Slovenia: From first steps to a thriving National Section

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1 Summary

The chapter draws on various sources, including the written archive and interviews with leading members of the National Section to give an overview of the history of FICE Slovenia. We can identify several stages in this story; in the first there were contacts after World War II between FICE International and FICE Yugoslavia which, however, lost contact with FICE between 1977 and 1987. During the second stage, from 1987 to 1991, Slovenia and Croatia organised a common FICE Section. The third stage involved political changes on the one hand (Yugoslavia fell apart and Slovenia and Croatia established separate National Sections) and the renewal of residential institutions on the other. Both had important implications for FICE Slovenia's national and international activities. During this period the development of the FICE Alps-Rhine Group (Switzerland, Germany, Netherlands, Slovenia and Hungary) resulted in a number of activities and seminars in the years 1995 to 1998 which are described in Shaw (2008, pp. 125-126) as an illustratation of FICE National Sections cooperating internationally. 1997 brought the fourth stage in the development of FICE Slovenia from an organisational point of view as FICE Slovenia moved from being a section under the Special Pedagogues' umbrella Association to a new professional association — Association of Social Pedagogues. Our most recent activities and the present state of relationships and professional development in the field of child and youth care in Slovenia are summarised along with those of National Sections in Shaw (2008, pp. 165–181)

2 Introduction

We believe that organisations develop in similar ways to persons, groups or families. It is important how people who work together can cooperate. Can they share the definition of their goals? How do they integrate their wishes and motives into the working process? But their work is also influenced by the broader social context including their professional field of practice and/or research, the organisation and structure of institutions, the legislative framework and the political context.

The development of FICE Slovenia has been associated with the individuals who have participated in its growth and also with the general development of professional practice, social policy and the political and legislative frameworks. We have drawn on written documents in the archives of FICE Slovenia and of the Association of Social Pedagogues in Slovenia and the personal memories of key individuals connected with developments at the time. We have tried to describe the Section's activities in relation to the broader professional and social context and also to give some explanatory information on the development and professionalisation of child and youth care in Slovenia to illustrate the connections between the National Section and developments in child and youth care practice.

3 Looking back

The early history of FICE Slovenia was linked to the activities of FICE Yugoslavia as Slovenia was the northwestern republic of Yugoslavia until 1991. Oral records show that Yugoslavia participated in FICE activities in the 1950s; in spite of never forming a National Section, Yugoslavia hosted the 1964 Congress in Ljubljana and the 1974 Congress in Banja Luka. At that time Slovenia was connected with FICE International mostly by Prof. Dr Bronislav Skaberne and by a small group of active directors of residential institutions all over Yugoslavia. Bronislav Skaberne was a researcher at the Institute for Criminology at the Faculty of Law in Ljubljana. We do not have a lot of written documents from that time but his colleagues Dr Janez Vivod and Dr Vinko Skalar reported that he cooperated with FICE International as well as with other international professional circles from Eastern and Western Europe.

It is important to point out that FICE was one of the few professional organisations which did not lose contact with the Eastern European countries during the cold war. This fact was very important for Eastern European countries as FICE offered the opportunity to be in contact with professional developments in the West.

In the late 1960s Slovenia piloted an important action research project, Experiment in Logatec, lasting from 1968 to 1973. The aim of the project was to introduce a permissive educational model into the residential institution for delinquent youngsters at Logatec. The influence of this experiment was enormous and brought professional changes into everyday practice in all institutions for children with emotional and behavioural problems. The researchers involved with this action research were Prof. Dr Skalar Vinko and Prof. Dr Katja Vodopivec; of the practitioners working on the research at the institution at the time we should mention Dr Ivo Škoflek, the Director, and the psychologist, Dr Janez Bečaj.

We will show how the care system for young people living in risky circumstances developed by describing the basic characteristics of each stage in development alongside our description of the development of the National Section.¹

¹The mandate of child and youth care work as well as of social work today is to provide assistance to individuals who in the era of postmodernism and globalization do not have enough coping strategies to enable them to acquire appropriate knowledge and skills and the social and economic resources necessary to secure a life standard satisfying at both a personal and a social level.

Bronislav Skoberne was connected with representatives from Zagreb (Croatia) and Beograd (Serbia) in FICE Yugoslavia at that time. He attended the international meetings of FICE. After his death in the early 1970s, Slovenia lost its connection with FICE International for quite a long time. In 1987 Alenka Kobolt and Franci Imperl tried to renew contacts with FICE and learned from the General Secretary of FICE, Franz Züsli, that Yugoslavia had lost contact with FICE International in 1977. This does not mean the complete loss of all international connections. The 1970s were in Slovenia a time of opening up, politically and also professionally. A lot of tourists came to Yugoslavia and a lot of Slovenes worked abroad mostly in Germany, Sweden, Austria and the Netherlands. Visits by our professionals abroad and visitors coming from the field of residential work were mostly from France, Germany and Austria.

Why do we stress the importance of international relations? As we belonged to Eastern Europe at the time, relations with the West were less common but the fact that Slovenia has Austria and Italy as neighbouring countries gave us opportunities to communicate and cooperate with the West more easily compared with other areas in the East.

In the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s most international professional contacts were organised by Dr Janez Vivod who was working as coordinator for this field at the Ministry of Education and later at the School Board in Slovenia. Professional novelties which came to Slovenia in the 1970s alongside permissiveness (introduced into practice through the *Experiment in Logatec*) included group dynamics and T-groups. Both processes had a great impact on the development of practice in residential institutions.

Around the year 1975 residential institutions established a so called 'Study Group,' led by Prof. Dr Vinko Skalar, with the aim of raising professional standards of practice. Each institution had one representative in the group and they organised seminars and professional meetings on different themes for staff in the residential care system. Professionals from other institutions (social welfare agencies, the criminal justice system, schools, etc.) were invited to these meetings. This gave an opportunity for networking and cooperation. Topics included: working with parents, individual care planning, cooperation between social agencies and residential institutions, how to motivate children and young people, social competencies of young people.

Looking back we can say, on the one hand, that in many ways the field of residential care for children and young people was professionally more innovative and creative than general education in school was, due in part to the complexity of the task and in part to some active individuals working in this field. On the other hand, living conditions in the residential institutions were very bad. All except one were in old and inappropriate buildings (castles etc.). The boarding schools for young people enrolled in secondary education in big cities and coming from rural parts of Slovenia were all renewed in the mid 1980s. Active individuals from residential care exerted a lot of political pressure to ensure the continuation of the building programme to institutions for children and adults with special needs (where children and young people with emotional and behavioural problems might also be accommodated).

In 1986 the political decision was made to build new buildings for children and adults with special needs who had been accommodated in old buildings such as castles and monasteries ever since World War II. This opened up the possibility of other conceptual changes such as those suggested by a special group of

experts working in the 'Commission for the transformation and renewal of residential settings for children with special needs.' The following basic principles for renewal were laid down:

- to move residential institutions closer to populated centres leading to better integration into the community
- to reduce the number of children/young people in every establishment leading to a more intimate climate and more privacy
- to create institutions that would operate regionally so as to assure continuous contact with families and to prevent loss of contact with their familiar environment.

Slovenia began the renewal of residential institutions in 1987 as a process of successive renewal of up to two institutions a year. It was important to achieve not only structural changes but also changes in the ways staff worked; they had to become familiar with all the new directions and models in this field of work, to organise a lot of visits to other countries and to establish a university study programme and a variety of opportunities for life long learning. Co-operating with FICE International was seen as an opportunity to cooperate with various countries and to be in touch with new ideas.

4 From renewed contact with FICE to the FICE Slovenia-Croatia National Section

Slovenia lost its connection with FICE for about 10 years from 1977 to 1987 when we have the first written contacts with FICE International. In 1988 two representatives from Slovenia, Alenka Kobolt and Franci Imperl, took part in the FICE Congress at St Gallen. Alenka Kobolt was at that time working as the coordinator and Franci Imperl as a member of the Commission for the renewal of residential institutions. At that time the President of FICE International was Prof. Dr Heinrich Tuggener and the General Secretary was Dr Franz Züsli. Participating in the 1988 Congress in St Galen was an opportunity to get to know other FICE countries' representatives and colleagues from practice all over Europe and North America. We were granted observer status with the goal of establishing our own FICE National Section in collaboration with the other Yugoslav republics.

At the time of this new contact with FICE International a lot of new ideas were emerging in Slovenia. Regional initiatives for youth care were introduced, mainly as a response to drug problems which appeared in larger cities such as Ljubljana or in towns at the seaside. In addition, the first street work projects appeared and volunteer work became more significant. Awareness of inadequate handling of young people's problems led to the development of a greater and more heterogeneous range of services by institutional care and alternative projects.

All these changes to some extent influenced the process of loosening traditionally rigid institutional programmes. More and more professionalism was obvious in all institutions dealing with children and young people living in risky circumstances. Professionals saw new promising possibilities in therapeutic models

and some institutions attempted to base their daily work on therapeutic programmes, such as Redl and Wineman's concept of work with aggressive youth (1965) or Glasser's choice theory (1998) within the framework of reality therapy (1975). The development of non-governmental organizations enriched the already existing services with new programmes so that institutional care remains the last resort in the care of children and young people with problems of social integration.

Before joining FICE International officially we asked colleagues from Beograd and Zagreb to join us in the process of establishing a FICE National Section. As the Institution for Social Problems Research in Beograd, which had been involved with FICE in the 1970s, had no interest in joining us, we decided that Croatia and Slovenia would coordinate their activities in the area of practice and join FICE International.

In September 1989 we established our joint National Section, formally within the framework of the Slovene Association of Special Pedagogues, which made the administrative and organizational tasks easier. By the end of 1989 there were 31 organizational and eight individual members of FICE Slovenia—Croatia.

In the document FICE Slovenia (1997) the following goals for the FICE National Section are stated:

FICE International brings together individuals and institutions who deal with the care of children and young people living outside their families (foster care, boarding schools, all forms of residential institution and special institutions). The main aim of the FICE National Section is to integrate all national bodies, institutions and individuals from this broad field in activities which should enable further professional development and the implementation of new models of care.

Important fields of work for our section are (Goals and working fields of the FICE National Section, FICE Slovenia, 1997):

- permanent (life-long) education of practitioners through national and international meetings;
- implementing new ways and alternative models of care and support for children and young people;
- implementing the integration and inclusion of young people with special needs in all educational forms (kinder gardens, schools);
- building up international relations and spreading information from other sections;
- professional exchanges with other FICE sections and national organisations:
- organising seminars and conferences on a national and an international level;
- publishing the national Bulletin with the aim of informing all the members.

Our activities in 1990 were focused on the national level in Croatia and Slovenia, to spread information about FICE International and to establish our own national organisation. The President of the FICE National Section was Franci Imperl; on the board were: Alenka Kobolt, Janez Vivod, Irena Benedik, Helena Pe\v{c}elin, Marjan Čonč and, from Croatia, Boris Hudina and Tatjana Juričan. There were 75 organisational and 138 individual members of FICE Slovenia—Croatia in 1990.

5 Activities in 1989 and 1990

- Our representatives (Irena Benedik, Marjan Čonč, Vera Čonč and Alenka Kobolt) participated for the first time, with observer status, in FICE International, at the Federal Council Meeting on 21–24 September 1989 in Budapest.
- The most important activity was the publication of the Bulletin of FICE Slovenia—Croatia whose main aim was to inform all members about FICE International activities and also activities of the National Section. We had passed information about FICE to other professional publications such as the Slovene publication Birds without a Nest, Social Work in Croatia and others. Media in Slovenia and Croatia (radio, newspapers) published information about the establishment of the National Section, its aims, mission and goals. The Bulletin was published until 1997 when a new professional journal Socialna pedagogika replaced it.
- Our first international seminar—symposium was organised on 27 March 1990 when FICE representatives from the USA (Prof. Dr Karen Vander Ven), the Netherlands (Dr Leo Lighart) and Austria (Helga Baumann) spoke to us about contemporary developments in child and youth care in their countries.
- We also organised common activities for colleagues from Slovenia and Croatia such as the three day 1989 seminar: From institutional care to the small group home what does it bring? and the 1990 seminar Models of work in institutions from group to individual planning. Twelve guests of the National Section from the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark lectured on topics related to child and youth care, sharing with us new models and examples from their practice.
- Two trips for our members were organised to visit small group homes in Vienna and Graz (Austria) and Freiburg in Breisgau (Germany). Members attended a professional meeting in Klagenfurt\Celovec (Austria) where Erich Kiehn from Freiburg in Breisgau (Germany) was a guest. Kiehn was active in developing the small group home model of child and youth care and helped Slovenian and Austrian practitioners to implement this approach. We must thank him for all the support he gave to Slovenia; he often visited our country, gave lectures and helped us to make useful professional contacts.
- Quite a large group of Slovene and Croatian professionals attended the FICE Congress in Prague in August 1990, where Dr Iva Vankova and

Robert Soisson gave two impressive lectures. The congress was an opportunity to make new professional contacts.

• Our Annual Conference was devoted to children's rights and Prof. Dr Alenka Šelih and Dr Mirjam Škrk addressed practitioners on this topic.

Similar activities also took place the following year, 1991. But in the meantime Yugoslavia had split. We worked with our Croatian colleagues throughout the year, maintaining contacts with them and with their and our institutions but the future of our joint National Section came into question as we were now politically two entities. In the end we established two National Sections — FICE Slovenia of which Dr Alenka Kobolt became President and FICE Croatia with Dr Antonija Žižak as Presdent.

6 Through 1991 to full membership of FICE in 1992

- FICE Slovenia was very active in organising psychosocial support for refugee families mostly from Bosnia and Croatia who came to Slovenia after the armed conflict in their region. We cannot forget the help of our friends (some of them members of FICE Denmark) who came in a convoy of materials and people to bring support for refugee families in Slovenia and to visit all the refugee camps in Slovenia, in particular Johannes Philipsen, Charlotte Guldberg and Margot Lieberkind. Through our contacts with other National sections we received similar professional and organisational support.
- We published two issues of the Bulletin for all FICE members containing information, articles from the seminars and other topics of interest.
- 25 professionals from Slovenia met with colleagues from the whole of Austria for a two day symposium in Graz (together with the Institutes for Social Pedagogy and for Family Counselling in Graz) to share experiences of implementing social pedagogical work with families.
- Over 250 participants from different institutions attended a successful national meeting (organised in cooperation with the Study group of Special Pedagogues) on the topic *Institutions and parents* how can they work together?
- Representatives from Slovenia and Croatia took part in the Federal Council organised by David and Kathleen Lane held in spring 1991 in Wakefield, England.
- The autumn Federal Council meeting had been planed to be held in Ljubljana but the political changes and the unstable situation in Slovenia (after the 10-day war in June 1991) changed this decision and the meeting was moved to Budapest.
- A lot of practitioners from all over Yugoslavia (mainly Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia) applied for a study exchange which FICE Netherlands planned

to carry out in the year 1992 involoving hosting our practitioners in their institutions to promote professional exchanges and learning but the conflicts, first in Croatia and later on in Bosnia, did not allow us to realise this very interesting plan.

In 1992 at the 39th FICE Congress in Luxemburg, attended by over 400 delegates from more than 30 countries, Slovenia became a full member of FICE and FICE Croatia became an associate member. This was an important milestone in our development.

At the Congress FICE International passed a resolution expressing extreme concern at the latest news of conflict in Bosnia:

FICE calls on all parties involved in the fighting to offer special protection to children and the places where they live and it urges them to bring an end to the fighting (FICE resolution, 29th May 1992).²

Support for refugees in association with other NGOs remained a main focus of FICE Slovenia's work in 1992. Some of our intistitutions also had contacts with institutions in Romania and developed exchanges with them.

Organisationally FICE Slovenia was part of the broader professional community, the Association of Special Pedagogues in Slovenia. This organisation covered the broad area of education and institutional care for persons with special needs. The main work of FICE Slovenia was in international contacts. We saw our activities mainly as 'a window on the world' with the aim of strengthening the flow and exchange of professional ideas, models and developments in our field.

7 From 1993 to 1997

Our organisational framework remained the same as before: the sixth section under the umbrella of the Special Pedagogues' professional community sections alongside those for people working with children and young people with a learning disability, a physical disability, hearing impairment, visual impairment or with emotional and behavioural problems. The last category includes children and young people with difficulties in social integration.

Our main goals in this period were to support international contacts and relationships on the one hand and to strengthen professional development in the field of child and youth care on the other. The renewal process of residential institutions was being carried out very actively in this period. A lot of small group homes were introduced instead of the big institutions which had been set up in old castles and monasteries. Children and social pedagogues moved to new buildings, near to cities and spread over different locations. Living conditions

²In the archive we have found a paper sent on the 3rd July 1991 (during the 10 Day War in Slovenia) to the General Secretary of FICE International asking for help in the sense of implementation of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child and for him to pass this appeal on to other FICE National Sections to ensure that proper information about the situation in Slovenia is made available.

were closer to family life with more opportunities for intimacy, responsibility and autonomy. Educating the staff became an important task.³

Introducing new models into everyday practice became a important goal. The transformation Commission, together with the Faculty of Education at Ljubljana University and with the support of the FICE National Section, organised one of the most important interdisciplinary study courses for practitioners in the context of the framework of the renewal process, a 540 hour study course of interdisciplinary education for practitioners moving from the big institutions to the work in small group homes.

On 5–7 May 1993 FICE Slovenia organised the Federal Council meeting in Preddvor sandwiched between symposiums on Supervision and Evacuating Children from Crisis Areas. Guests from many FICE countries from Western and Eastern Europe, South Africa, Israel and Canada attended them and we were joined for the latter by representatives of UNHCR, UNICEF, the International Red Cross and the International Red Crescent.

The first symposium on Supervision, which was just beginning in Slovenia at the time, took the form of an Expert Seminar on supervision at Preddvor on 3–4 May for a small group of professionals; the second at the Ivan Cankar Cultural Centre in Ljubljana on 5 May took the form of a day seminar for the wider public. The lectures and papers from the first symposium were published as a thematic issue on 'Supervision in Slovenia' in the professional journal School Field in 1994.

The symposium on Evakuierung von Kindern aus Krisengebieten/Evacuation et prise en charge des enfants réfugiés/Evacuating Children from Crisis Areas was organised on 7 May in Gorizia (Italy, close to the Slovene, Nova Gorica) because FICE International was able to obtain financial support for the symposium only if the conference was organised in a Western European country. Though Slovenia had been recognised by many countries as an independent state it was still seen as part of Eastern Europe and too close to the armed conflicts in Croatia and Bosnia. At that time Slovenia still faced the enormous problems of the refugees. The Ministry for Schools organised a school for the refugee children living in Slovenia, and a lot of NGOs were active in improving the living and psychosocial conditions of the refugees, particularly the children. Dr Anica Kos made an outstanding contribution not only in practical support but also at the organisational level, establishing the first NGO devoted to psychosocial support for refugees in Slovenia.

Slovenia also faced a lot of economic changes; due to its new political status as an independent state, the old economic ties with Yugoslavia were broken. Many adults within Slovenia's two million population lost their jobs and found themselves facing life situations beyond their personal and material resourses. The younger generation were faced with new challenges often illustated in the need continuously to 're-invent' a personal biography in a society of individual-

³The introduction of a formal educational programme for social pedagogues was an important step in the professional development of residential care in our country. The first diploma programme was started in 1964. In 1986 the degree programme started and in 1991 the programme at the Faculty of Education in Ljubljana was renamed Social Pedagogy. At the same time the opportunity to reach the highest possible academic degree, a doctorate, was introduced enabling Social Pedagogy to stand as a discipline in its own right.

⁴David Lane (FICE UK representative at the Federal Council in Preddvor) brought from London a small leaflet with the slogan 'Putting Slovenia to the map' as Slovenia, formerly the northwestern Republic of Yugoslavia, was almost unknown to the average European citizen.

isation and risk taking.

An important part of FICE Slovenia's activities between 1994 and 1997 took place under the aegis of the FICE Alpes–Rhein network (Shaw, 2008, pp. 125–126). In addition we participated in the FICE Congresses in Milwaukee (1994) and Copenhagen (1996) and in the Federal Council meetings of that period.

The last meeting of the FICE Alps-Rhine group was organised in Slovenia, at Bled, on 11–13 November 1997 under the title 'Quality in the social pedagogical work'. Participants from Croatia (Antonija Žižak, Nivex Koller and others), Germany (Wolfgang Trede), Switzerland (Otmar Doerflinger) and guest John Hudson from England inaugurated the First FICE Slovenia Congress and the new natinal section — the Slovenian Association for Social Pedagogues.

The Congress title was 'Identity and fields of social pedagogy' and, with more than 200 participants from all over Slovenia, we were glad to have guests from other FICE National Sections as we changed the organisational framework for FICE Slovenia. With the enormous economic, political and professional changes that had taken place in Slovenia from the late 80s to the late 90s, including the development of social pedagogy as distinct profession with its own development separate from the development of other special pedagogues, social pedagogues had broadeded their areas of work from mostly residential care to other educational settings (kindergartens, schools, boarding schools), and to health organisations and, after the late 80s, to the emerging NGOs⁵

This fact suggested the idea of forming our own autonomous professional organisation with sections in order that social pedagogues in practice would strengthen their professional identity which would take over FICE membership.

With this changed the status of the membership. Until now institutions and individuals could be FICE members; from 1997 only individual membership was possible. We started with 150 of individual members in the year 1997 and reached over 450 members in 2006. Through this change we have lost some organisations as members as some have stayed in the section concerned with emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children under the professional umbrella of the Association of Special Pedagogues.

After 1997 FICE Slovenia ceased to be sixth section of the Association for Special Pedagogues. Instead the whole Association for Social Pedagogues became the FICE National Section. Helena Pečelin-Poche took over the presidency of the Association from Alenka Kobolt who had been President from 1991–97).

A new board were established and new national goals were drawn up. There was still an urgent need to bring the renewal of the institutional care to a end (at that point only two of the institutions were still in the old buildings). The movement for the integration of children with special needs into regular education had started to be active in Slovenia at that time. The Ministry had appointed a group of special pedagogues and social pedagogues to develop the first conceptual basis for the process of integration and we were involved in the activities connected with developing an ethical code for social pedagogues.

 $^{^5}$ According to Kojic-Zupančič, in 2000 social pedagogues were employed in the following institutions: 5.9 % in kindergartens, 21.7% in schools, 16% in boarding schools, 15.5 % in residential institutions and small group homes for young people with social integration problems, 8.5% in health organisations, 7.2% in social agencies, 3.9% in secondary schools (vocational education and gymnasiums), 7% in institutions for young people and adults with special needs, 2.6% in prisons. The rest are working in various NGOs and other institutions.

8 FICE Slovenia as the Association of Social Ped-agogues — 1997 onwards

Slovenia faced a lot of violent and rapid social changes in the 1990s. To reflect the changed conditions in practice and to develop new approaches to theory and research is the duty of the profession today in Slovenia as in other countries. With the start of FICE Slovenia as the Association of Social Pedagogues came the development of new sections for:

- social pedagogues working in the small group homes in Slovenia
- social pedagogues working in schools
- social pedagogues working in prisons
- students a very active section organising student congresses with national and international participation
- publications: traditionally the Bulletin, published twice a year, brought information for practitioners; in 1997 we started Social pedagogy, a national scientific journal cited in the 'Social Abstracts and Family' database, which is edited by Prof. Dr Bojan Dekleva with the assistance of Prof. Dr Alenka Kobolt and published quarterly; by the end of the 2006 40 issues had been published containing more than 280 scientific and professional articles.
- the ethical commission which has produded an *Ethical Code for Social Pedagogues*.

Important topics in child and youth care at this time in Slovenia were quality, the implementation of children's rights and the search for better ways of working with families. A lot of new NGOs were established and the church became more active in the areas child and youth care and social security. New vulnerable groups of young people were identified among second generation migrants, young people who leave school without qualifications and do not have many opportunities for vocational training and children who grow up in very bad economic conditions. Present practice is almost entirely inclined towards the concept of so-called 'life-oriented social pedagogy.' The available approaches range from preventive approaches integrated into regular educational institutions through projects of short and long duration, various forms of day care and group homes to conceptually flexible forms of care which allow people to take into account the various needs of users and to satisfy the increasing demand for quality as well.

We can list some important activities from 1998 to 2006 first on the national and after on the international level:

1. National level

• Every year a national seminar was organised for our members. We were faced with a lot of other seminars at that period; so it was important to satisfy the demands of the Ministry for Education in order to gain the certification for the seminar. We were successful and every year a lot of practitioners attended these seminars.

- After the first congress in Bled in 1997, the second was organised on 9–11 November 2000 in Škofja Loka under the title 'Everyday life and participation of users.' We had international guests from Croatia and Slovakia. The third congress of our Association was held in Rogla on 20–22 October 2005 with the title: 'Models of good practice in social pedagogical work.' This time we organised an international symposium in which guests and colleagues from Germany, England, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Croatia and Romania participated.
- In 2000 we translated into Slovenian the FICE Glossary prepared by John Hudson, Leo Ligthart and Robert Soisson. Peter Pal, Alenka Kobolt and Bojan Dekleva prepared the translation which was published under title Mali socialno pedagoški slovar izrazov na področju izvendružinske vzgoje: (slovensko-angleško-nemško-francoski). Ljubljana: Združenje za socialno pedagogiko, 2000. ISBN 961-90563-2-9.

2. International level

- In 1998 the fifth FICE Alps-Rhine seminar was organised in the Netherlands. This time almost 20 professionals from Slovenia took part in this seminar. For us this seminar was important as we got informationâs about the new model of work with families and parents: 'Video Home training' and a model of work named 'Family first.'
- Two excursions from Slovakia to Slovenia were organised by Helena Pečelin where our colleagues met with Slovene practitioners in residential homes and small group homes as well.
- In 1999 Alfons Schmalstieg from Duderstadt organised a visit to Germany and we have hosted a group of directors and practitioners from Israel in Slovenia; the following year our practitioners visited Israel.
- Our representatives participated in the FICE Congresses in Maastricht in the spring of 2000, in Berlin in 2002 and in Sarajevo in 2006.
- We were happy to take part also in the activities FICE Switzerland organised in the last few years namely the summer camps from Hungary to Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro for the children and educators from the republics of formal Yugoslavia. The youth parallel activities at the Sarajevo congress showed that all this energy reached the goal participation and involvement of children under the umbrella of FICE mentoring.
- Our participation at the FICE Federal Councils international became irregular, mostly because of concentration on national issues and also because of the growth of the Association.

New sections brought a lot of new activities and organisational work. The Association was never financed from the state or got other financial support. The membership fee was throughout this time the only source of finance except for the journal *Socialna pedagogika* which is financed through the Agency for High Education and Science.

Helena Pečelin–Poche led the Association from 1997 to 2001, when Dr Mitja Kranjčan took over the presidency. In 2003 the presidency went again into the woman's hands with the election of Helena Jeriček.

For the period from 1997 to 2006 the focus of FICE Slovenia's activities was national. FICE had become for Slovenia one of many possible windows onto the world outside. And there are changes in what was understood as 'out' and 'in.' At the outset FICE had been one of the very few possibilities for having international professional ties and cooperation; now the picture is completely different.

The enormous developments in technology and the economic and political changes in the area which are exemplified in the European Union (EU) membership of Slovenia from 1 May 2005 and the of the Euro as currency from 1 January 2007. Slovenia now has a lot of professional ties and cooperates with neighbouring and other countries so that Socrates—Erasmus projects and EU research projects have became competitors to FICE. FICE's main contribution over almost 60 years of activities in Slovenia has been in facilitating cooperation with and within eastern Europe even during the 'cold war.'

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