at the end of April 2009 to the previous year shows an increase in unemployment of 32.7 % in Slovenia, 27.4 % in the area of the Regional Office Maribor and a 21.3 % increase in the area of the Municipality of Maribor. The majority of unemployed in Slovenia and in the Municipality of Maribor are male (50.7 %; 50.6 %), while in the area of the Maribor Regional Office women are prevalent with 50.5 %. In the age structure the highest share belongs to unemployed persons between 50 and 60 years (28.2 % in Slovenia and 26.5 % in the area of RO Maribor).

The reasons for the low employment rate in Slovenia lie in employment policies and the organization of the pension system which tended to promote inactivity of older workforce before 1990. Today public actors in Slovenia are more aware of the fact that the integration of older people into the labour market will constitute an important factor for ensuring economic growth in the future. As a result, strategies and policies for encouraging older workers to remain in employment (i.e. active employment strategy) have been established and the laws (Pension and Disability Act, Employment and Insurance against Unemployment Act) have been changed.

Table 1 - Employment rate for the age group 55-64 in the EU and in Slovenia (2001-2009) - Source: EUROSTAT

Total	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU27	37,5	38,2	39,9	40,5	42,4	43,5	44,7	45,6	46,0
EU15	38,4	39,8	41,5	42,5	44,2	45,3	46,6	47,4	48,0
SLO	23,4	25,9	22,7	30,1	30,7	32,6	33,5	32,8	35,3

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Male	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU27	47,3	48,2	49,7	50,1	51,6	52,7	53,9	55,0	54,8
EU15	48,3	49,8	51,3	52,0	53,3	54,1	55,3	56,2	56,2
SLO	33,0	37,4	31,8	41,2	43,1	44,5	45,3	44,7	46,4

Female	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU27	28,2	28,9	30,6	31,4	33,6	34,9	36,0	36,9	37,8
EU15	28,8	30,2	32,0	32,9	35 5	36,9	38,1	39,0	38,0
SLO	14,4	15,1	14,6	19,6	18,5	21,0	22,2	21,1	24,8

Table 2 - Employment rate in the age 55-64 in the EU and in Slovenia (2001-2009) - Source: EUROSTAT

Total	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU27	37,5	38,2	39,9	40,5	42,4	43,5	44,7	45,6	46,0
EU15	38,4	39,8	41,5	42,5	44,2	45,3	46,6	47,4	48,0
SLO	23,4	25,9	22,7	30,1	30,7	32,6	33,5	32,8	35,3

Male	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU27	47,3	48,2	49,7	50,1	51,6	52,7	53,9	55,0	54,8
EU15	48,3	49,8	51,3	52,0	53,3	54,1	55,3	56,2	56,2
SLO	33,0	37,4	31,8	41,2	43,1	44,5	45,3	44,7	46,4

Female	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
EU27	28,2	28,9	30,6	31,4	33,6	34,9	36,0	36,9	37,8
EU15	28,8	30,2	32,0	32,9	35 5	36,9	38,1	39,0	38,0
SLO	14,4	15,1	14,6	19,6	18,5	21,0	22,2	21,1	24,8

## Short introduction Active Age – Maribor.

## 2. Local Support Group and Main Thematic Area – Age and Economy

- Municipality of Maribor (2 members)
- Employment Service of Slovenia, Regional Office Maribor ( 2 members)
- Association of Societies for Social Gerontology of Slovenia (2 members)

- Eim, Human Resource Development Centre (3 members)
- Center for Domestic Help Maribor – Social Care Services at Home (1 member)
- Senior Citizens Home Tezno Maribor (1 member)
- Polutke organization (1 member)

Increasing the employment rate of older people in Slovenia is one of the priorities of the Active Aging Policy. Existing measures designed for improving employability of older unemployed persons mostly include various financial incentives for employers and part-time employment within public works. However, almost none of them are specialised for

people over 50 considering their special characteristics and needs in the tackled area.

Stimulating longer participation of older workers on the labour market is becoming a trend. For the elderly, work is an important social stimulus. Active elderly have better health and live longer.

With the intention of developing and testing new “tailor made” methods for prolonging working activity of the target group we prepared a social experimentation project that will be implemented as a pilot training programme “Active after 50” in the Podravje region (Maribor) for a small group of older unemployed people. The results of this new programme will be compared to the results of the existing measures.

### 3. Focusing on policies at regional and local level and local actors

The main public actor in the field of employment initiatives for ageing workforce is the Ministry’s of Labour, Family and Social Affairs, which is responsible for the arrangement and implementation of laws and other legislation in the area of employment, labour relations, on-job health and safety, pension and disability insurance, insurance against unemployment, employment and status of disabled persons and social inclusion.

Furthermore, Slovenia is aware of its unfavourable demographic composition and the low proportion of elderly employed and has in 2006 started to develop a national Strategy for Active Aging i.e. an active aging action plan for employment. The most important objectives of the strategy for active aging are similar to the EU objectives of approaching the Lisbon goal of an average 50% employment rate, measures to achieve the goal are defined within the strategy as follows:

- identifying the benefits of employment of elderly people;
- definition of appropriate measures for the employment of elderly people; (enforcement of appropriate modern pension legislation);
- measures focused on investing in training, lifelong learning and skills aimed at providing the elderly with higher productivity and
- 

- employability and competitiveness in the labour market;
- measures aimed at improving working conditions and occupational health and adjustment at work;
- measures to change attitudes of employers and the general public toward the elderly (promotion of employment of senior citizens).

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia adopted Measures to Promote Active Ageing on 23rd September 2010. The document provides information about measures regarding active ageing and represents an upgrade of the Strategy for Active ageing by 2010 (solidarity, cohabitation and quality ageing of the population), which was adopted by the Government of the Republic of Slovenia in 2006.

The main goal and purpose of the measures is to increase the average share of employment of the elderly aged between 55 and 64 to 43.5% as stated in the Operative Programme of Human Resources Development 2007-2013 while also following the goal of raising the employment rate of population aged between 20 and 64 to 75%.

The document consists of three parts, which include the following measures:

- Measures for the unemployed aged above 45 – among key programmes for a faster inclusion of elderly unemployed are public works, subsidizing of employment, assistance programs for job-seeking, institutionalised training and introduction to work at employers, subsidizing of self-employment and expected employment of the elderly within other programmes of active employment policy; an additional measure foresees a better, quicker and more effective processing of elderly unemployed at the Employment Service of Slovenia.
- Measures for elderly employed include measures for training and education and measures for improvement of work conditions, occupational health as well as training and competitiveness of elderly on the labour market. Among other important measures of promoting and raising awareness there is also the promotion of culture of prevention and health at work.
- Measures directed at changing the attitude of employers and the broader public are horizontal measures for promotion of active ageing and include a communication strategy and an action

- plan of the Employment Service of Slovenia for a promotional campaign for employment of the elderly that will be aimed at awareness raising of employers for employment of elderly, increasing the competences of the employed at Employment Service of Slovenia for counselling the elderly job seekers, informational campaigns for small and medium sized companies, influencing the awareness of the broader public towards the elderly in the society and at measures for improving the self image of elderly.

Among additional measures there are measures of personal additional work, mini jobs and a key emphasis on modernisation of pension legislation as an important element of active ageing.

Measures and programmes of the document mentioned above will be implemented in Slovenia in the coming years (2011 and later). Almost all of the measures described in the above mentioned document are at the beginning of development phase.

Currently most direct activities that are being implemented in Slovenia to promote the employment of older people are carried out within the measures that raise employability of unemployed people, stimulate employers to create new jobs and employ disadvantaged groups, and within training and education for employment. Support of re-entering the labour market mostly involves various financial incentives for employers (subsidies for employment and reimbursement for contributions that are rather non-simulative). However, there is also some counselling done and measures like public work programme and part-time employment are also carried out.

Participating in leisure, social, cultural and spiritual activities in the community, as well as with their family, allows older people to continue to exercise their competences, to enjoy respect and esteem and to maintain or establish supportive and caring relationships.

Slovene elderly are active in various spheres of activity: from helping their children families, volunteering in the communities, public engagement, housekeeping, personal hobbies, amateurish work, pensioner's organisations, political

party, and self help groups to the Third Age University.

## The Elderly on the Labour Market

Concrete measures included in the Slovenian Strategy for active ageing (annual action plans) are still in the process of development. Nevertheless, in recent years we have started a number of financed active labour market programmes/measures for the unemployed in the area of carrier planning and job searching, but none of them specialised for people over 50, although they have special needs in the tackled area.

The acquired abilities of the elderly could present a solid basis for future development; by accepting their experience and wisdom they can be actively involved in improving life of the society as a whole. Therefore they should be given the opportunity to carry out a job as long as they wish or are able to as well as access to educational and training programmes since the encouragement of elderly to cooperate represents the key element of active ageing.

In order to improve the situation of the elderly on the labour market in the region it is necessary to improve awareness raising and inform employers as well as the wider public about the meaning and added value of older population. This way lifelong learning plays an important role that is too often overlooked. Inclusion of population into lifelong learning represents a requirement for competitiveness and productivity of each individual on the labour market within the full life cycle.

If we want to activate the unemployed aged above 50 and motivate them for active employment, LLL and active ageing we need to adapt the topics of the programme to their characteristics/needs and the needs of the Slovenian labour market and demographic situation.

Slovenia also has no mechanisms for promotion and implementation of stress-free and gradual retirement.

The employment rate of the elderly in Slovenia is rather low compared to other EU countries due to recent employment policies and the organisation of

the pension system. Existing measures that raise employability of older unemployed people mostly include various financial incentives for employers, but also part-time employment and public work scheme. However there are no measures designed specifically for elderly that would be based on their characteristics.

During the discussions with citizen groups it was clear that there is no real tradition of employing retired persons although few of them did practice part time work - because of their affection for and connection to the profession and as a soft transition from work to retirement. Such employment is sometimes also difficult due to the legislative obstacles.

## Inclusion into Society and Social Life

The elderly are included in various cultural, sports and leisure programmes that are provided in this sphere by non-governmental organisations for the elderly, including the numerically strongest Society of Pensioners of Slovenia and the Third Age University; they are also active in numerous other organisations, but the percentage of elderly in their activities promoting active social life is still too low.

Participation of seniors in various learning activities depends mostly on the living arrangements and social networks, but also on the participant fee required. Activities that are free of charge are particularly attractive.

Although Slovenia has some history and practice of intergenerational cooperation, there is a need to improve the intergenerational communication and relations.

There are no direct links (for consultation, evaluation, planning...) between the local communities/municipalities and the elderly, but the municipalities still finance and support programmes and activities for elderly.

Slovenia still lacks a proper system of preparation for old age that would allow the elderly to adapt to changes in life and develop new life styles during this age as an affiliation to the generational life style. It does not define extra roles for older people, doesn't have instructions for productive ageing and cooperation in social life. This vacuum then has a negative influence on cross-generational relations.

The elderly on the labour market are as a rule disadvantaged compared to other age groups. Older people aged above 50 represent 34.9% of the population nationwide or 32.7% in the Maribor region. Considering that the share of the elderly among the active working population is around 23%, they are 55% more likely to be exposed to risk. At the same time the share of the elderly the newly employed is 11.7% in Slovenia and 14.0% in Maribor. Therefore this age group is receiving the benefits of positive discrimination by institutions of the labour market.

The first positive discrimination is special consideration of unemployed job seekers at the public employment office with a preferential personal treatment and more intensive personal counselling. This approach is the consequence of larger accumulated problems on the one hand and on the other hand a consequence of lower ICT literacy among older people which restricts the use of self-service forms of informing and basic counselling. Despite tailored work with the elderly, the number of new employments of older people is lower than expected. Admittedly, the share of new employments is slightly higher in Maribor, which, considering the city's higher unemployment rate and weaker economic situation, demonstrates the ability to achieve better results through targeted work, even though these results are not satisfactory yet. To increase the employment rate of older people, the public employment office mostly utilises additional referrals of older people to work places regardless of the employers' stated preferences.

Among the Active Employment Policy measures, those intended for older job seekers are mostly aimed at encouraging employers to employ older people and at increasing employment integration and short-term forms of additional training and obtaining formal knowledge.

These measures in Slovenia are subsidies for employers for encouraging employment of hard-to-place workers in the amount of 4,000 EUR, among which the elderly aged above 50 are the primary group.

The most efficient measure for reintegration of older people into work is public work. Public work is an active employment policy measure and a form of special employment relationship. It is aimed at the most vulnerable groups at the labour market with

the elderly aged above 50 having reduced entry requirements and, unlike other groups, the opportunity of repeated participation in the one-year programme. That the programme is successful in achieving its goals is evident from the share of older people aged above 50, which is 43.5% in Slovenia and 55.7% in Maribor.

Based on the presented data it is evident that operation of public institutions on the labour market and active employment policy measures are not achieving the desired results for the elderly group. Another important factor are changes to the labour market. The government of the Republic of Slovenia passed two acts that will in the future have a significant impact on the older people's chances of employment. On 1st January 2012 The Social Entrepreneurship Act will come into force, which is among others aimed at employing people aged 55 and above. Another new measure for increasing economic integration of older people are also the so called mini jobs, a new form of employment (enabling an annual income of up to 6,000 EUR and allowing up to 720 hours of work), which are available to students, the unemployed and the pensioners.

In addition to legislative solutions, changes pertaining to employers are required in Slovenia. In the last several years the state has relatively quickly raised the retirement age threshold for men and women alike. In the last two decades this threshold was raised by 8 years, which the employers failed to adapt to and did not change and create work places for older workers. According to our opinion, this is currently the most important labour market challenge in Slovenia if we want to significantly increase the inclusion of older people into the labour market.

The most important document in the field of ageing in Slovenia is The Strategy of care for the elderly until 2010 – solidarity, good intergenerational relations and quality ageing of the population. The strategy of care for the elderly until 2010 – Solidarity, good intergenerational relations and quality ageing of the population is the Republic of Slovenia's answer to the issue of population ageing and European requirements to provide for new solidarity among generations. The main purpose of the strategy is to coordinate and connect the work of the competent Government Ministries with that of the economy and the public third sector in order to

increase solidarity and the quality of mutual coexistence among the third, middle and young generation. Furthermore, it aims to provide quality ageing and care of the rapidly growing percentage of the third generation.

The Slovenian strategy of care for the elderly till 2010 – Solidarity, good intergenerational relations and quality ageing of the population is based on the findings of this EU document. At the same time it is derived from the up-to-date gerontological knowledge. 40 years ago Slovenia was among the first to have established a gerontological institution. Now a new chance has presented itself for it to become one of the leaders in Europe due to the strategy of solidarity, good intergenerational relations and quality ageing of the population, as well as an exporter of knowledge and experience acquired from this field of sustainable development that is coming to the fore.

The second section of the strategy determines its global objectives in the framework of sustainable development of human resources for all three generations of Slovenia under conditions of an ageing society. The following are determined as priority areas requiring special attention: care for establishing conditions for active integration of the third generation into the process of work and employment, care for socially acceptable and financially sustainable pensions, implementation of insurance for long-term care, care for carrying out of services and social security programs in the field of ageing and good intergenerational relations, care for preventive strengthening of health of the elderly, for their medical treatment and for stability of the health insurance system, care for upbringing and education of the young people and the middle generation so as to provide quality coexistence with the elderly and to ensure proper lifelong learning as well as education of the elderly, guidelines in the field of culture, particularly media, for cooperating in taking care of the growth of new solidarity between the generations and for the quality humane survival of the society with a large share of the old population, guidelines in research and science in the field of ageing, age and good intergenerational relations, guidelines in spatial planning for both the housing and public regulations that shall be appropriate for life and work of the old people, development of modern means of communication as close as possible to the old people and ensuring their participation in everyday use of these means,

development of means of transport that will allow mobility and participation of the old people as well as care for efficient protection of the old people against abuse and violence.

What follows is an overview of the situation connected to public care for good intergenerational relations and quality ageing, as well as the foreseen strategic measures in the twelve fields. They are: work and employment, pension and disability insurance system, long-term care, social security, family, health care, upbringing and education, culture and information, science and research, housing policy and spatial planning, transport and personal and other safety of the elderly.

In the fourth section of the document you can find the guidelines for implementing the strategy and for designing and implementation of sector programs for quality ageing and good intergenerational relations.

There is also a commitment to establish a Council for Solidarity, Good Intergenerational Relations and Quality Ageing of the Population in Slovenia. In Slovenia this Council was actually established and it combines all relevant factors in this area including the representatives of the government, the target group, carers, NGOs and the science sphere. The president of the Council is the representative of the NGO. A new strategy is currently being prepared.

## 4. Problem Analysis - General

The most important act in the field of social security which also covers the ageing of the population is the Social Security Act.

According to the Social Security Act, services intended for care, inclusion and integration aimed at vulnerable groups are provided as:

- public social welfare services;
- social welfare programs/projects;
- financial benefits: social assistance;
- tasks by other Acts and regulations prescribed to the service providers in the field of social welfare services to prevent and reduce social exclusion.

Social welfare services: first social aid, personal help, help to the family, institutional care, guidance, protection and employment under special conditions, help for workers in enterprises, institutions and at other employers.

### Social welfare programs

Programmes aimed at resolving social distress of individuals and different groups: persons with long-term mental health problems, persons with disabilities, drug users and alcoholics, homeless persons, children, adults or families aiming to resolve inter-personal problems, violence victims (maternity homes and shelters for women and children).

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased awareness of life-long learning, which enables elderly workers to constantly improve their competences.</li> <li>- Increased awareness of the challenges which an ageing population and workforce present.</li> <li>- Subsidies for retraining and education of elderly</li> <li>- Subsidies for employing the unemployed elderly.</li> <li>- <b>Increased awareness of long-life personal-ity development (meaning: awareness of one's role in different periods of life, awareness of one's own potentials and advantages, improving the positive self image, realizing the importance of health – physical, mental and social,....)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Employers prefer younger workers due to their ability to adapt and acquire additional knowledge.</li> <li>- Older workers usually earn more than younger workers and have more benefits (vacation days).</li> <li>- <b>Different ways of thinking between generations can cause difficulties in working together.</b></li> <li>- <b>Older workers are facing prejudices from employers and younger workers.</b></li> <li>- Lack of competences in the field of ICT among older workers</li> <li>- Older workers have not adapted to characteristics of knowledge economy (constant learning, more frequent change of jobs, faster</li> </ul>

	<p>pace)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of incentives for companies to stimulate older workers to retire later.</li> <li>- <b>Older workers usually have more health problems.</b></li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Preparation of Slovene Strategy for active ageing.</li> <li>- Lack of younger workers on the future labour market due to demographic trends.</li> <li>- Development of innovative forms and connections at local level for implementing the programmes for combating discrimination and promoting social inclusion of the elderly.</li> <li>- Removal of incentives for early retirement.</li> <li>- Development of policies which will stimulate later retirement.</li> <li>- <b>Development for new policies and incentives for tackling the challenges of an ageing population and workforce.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Existing social systems with their activities and structure will not be appropriate for the growing needs of the ageing population.</b></li> <li>- Increased financial burden for the workforce as higher spending for pensions, health care and social services might lead to friction between generations and social exclusion of the older workforce.</li> <li>- Labour market will be more open to foreign workers – more (cheaper) competition.</li> <li>- Technological development will be even faster, which might put additional pressure on older workers to keep their competences up to date.</li> </ul>

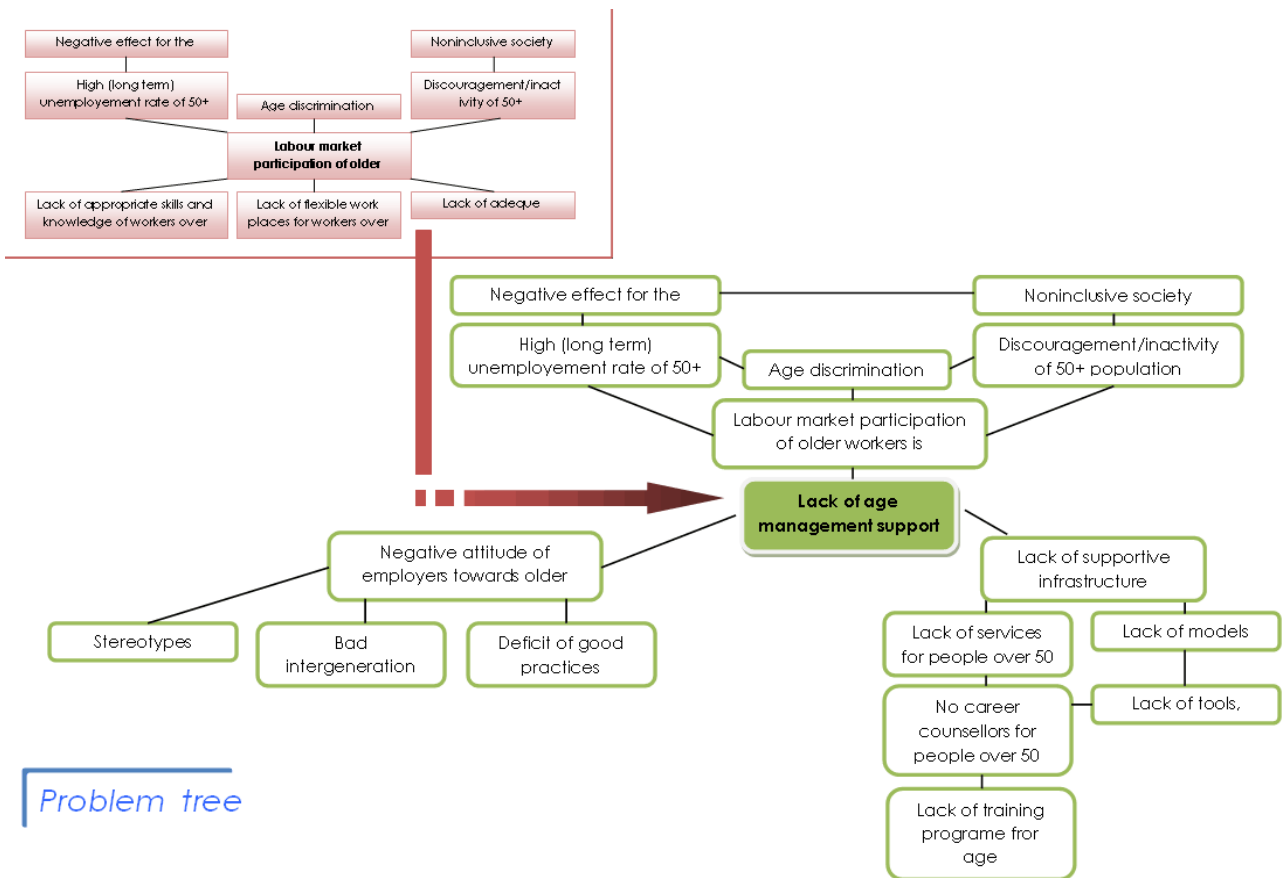


Figure 1 – Problem Tree

## 5. Guidelines

The Maribor core LSG group carried out its activities for the whole duration of the Active AGE project in all three fields:

- Age and economy
- Age and care services and
- Age and insecurity.

We have tried to shed new light on the problems and to verify the existing best practice cases in all the mentioned fields in our local environment. Several best practice cases were also presented to the EU partners of the Active Age project: case study Care for the elderly, and case study – presentation of an innovative and well organised program “Self-Help Groups for the Elderly”.

### Main goals of the Maribor LSG Age and Economy

1. For easing the transition we suggest organizing workshops where individuals who will be retiring within the period of 1-2 years will be provided with information on what retirement means on a social, personal and economic level and with help on how to plan post-retirement activities. Among the planned activities are work activities, which will enable them to stay active after they retire and reduce the difference in economic status.
2. Demonstrating the necessity of additional training for unemployed people aged above 50 in order to activate their potentials (mental, motivation, communication, innovation, problem

solving capacity, adapting to new situations, work organisation and planning,...) with the purpose of identifying, strengthening and realizing how to use their social and generic competences, enabling them employment and active integration to the labour market as well as social inclusion;

3. Active education and training of unemployed individuals aged above 50 and of employed individuals who are 1 or 2 years away from reaching retirement age in combination with a system of social and economic voluntarism.
4. Using information on programmes and results of pilot projects in the field of active ageing to influence suitable policies at the regional and local level and in turn directly influencing changes of established employment patterns in the government, non-profit and profit economic sectors.

We particularly focused on the field of age and economy, especially on innovative “softer” forms of lifelong learning with a special emphasis on a comprehensive development of personalities. Through the pilot project Social Experimentation we tried to prove that in addition to existing training mechanisms for job seekers regular lifelong personality development programmes have to be implemented in all fields (physical and mental health) and activities must be encouraged in all spheres of life (social, health, cultural, economic, ...)

## 6. The proposed actions : objectives, activities and target

### LOCAL PILOT PROGRAMME “ACTIVE AFTER 50”

#### LOCAL ACTION RESEARCH GROUP

- Employment Service of Slovenia, Regional Office Maribor (2 members)
- Municipality of Maribor (1 member)

- Regional Labour Foundation of Podravje (1 member)
- Association of Societies for Social gerontology of Slovenia (1 member)
- Eim, Human Resource Development Centre (2 members)
- External evaluator (1 member)

### Objective, activities and targets

In spite of all the policies at the regional and local level and other mechanisms, there are still no measures specially tailored to unemployed people over 50, considering their special characteristics and

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needs for active integration to the labour market. With the intention of developing and testing new “tailor made” methods for prolonging working activity of the target group, we prepared a social experimentation project that will be implemented as a pilot training programme “Active after 50”

in the Podravje region (Maribor) for a small group of older unemployed people. The results of this new programme will be compared to the results of A Job Club, financed from the Active Employment Policy, but not exclusively intended for older unemployed.

	Pilot group - Social experiment	Control group - A Job Club
goals	to strengthen the skills of the participants they need to participate more actively in active ageing and the integration into the labour market,  to assist and support the social integration of the society in general	help members find a suitable job as quickly as possible
duration	6 months (240 hrs.)	3 months (240 hrs.)
method of work	Orientation phase: During the first month workshop 3 times per week Modular phase: in the next 5 months group meetings twice a week individual work at home or in the field	Meetings every workday for 4 hrs. First 12 days as workshop, the remaining time as individual work at the contractor
content	Topics related to employment, maintaining active job participation, active ageing and social integration into the greater society	The emphasis is active job finding
number of participants	15 (9 women, 6 men)	14 (8 women, 6 men)
average age	57	52
rate of education	Elementary school – 2 Vocational school – 7 High school – 5 College- 1	Elementary school - 4 Vocational school – 2 High school – 6 College – 1 University – 1

## Aim of the programme

The intent of the pilot training programme was to activate the target group’s (50+) potentials (mental, motivation, communication, innovation, problem solving capacity, adapting to new situations, work organization and planning,...) with the purpose of identifying, strengthening and realizing how to use their social and generic competences, enabling them employment and active integration to the labour market as well as social inclusion and

prolonging their active role on the labour market as well as offering them help and support in achieving social inclusion in the society.

## Programme Objectives

Training programme goals that we want the participants to achieve:

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- becoming aware of the meaning of life and of their role in different periods of life;
- becoming aware of their own potentials and advantages;
- developing the ability for recognising their needs, motives and personal values;
- expanding their positive self image and relation to the environment;
- realizing the importance of health and ways for maintaining good physical, mental and social fitness;
- recognizing methods and techniques for effective learning;
- learning how to cope with losses, manage stress and addictions;
- understanding the meaning of active life and strengthening their social network;
- improving their communication skills;
- developing their individual communication style in the information society;
- recognizing methods of interpersonal conflict solving;
- becoming aware of the importance of intergenerational dialogue in the world of work;
- knowing how to use computer;
- knowing how to search for information about possibilities of active social inclusion independently, whether on the topic of work or any other topic;
- knowing how to advocate the benefits of the employment of older people
- identifying their specific work competences (capabilities, skills, knowledge and expertise, behaviour and creativity) for active employment and integration into the labour market;
- improving their role in the group / team and environment;
- using their personal promotional folder;
- following their activity objectives in regard to work and social inclusion;
- following their life-long objectives and consciously strengthening their work and personality potential;
- using skills for proactive integration into the labour market;
- accepting responsibility for improving their own employment opportunities;
- strengthening their competences with the intent of employment and prolonging their working activity on the labour market;
- knowing how to search for support in their social networks.

## 6.1.1.2. Indicators of output

## Programme implementation details

From May to October 2010 the following steps were made:

- preparation of the pilot (content, topics, methods...)
- production and distribution of promotion brochures
- preparation of materials for the participants – a folder for worksheets containing:
  - a manual on achievements and challenges
  - selection of the participants – presentation of the programme at the Employment Service of Slovenia, Regional Office in September 2010

From October 2010 to February 2011 the Programme was implemented:

1. Orientation phase was carried out in October 2010 and lasted for 12 days, 4 hours daily (a total of 48 hours).

2. Modular phase lasted 5 months (a total of 106 hours, 80 hours of this as teamwork on the premises of the activity holder twice a week and 26 hours as individual activity at home and in the field).

- 1<sup>st</sup> modular phase: November 2010
  - The topic of this phase was: „Employment“
- 2<sup>nd</sup> modular phase: December 2010
  - The topic of this phase was: „Communication“
- 3<sup>rd</sup> modular phase: January 2011
- The topic of this phase was: „Health“
- 4<sup>th</sup> modular phase: February 2011
- The topic of this phase was: „Active ageing“
- 5<sup>th</sup> modular phase: March 2011
- The topic of this phase was: „Lifelong learning“

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3. Individual work with participants (once a week approx. 4 hours in 5 months, totalling 74 hours).
4. Conclusion of the programme lasted 12 hours.

## Training Methods:

- Cooperative learning methods: presentations, group problem solving, case studies, brainstorming, self-reflection
- Group learning methods: working in smaller groups, discussion, role playing, simulation, group projects/assignments, self-help groups
- Individual coaching
- Visiting the institutions and field events.

## Process Monitoring

Progress monitoring was based on the qualitative method (Spiderweb), which was implemented at programme start by examining existent competences in connection to the themes/subjects under consideration and after conclusion of the programme by repeated examination of the same competences. As a tool in this method questionnaire and interview were used.

## 7. Social experiment – lessons learned

### By participants

Each person has written an interview for a newspaper and equipped it with attractive photos which reminded them of a specific item. The newspaper was used as a means for qualitative evaluation.

- friendly companionship
- the opportunity to exchange views/perspectives
- increased/empowered social network
- mutual assistance in establishing contacts with potential employers;
- a relaxing and active way of working
- the possibility of equal participation
- well-prepared training materials
- many new, useful and interesting contents.

### By mentors

After each meeting the mentors prepared a brief report on the impressions and observations which could be summarized in:

- A group of 15 people is appropriate for an interactive participation as a method of self-help group work.
- Through the above mentioned method, a self-help group, we were able to ensure the involvement of each participant, mutual listening, respect of what the group members have said, acceptance of differences, rich and frank exchange of experiences of group members, which reinforces the sense of security and confidence.
- At the end of the programme we have observed notable changes in the participants of the program, which are visible in the way they think about themselves, their problems and obstacles.
- The group members have strengthened their skills for successful performance on the labour market and increased the intensity of job search (writing job applications/job offers, better performance at personal interviews, inclusion into the database of employment agencies, networking etc).
- It is obvious from daily individual activities that the participants started to use modern approaches to job searching (application form, curriculum vitae, improved communication for employers, personal presentation folder,...), which shows that they have more confidence in making contacts with employers and thus a more positive attitude.

## 8. Instead of conclusions

The programme is not fully evaluated yet and will finish at the end of 2011. We predict that additional experimental pilot projects in the following two years will be able to extend best practice cases to employment programmes not only in Maribor, but also nationwide.

In the case of favourable results of the evaluation programme "Active after 50", it will be proposed as one of the Active labour market policy programmes which would ensure its regular implementation and systematic provision of funding

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## 9. Resources, timetable and budget

Proposed budget for implementation LAP Maribor

	2012	2013	
Municipality of Maribor	10.000	30.000	40.000
Employment Service of Slovenia	50.000	70.000	120.000
Eim, Human Resource Dev. Centre (EU funds)	70.000	80.000	150.000
Association of Societies for Social gerontology	5.000	10.000	15.000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>125.000</b>	<b>190.000</b>	<b>315.000</b>

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