

Improvement of IT Skills of Seniors at Risk of Loss of Job, Sole Traders and Small Entrepreneurs

**ESF project coordinated by the
Institute of Life-Long Learning of the
Slovak University of Technology in
Bratislava, Slovakia**

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SLOVAK UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY IN BRATISLAVA



Slovakia

Independence: January 1, 1993
(from Czecho-Slovakia)

EU member since: May 1. 2004

€ introduced: January 1. 2009

Area: 49 030 sq.km

Population: 5 429 763_[est 2010]

Population density: 107.5/sq.km

Capital: Bratislava (441 453)

GDP: 16 281\$_[est 2010]

Unemployment 14 %

Universities 21 (+6 private)

Education is basicly free

Slovak University of Technology

- <http://www.stuba.sk>
- public, non - profit
- leading university in the field of technology and the second largest university in Slovakia
- started 1938 based on reputation of first mining academy(1762) with more than 18,000 students now
- providing a full range of technological education at both under-graduate, graduate and post-graduate levels
- 7 faculties



Institute of Life-long Learning

- 7 fte employees, 200 lectors/tutors, 3000 LLL students (largest university ILL in Slovakia)
- established in 1998, comprise 5 division:
 - Engineering education Centre
 - Further education Centre,
 - **University of the third age,**
 - Language Centre,
 - French Centre



Recent projects of ILLL STU

- 2008 – 2010 Professional MBA for Automotive Industry
- 2009 Project: PAPILL- Policies And Practices In Lifelong Learning
- 2008 – 2009 LLP – language training
- 2006-2008 Neighbours -
- 2005-2006 ESF Prointegra.sk - Integration of risk groups of children and youth (into classrooms)
- 2005-2006 ESF Career Counselling (karieroveporadenstvo.sk)
- 2004-2008 Socrates Thence/EULearn/ - European Thematic Network of University Lifelong Learning
- 2004-2006 EU e-learning @lf@-bet@ - e-learning for immigrants
- 2004-2006 ESF Seniors Online
- 2005-2007 Socrates Grundtvig Sen-Net - Seniors in Network
- **2005-2007 ESF Improving of IT skills Risk of Loss of Job, Sole Traders and Small Entrepreneurs**
- 2004-2006 E-learning at STU
- ..



Skills for seniors

- In Slovakia there **is not a second chance** special study opportunities at secondary schools or universities.
- Students of the older age are treated same as regular students. Study at university is possible in face-to-face or in a distance mode. Those studying in distance may be (and are) **charged** by universities. Therefore only **few** students of older age are studying in regular studies.
- Provisions for seniors are organized as so called “interest study”





Education offered to seniors in Slovakia

1. **cultural, social events** with educational aspects organized ad hoc by seniors themselves (local clubs of seniors or through associations of seniors / pensioners / retired) or by NGOs or by other institutions,
2. “**Academies of seniors**” organized by cities with cooperation with seniors (do not have entry requirements, have different forms, not strictly regulated, supported = basically free for seniors, not regular, not regulated, without statistics or association)
3. **Universities of the Third Age (U3A)** – organized only at universities according to university rules, entry requirements: finished secondary education, age at least 45 for women (not unified at all U3As), 50 for men = 10 years before retirement

Universities of the Third Age

- The first U3A was established the year 1990 at Comenius University in Bratislava and became the largest one.
- The Association of Universities of the Third Age (ASUTV) of Slovakia was established on the 1st of December 1994.
- Today all 13 U3As (from app 30 universities in Slovakia 13 has U3A) are members. U3As are in 11 major Slovak cities



Study and Participants

- Participants are not considered university students and certificates they are receiving are not equivalent of the degrees or diplomas. Rules are adopted to and by individual universities.
- Rules are similar in following:
 - UTAs offer a three-year program.
 - The study plan of each year usually consist of 14 three-hour lectures presented each fortnight.
 - During the first year students have basic lectures in each of the offered discipline.
 - The second and third year is devoted to the study of optional disciplines and students enrol in the study of specialised subjects, where lectures may be supplemented by workshops, seminars, field work, field trips etc.



Study subjects at U3As

- are ranging according to the focus of each university and are supplementing each others also according to the regional needs.
- U3A at Comenius University in Bratislava is offering 45 mostly humanities oriented subjects (<http://www.cdruk.sk/blade/index.php?c=1607&studijne-odbory-pre-skolsky-rok-2010-2011>).
- University of Technology Bratislava 7 technology oriented subjects (http://www.stuba.sk/new/generate_page.php?page_id=1350), University of economy Bratislava – economy subjects, Agricultural University of Nitra – agriculture related subjects. There are students who studied more subjects at different universities also due to good coordination through the Association (basic – first year of study is recognized by all U3As mutually).



Financing U3As

- Government does not provide direct financing to any kind of education of seniors directly. Negotiation about the financial support of U3As (2010) with the Ministry of Education initiated by the National Plan for protection of Seniors was not successful up to now. Students (participants) of U3A has to pay for the study.
- Fees are ranging according to the support of the university, sponsors and also according to the subjects and status of the senior (working/retired) from 25 to 80 € per year.



Additional activities and legislation

- There are also special / additional activities organized within U3As like alumni clubs, intensive language courses, wellness and sightseeing trips etc.
- There is no specific legislation about education of seniors, however it is mentioned in the National Plan for protection of Seniors (in preparation as a Plan for Active Aging) and in the Law about Lifelong Learning (586/2009 Col.)

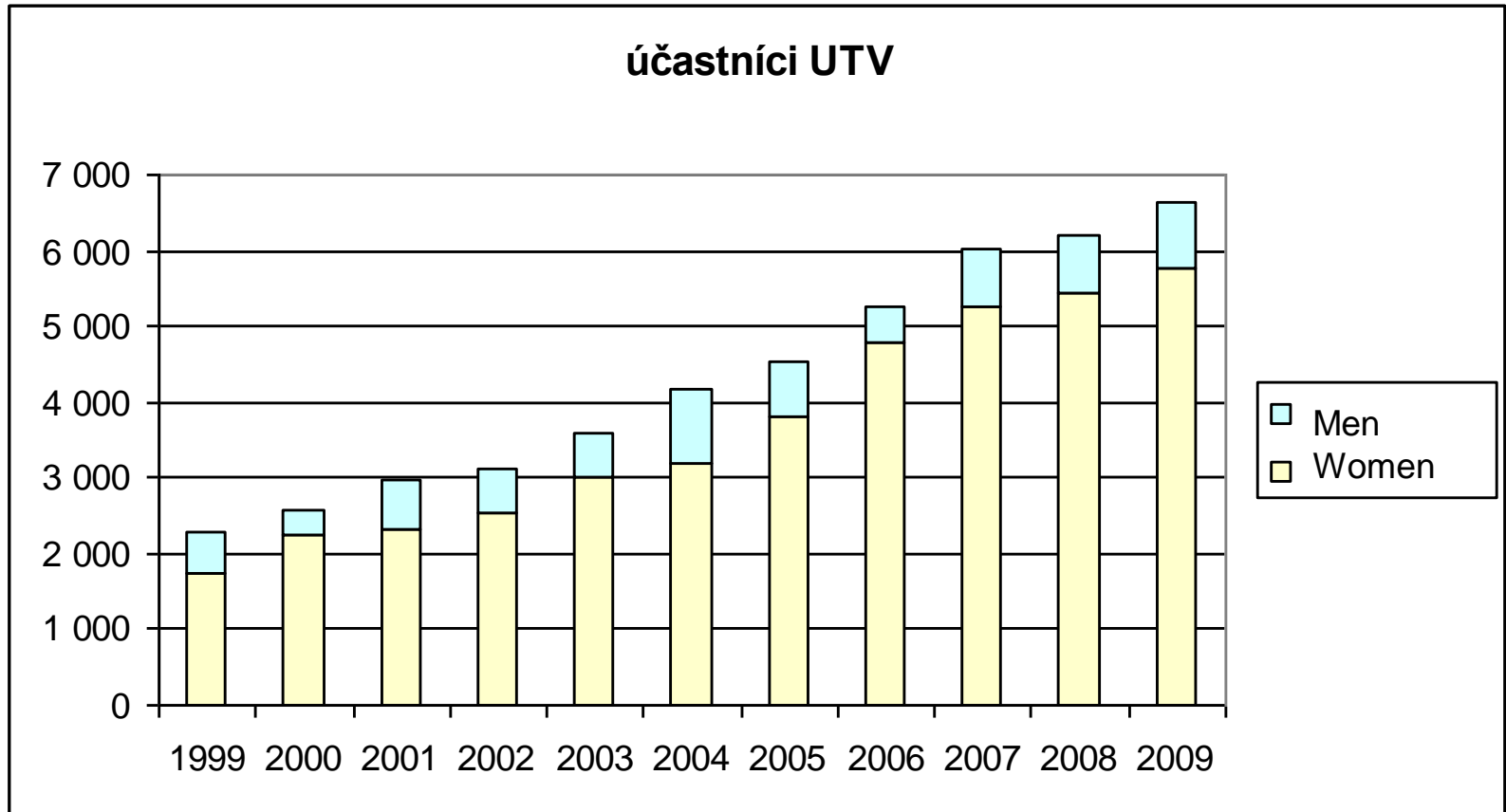


Number of U3A students

- In the year 2009 there 6652 senior students at U3A. From those 5762 women (87%) and 890 men.
- In last ten years the number of students was tripled (from 2 268 students in 1999). Students have to be reported to the Ministry of education (Institute UIPS). Statistics are ranging to the year 1999. Through **all years the number of students was growing**. All the time there was a **majority of women** ranging from 76% to 91%.
- In some universities (especially Comenius University) there is a waiting list of applicants. Some applicants on the base “first subscribed first in the study” has to wait more then a year to became a student.



Number of U3A participants in Slovakia



Source : Separát štatistickej ročenky školstva SR 1999 – 2007.
Ústav informácií a prognóz školstva, Bratislava 1999 – 2007.



University of the Third Age of the Slovak University of technology: Study subjects:

- ***Environment:***
History of Architecture, Architecture and Urban Planning, Garden and Landscape Architecture,
- ***Healthy Lifestyle:***
Food and Health, Care about Physical and Mental Health,
- ***ICT:***
Computers, Internet, Practical Utilization of Computers.



Improvement of IT Skills of Seniors at Risk of Loss of Job, Sole Traders and Small Entrepreneurs Project

- Partners: 2 universities
- Duration: 24 months (2005-2007)
- Budget: 42 000 € (95% grant + 5% own contribution) from Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of SR
- Aim: seniors will acquire, respectively improve their IT skills and thus increase their professionalism and competitiveness on the labour market
- Target audience: Seniors of age higher than 10 years before retirement (>45 for women, >50 for men). Focus on those in risk of losing job.



Specific project objectives

- Improving the IT skills of persons whose job place is at the risk because of low or zero IT skills;
- Improving support activities: consulting and advisory services, summer school;
- Improving the quality of IT education and to adopt/customize the content to the needs of the labour market and small business;
- Improvement of computer equipment and development of study materials to assure sustainability of the project.



Project realisation and outcomes

- 3 courses (Computers, Internet, Practical Utilization of Computers) ran for 2x2 semesters (length of one course app. 80 f-t-f hours)
- Participants: 564 , graduates: 229.
- Senior senior's lecturers
- Introduction of project based learning
- Small group consultations (tutorials)
- Accreditation as LLL course
- Study materials specially adopted to needs of seniors: glossary, computers, internet, office application
- Seminar/Workshop



Impact

- Survey, research -> new project:
<http://neighbours.spsa.sk/> Neighbours – Promoting internet literacy of elderly people by creating virtual places to come together with European neighbours
- Saved jobs (example www.bipocasio.sk)
- Sustainable / still growing but with higher fees
- Regular workshops/seminars in June
- Blog maintained by senior
tretiweeknalinke.blogspot.com/
- Education and IT part of negotiated National plan for active aging



Thank you for your attention!
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Problems

- This was one of the first ESF projects – there was not prepared financial manual before the start of the project and during the project it was changed.
- Post-financing with delays of years caused that we were able to spend only 23 040 €.
- Priorities were not publicly discussed and changed by the Ministry (e.g. in favour of spec. groups).
- Not very transparent procedures.
- Practical decision making left to the Executive agency without check of the outcomes, just checking financials.



Aging of population in general

- In industrial countries sufficient food supply, sanitation, reduce disease, improving medical care, social inclusion (welfare) and promotion of healthy lifestyle are increasing life spans – **people are living longer**
- Birth rates fall due to access to [contraception](#), increases in wages, [urbanization](#), a reduction in [subsistence agriculture](#), an increase in the status and education of women, a reduction in the value of children's work, an increase in parental investment in the education of children and other social changes together with the change of value system (career orientation, ..), financial insecurity (crisis, loans, ..) - **less children are born**
- Previous two factors cause ageing of population. In most countries the **ratio of active/dependant** people is decreasing and has to be addressed by family, health, tax, social systems and respective policies



Aging and a social system – response to decrease of ratio of active/dependant

Variables:

1. Age of retirement (now in Slovakia women in average 59 and men 62) with continual increase to 2019 to 62 for both sexes (Problem: age limit of effective participation in the work (health , ability to work..))
2. High of rents
3. Performance of economy – creation of social funds (Slovakia I (state), II (private) III (individual) pillars)



Economical problems caused by aging

1. Birth rates may drop to well below replacement level leading to a shrinking population
2. Renters (together with young families with small children) are now most vulnerable to risk of poverty
3. 2019/2020 50% of voters will be over 50. Changes will be politically costly





Veková štruktúra obyvateľstva SR a vekové generácie

