



Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013  
Leonardo da Vinci, Multilateral Projects Transfer of Innovation  
PROMOTING NATURE BY TRAINING NATURE INTERPRETERS



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Education and Culture DG  
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## Instead of a foreword



*»The Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning assesses the training of people to conduct quality guiding in nature as of great importance for Slovenia. Preserved nature is namely a great resource that needs to be cared for and promoted. Qualified nature and landscape guides have an important role; they can act as a link between nature conservation and nature-balanced development. This kind of training is an opportunity for the people in protected areas as well as contribution to developing a quality nature related tourist attraction. Therefore we shall continue supporting activities of the Goričko Landscape Park in this field and help in the efforts to recognise this training formally.«*

**Dr. Katarina Groznik Zeiler**, Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning



*»Introduction of the training for nature and landscape guides is not only a big step for the Goričko Landscape Park but for all protected areas of Slovenia; it is an opportunity to provide training jointly and on the basis of commonly agreed standards. These nature and landscape guides are qualified to conduct tailor made and competent nature and landscape guiding in a region. Protected areas can also contribute to the region's tourism and economy. Examples from Austria and Germany show that training of nature and landscape guides in protected areas can be a success. Nature and landscape guides of 50 nature parks in Germany have been trained under a common programme. What could prevent a unified training approach for the guides in protected areas of Slovenia? The Association of German Nature Parks will further continue to support the efforts of the Goričko Landscape Park and other protected areas.«*

**Jörg Liesen**, professional co-worker of the Association of German Nature Parks

## Where there is a will, there is the way

Care for nature and landscape should be a value to everyone. How to reach this idealistic but necessary objective is a question asked by all of us who wish to educate, guide and increase awareness of people with regard to nature and landscape conservation. In a material world that is focused on gathering material goods and characterised by escapism to a safe and comfortable virtual world it is necessary to show the way back to nature and reality.

Nature interpretation is a tool that can raise awareness of both the local people and visitors of certain geographical areas through experience. Lifelong learning provides opportunities outside formal educational systems for gaining additional knowledge and skills that help enrich professional and personal life.



*»The Leonardo da Vinci programme is a response to teaching and learning needs of individuals and employers and enhances the availability of vocational education and training. By helping European citizens to acquire new skills, knowledge and qualifications, the programme also aims to bolster the competitiveness of the European labour market.« [www.cmepius.si](http://www.cmepius.si)*

The programme has enabled transfer of knowledge and experience related to training of nature and landscape guides from Germany and Austria to Slovenia.

To provide quality guiding in protected areas of Slovenia and indirectly to raise awareness related to nature conservation were objectives that led Goričko Landscape Park in cooperation with six partners from Slovenia, Austria and Germany to apply for the project.

The project logo includes a message about the project purpose and objectives:



**Square** – house-rationality – human being – father

**Circle** – tree – life – emotions – nature – mother

**5 colours** – 5 senses

The logo unites contradictions such as nature-human being into one. Rationality analyses and interprets, while nature gives the possibility to sense and feel.

The logo has been designed by academic painter Ignac Meden.

## Project results

The project aimed at developing a training programme for nature and landscape guides focused on interpretation skills, establishing a pool of trainers and exploring possibilities for sustaining training in the future.

A training needs' analysis carried out in Slovenia confirmed the need. Respondents welcomed the initiative to develop nature interpretation training. The results of the needs' analysis and good practice examples from the partner countries were considered when preparing the training curricula. The training programme comprises four modules with a total of 77 hours.

Training is aimed at all those who wish to raise awareness of the visitors about the importance of nature and landscape conservation. Due to different levels of knowledge, experience and formal education of training participants, the training material covers a variety of topics. The focus of the programme is on gathering basic knowledge and skills through practical work.

Training materials have been prepared by a number of Slovene experts covering nature conservation, adult learning, forestry, landscape architecture, ethnology, recreation and healthy nutrition, working with people with special needs, marketing and interpretation. These experts also represent the basic pool of trainers who will implement the training in the future.

A partner network created during project implementation creates a sound basis for introduction of the training at a national level. Partnerships created with institutions and individuals were strengthened and prove that the right way was chosen.



*»The project results are a trainer's handbook and a workbook for participants. The handbook is primarily meant for the trainers and offers a comprehensive set of material dealing with nature and landscape interpretation in an interdisciplinary way. The workbook or portfolio is meant for participants of nature and landscape guide training. It comprises basic theory, exercises and practical cases that will support the participants step by step to become nature and landscape guides.«*

**Dr. Gregor Torkar**

## Step by step: 4 modules

**What is nature and landscape interpretation** and why it is a suitable tool for raising awareness regarding nature conservation?

1. The introductory training module is aimed at learning about the programme and its key terms and principles.

To bring the nature and landscape closer to a visitor, it is necessary to know about it in the first place. **Knowing about living and non-living nature and understanding the processes in nature and landscape** represents the basis on which interpretation can be developed.

2. The second module enables the participants to acquire knowledge about nature, landscape, ethnology, psychology, ethics and healthy life style.

**How to develop a guided** tour that allows visitors to experience nature and landscape as something positive and that makes them feel that they are part of it?

3. Learning about the needs of the target group and building on people's experience, building a positive attitude towards nature and landscape, active involvement of visitors and well-planned and conducted guiding enables the visitors to learn about and experience nature and reflect internally on this experience.

Who are our visitors? How to inform them about our services and how to exceed their expectations?

4. To enable the visitors to experience nature and themselves as part of it, we need to convince them first to attend a guided tour. **Marketing** is therefore an important part that integrates specific contents in an offer and brings it to the attention of people looking for such experiences.



**Why does guiding in protected areas require a competent guide?**

*»I grew up in the Nature. While getting to know it, I began to love it and wanted to understand it. Now when I understand it, I wish to protect and conserve it so that my children will be able to grow up in it. This can only be achieved by joining the efforts of the convinced.«*

**Kristina Gorišek**, park ranger in Sečovlje Salina Landscape Park

## It is never too late...

Health is a value that is neglected by the majority of people due to their existing life style. Healthy life is conditioned by healthy food and nature. Only both of them together provide a basis for the future of nature and mankind.



*»The recipe: Healthy and natural*

*Ingredients: nature and landscape guide, bicycle, Nordic walking sticks, healthy snack, water, camera, rucksack, focused and well-rested head.*

*Preparation: Cycle from Murska Sobota to Castle Grad in Goričko. Meet the guide and take the walking sticks. Turn to the castle park and enjoy two incredible hours in a forest, teasing all your five senses. At the end, a short tour with your Nordic walking guide. Finally, a stopover for a healthy snack in the*

*local inn. HMMMM, MJAM local, traditional, but still light and healthy. New feelings, new people, nicely tired body.*

*Do not forget: "Take it at the right pace!"*

**Mojca Makovec Haložan**, Centre for Health and Development

## With a bit of a good will and courage all can be achieved!

Experiencing nature is connected with motion in a natural environment and exploration of areas outside marked paths. Unfortunately not every person has a chance to enter this wonderful world of nature.



*»There are a number of possibilities to include people with special needs equally in the nature experience programmes and leisure activities. It is not about removing the obstacles within the existing attractions, it's about searching for individual and creative solutions. This requires from the nature and landscape guide the ability to identify him/herself with a certain situation and to possess knowledge of a variety of methods to pick from.«*

**Marelli Asamer Handler**, Association of Austrian Nature Parks

## Nature...

A man is a part of nature. Where are the limits at which a man has to stop and think about his everyday behaviour and actions in the environment?

A man is a living creature that needs sun, air, water and food. His behaviour in today's society shows that these aspects have been forgotten.

When the scales holding the sustainable state of nature on one side and the virtual desires of man on the other side, tip in favour of the man, both objectives will be lost.

Think: if we preserved nature and the landscape with the same level of enthusiasm that is put into finding ways into space, we would have succeeded in both.



*»The training of nature and landscape guides' project is a good start for networking and transfer of experience in this field. Knowledge and experience of nature and landscape interpretation will be transferred all over Slovenia. Also finding out about good practice elsewhere will be easier.*

*Nature interpretation skills contribute to better understanding of nature and its processes, which are closely connected with nature conservation.«*

**Marko Slapnik**, Logarska dolina d.o.o.

## ... and the man

*»People who live in protected areas care and nourish the nature and environment shaped by human activity. Areas of biodiversity and landscape diversity are usually ones that were formed by natural conditions or social conditions under a low economic activity. Because profit making activities were absent, the environmental burden is lower, but the level of awareness is proportional to the level of »under development«. In spite of or because of these facts, such areas offer different opportunities for nature friendly economic development that can be implemented by the local population alone, provided proper awareness is achieved. The benefit would without doubt be a healthy life style in a healthy and natural environment. Let nature and landscape interpretation be the first step on this way.«*

**Stanka Dešnik**, Senior Nature Conservation Counsellor, Goričko Landscape ParkG



## Project partners



Lifelong Learning Programme

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