

Editorial of the first edition of the project newsletter (December 2009) Handicraft Academy project - or when past and future shake hands

The Handicraft Academy project, whose lead partner is the municipality of Veržej, has been running for over five months. In that short period of time it has fully met all expectations with regards to the preservation of handicraft traditions and the forming of educational programmes.

These two particular segments are key messages that emphasise our project. An analysis of the current state of handcrafting shows that there remain only one or two experts, in some professions, who can still pass on their knowledge and skills to the next generation. The question of "who?" should not be the one that you ask first. But first, it is necessary to put into motion a wider variety of ways to motivate target groups that strive to take on the different forms of knowledge and the preservation of cultural traditions. The most important group among these is certainly the youth, but we must offer them something more; such as, that with the help of handicrafts they can obtain additional skills for employment.

The Handicraft Academy project brings together all of this. Through identification of the handicraftsmen's various activities such as, exploration of handicraft activities as a living example of preserving cultural heritage, handicraft knowledge is passed on through educational courses, practical demonstrations and familiarising handicraftsmen with business and marketing contents. Within three years of the project we want, through networking, to establish vertical and horizontal communication with a transfer of different skills and experience. And we hope that after the completion of the project, the past and future hands will last and remain firmly together. This will be the most important sustainable result of the project.

Being familiar with the operations and results of the project will certainly help the project newsletter, which will be issued twice a year during the project. I hope it proves to be a pleasant read and I warmly invite you to become as actively involved in the project's implementation as possible.

Mayor of the Municipality of Veržej
Slavko Petovar