



PARTNER ORGANISATION

OID	E10168511
PIC	944251545
Full legal name (national language)	Pučko otvoreno učilište Čakovec
Full legal name (in English)	Public Open University Čakovec
Acronym	POU Čakovec
Address	Kralja Tomislava 52
Post Code	40 000
City	Čakovec
Country	Croatia
Website	https://pou-cakovec.hr/en/
E-mail	project@pou-cakovec.hr
Telephone	+385 40 395 236
Establishment/Registration date of the organisation	28/07/1997

PROFILE

Is the organisation a public body?	No
Is the organisation a non-profit?	Yes
Type of organisation	School/Institute/Educational centre - Adult education

BACKGROUND AND EXPERIENCE

Please briefly present the partner organisation.

Pučko otvoreno učilište Čakovec (POU Čakovec) is a prominent adult education institution in Croatia, with a rich history dating back to its foundation in the 1950s. Initially established as the People's University, it has undergone several structural and name changes due to social events, becoming the Workers' University and later the Open University. In 1997, it was renamed to its current title, emphasising its focus on adult education.

POU Čakovec's mission is to provide lifelong learning opportunities and to support the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities through innovative and inclusive programmes. POU Čakovec is dedicated to high-quality professional development for its staff and learners, and it has a strong focus on international cooperation through Erasmus+ programmes and holds Erasmus+ accreditation in the field of adult education.

POU Čakovec offers a wide range of educational services and programmes, including:

- Basic education programmes (literacy, numeracy, etc.);
- Primary and secondary adult education, with 100+ educational programmes adapted to the labour market;
- Foreign language learning programmes, with special emphasis on cultural and historical knowledge;
- Croatian for foreigners, including holding state exams for permanent residence in Croatia;
- Training on sustainable use of pesticides and various informal education programmes;
- Vocational and non-vocational subjects, such as IT, accounting, marketing, healthy lifestyle, caregiving, project management;
- Agricultural programmes tailored to the needs of the rural community in Međimurje County;
- Special programmes aimed at vulnerable and marginalised groups, particularly the elderly and minorities, with significant achievements in primary adult education for the Roma community;
- Non-formal activities such as Paint 'n' Sip workshops, pottery, natural cosmetics, culinary classes.

POU Čakovec is an early adopter of the micro-credential approach in adult education in Croatia. By participating in a national voucher education programme, which provides free education to adult learners by offering them learning opportunities and (re)training in the field of green, digital, and labour-market-wanted skills, POU Čakovec has offered more than 55 micro-credential learning programmes so far.

POU Čakovec views cooperation as a powerful tool for the promotion of lifelong learning and the introduction of innovations in the field of adult education. Cooperation of institutions, associations, local authorities, agencies, and other organisations at all levels of the education system contributes to the exchange of knowledge, services, skills, and ultimately to the improvement of the entire system of adult education. Some of the partners at local and regional levels include the Town of Čakovec, Međimurje County, Croatian Employment Service, Faculty of Education, Technology Innovation Centre Međimurje, and Public Institution for Development of Međimurje County REDEA. On a national level, POU Čakovec regularly cooperates with the Agency for Vocational and Adult Education, Ministry of Science and Education, Croatian Association for Education of Adults, Association for Development of Human Resources and Adult Education at Croatian Chamber of Economy, and others. Through numerous European projects like Erasmus+ and ESF, POU Čakovec has developed a network of 75+ partners throughout the EU, among which many are public open universities and other providers of adult education. POU Čakovec works jointly with many of them on the creation of new programmes and tools, trying to respond to the needs of adult education at the EU level.

POU Čakovec is recognised for its dynamic approach to education, evolving to meet societal demands and responding to social and economic influences. It operates as an andragogic institution, acting as the first lifelong learning centre in Međimurje County. POU Čakovec's international projects and strategic partnerships enrich its educational offerings, providing platforms for joint projects and exchange of knowledge. This aligns with POU Čakovec's ethos of lifelong education and its commitment to opening doors to international cooperation, innovations, and opportunities.

POU Čakovec is committed to providing high-quality, affordable adult education that meets the needs of its community. The institution has a team of experienced and qualified instructors who are dedicated to helping learners achieve their goals. With a dynamic staff of 6, each an expert in their respective fields (leadership,



finances, project management, educational programme development, inclusion and diversity, IT & marketing), and more than 70 associates and lecturers, POU Čakovec enrolls 500-600 learners annually, amounting to more than 16,000 success stories since 1997.

What are the activities and experience of the organisation in the areas relevant for this application?

As an adult education institution, Public Open University Čakovec has continually aligned programming with the evolving needs of adult learners and current labour market trends. Formal vocational courses are provided to expand skills and employability. Complementary non-formal workshops are offered in arts, languages, and technology to engage senior citizens and members of other vulnerable groups such as the Roma and unemployed, fostering social inclusion and preventing marginalization. Relevant experience includes implementing the “ISKRA” project in collaboration with partner institutions. This initiative utilized art workshops to develop creativity and improve social engagement among adults 55+. As partners in the ESF “Istakni se, osvoji posao 2” project with the Croatian Employment Service, we strengthened competences and enhanced employability for unemployed participants through conversational language courses in German and English. Additional background is available regarding the organization's participation in diverse EU-funded projects on our website: <https://pou-cakovec.hr/en/projects/>.

Significantly, Public Open University Čakovec has recently obtained 2023 Erasmus+ accreditation in the field of adult education, affirming our capacity in this domain. Our substantial experience in providing targeted programming for adult learners of all ages and backgrounds demonstrates our capability to contribute meaningfully as partners for Erasmus+ initiatives.

What are the skills and expertise of key staff/persons involved in this application?

The experienced staff, joined by 75+ associates, bring comprehensive expertise in teaching, program administration, project implementation, and student empowerment within adult and inclusive education. This equips the team to deliver impactful outcomes through the proposed Erasmus+ project.

Mario ZAMUDA, Principal - Project Management & Administration

- Principal of POU (2012-present), Primary Adult Education Manager and Language School Manager (2007-2012). Holds MA in Primary Education. In 2018 took up position of lecturer at Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education, taught courses entitled Teaching Methodology in Adult Education. In 2011 underwent professional training for management and implementation of EU projects and in 2015 became assistant trainer. As of 2022, member of expert group/database for external evaluation of adult education institutions. Since 2023, member of CEDEFOP's steering committee for TCR on Upskilling Pathways in Croatia. Oversees all POU project activities.

Ivica JEĐUD, Head of Institutional and Interorganisational Cooperation - Project Management & IT

European project manager. Holds MA in English Language and Pedagogy. Background as pedagogical advisor in diverse educational settings (primary, secondary, adult education). Vast experience in managing Erasmus+ and ESF projects centred on empowerment and social inclusion. Engages actively with NGOs and associations. Very proficient in digital content creation (WordPress, Moodle) with 15 years of experience. Member of CEDEFOP steering committee for TCR on Upskilling Pathways in Croatia. Professional interest in MOOCs, AI and digitisation of education, open science, sustainability and other green topics, pedagogy of the oppressed.

Marta MIKAC, Head of Andragogy - Adult Education Department & Project Management

Holds MA in English Language and Pedagogy. Lead coordinator for adult vocational education initiatives. Skilled at tracking, adapting and incorporating new insights into educational offering of POU creating quality and in-demand programmes. Highly proficient in Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign. Has experience in working with people with



special needs. Professional interest in development of new teaching methodologies, innovative educational programmes, making adult education more accessible to vulnerable adult learners.

Andrea ŠTEFIĆ, Project Associate and Language Teacher - Languages & Project Management
Holds MA in English Language and Pedagogy. Language school manager. Vast experience of working and teaching English to learners from ages 8 to 80. Skilled photographer, highly proficient in Lightroom. Experience working as counsellor for adults with disabilities and behavioural problems. Professional interest in language acquisition aimed at adult learners, human and LGBT+ rights, use of gamification in adult education.

Darja SPAHIJA, Head of Administration - Finances, Project Management, Administration
Provides vital administrative support across all projects and programmes. Oversees documentation, finances, and daily operations. Expertly handles client interactions and correspondence. Ensures smooth institutional function and coordination. Skilled in managing administrative processes and financial records. Proficient in maintaining efficient office operations and supporting project teams. Professional interest in optimising administrative workflows, enhancing financial management systems, and improving institutional efficiency.

LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

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Position	Principal
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EU Projects in which POU Čakovec has been involved

EU Programme	Year	Project Title	Topics / Themes	Contract Number	Applicant / Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2025-2026	HER[AI]TAGE: Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage and Environmental Knowledge Through AI Technology	artificial intelligence (AI), cultural heritage, environment, seniors	2024-2-HR01-KA210-ADU000291871	Partner
Erasmus+ KA220	2024 - 2026	Advancing professional learning through the implementation of Future Class Labs (FCL)	classroom innovation, FCL, professional training	2024-1-PL01-KA220-VET-000250900	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2024 - 2026	InclusiGardens: Digital and Sustainable Pathways to Social Inclusion through Urban Gardening	urban micro-gardening, sustainable practices for disadvantaged groups, digital educational resources, social inclusion, food security	2024-1-SI01-KA210-ADU-000244829	Partner
Erasmus+ KA220	2024 - 2026	Microcredential Kitchen Basics for Gastronomy	digital education in hospitality, micro-qualifications for chefs, labour market adaptation, workforce mobility in Europe, inclusion of vulnerable groups	2024-1-AT01-KA220-VET-000246024	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2023 - 2025	Raising Awareness for a Greener Tomorrow	environmental education, sustainable practices, adult education, waste management, digital educational tools	2023-1-HR01-KA210-ADU-000155794	Partner
Erasmus+ KA120	2023 - 2027	Erasmus+ Accreditation in the field of Adult Education (2023 - 2027)	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of teaching competencies of foreign language lecturers with the 	2022-1-HR01-KA120-ADU-000111011	Applicant



			<p>purpose of encouraging and motivating learners to learn foreign languages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement of andragogic competences of staff and lecturers. Enriching the educational offer from different domains with the aim of increasing the motivation of participants for lifelong education. 		
ESF	2022 - 2023	IKT Cloud-IO	tourism and environmental protection, financial management for CSOs, IT tools and communication, volunteer program management, partnerships with educational institutions	UP.04.2.1.11.0424	Partner
ESF	2022 - 2023	Pouči me! (Teach me!)	support for disadvantaged children, social inclusion, volunteer program development, partnerships between CSOs and educational institutions	UP.04.2.1.11.0400	Partner
Erasmus+ KA220	2022 - 2024	Adult Education Addressing Today's Challenges	civic engagement for adult and senior learners, professional development for adult educators, social media for social change, educational tools for civic participation, empowerment of disadvantaged adults	2022-1-DE02-KA220-ADU-000089906	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2022 - 2024	Build Quality, Ensure Success	quality assessment in adult education, digitization of quality assurance systems, transnational collaboration, staff	2021-2-SI01-KA210-ADU-000048077	Partner



			competency development, continuous improvement in adult education		
Erasmus+ KA210	2022 - 2023	Developing the Cultural Capital of Roma Students	Roma education, cultural capital, reading literacy, teacher development, inclusive education	2021-2-SI01-KA210-SCH-000050241	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2022 - 2023	Recycling of Waste with Handicrafts	environmental protection, waste recycling, handicrafts, adult education, international cooperation	2021-1-TR01-KA210-ADU-000034997	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2021 - 2023	Bringing the European Dimension Closer to Remote Rural Areas	rural education, digital skills, cultural heritage, environmental protection, European cooperation	2021-1-SI01-KA210-ADU-000035010	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2021 - 2023	Higher Education for Roma	Roma education, teacher empowerment, vocational education, dropout prevention, educational inclusion	2021-1-SI01-KA210-VET-000032917	Partner
ESF	2021 - 2022	Pikač UŽIVO (Pikač ONLINE)	social inclusion, intergenerational learning, cultural heritage, artistic workshops, digital skills	UP.02.1.1.14.0063	Partner
Erasmus+ KA220	2021 - 2024	Help to Opportunities	Roma health literacy, healthy lifestyles, community education, e-learning, health prevention	2021-1-SI01-KA220-ADU-000033626	Partner
Erasmus+ KA220	2022 - 2024	EmpowHERment LAB	women's empowerment, digital skills, ICT sector inclusion, entrepreneurship, adult education	2021-1-HR01-KA220-ADU-000029700	Applicant



Erasmus+ KA227	2021 - 2023	Creative at Home	online arts education, creativity, entrepreneurship, digital transition, social inclusion	2020-1-PL01-KA227-ADU-095748	Partner
Erasmus+ KA226	2021 - 2023	Developing Digital Competence of Roma Children	digital literacy, Roma education, distance learning, teacher training, educational technology	2020-1-SI01-KA226-SCH-093610	Partner
Erasmus+ KA122	2021 - 2022	Raising Competences: Better Teachers - Better Education	inclusive education, vulnerable groups, intercultural competence, teacher training, anti-discrimination	2021-1-HR01-KA122-ADU-000018257	Applicant
Erasmus+ KA204	2020 - 2023	Common Framework for Adult Education Providers to Support Engagement for Learners with SpLDs	specific learning difficulties, adult education assessment, inclusive learning, educational effectiveness, upskilling pathways	2020-1-SI01-KA204-075962	Partner
Erasmus+ KA204	2019 - 2022	New Education with Success	adult education innovation, critical thinking, media literacy, youth employment, e-learning	2019-1-EE01-KA204-051675	Partner
Erasmus+ KA204	2019 - 2022	New Chance for Us	Roma adult education, social integration, teacher competencies, dropout prevention, minority education	2019-1-HR01-KA204-060807	Applicant
ESF	2019 - 2021	Gastroturisteduca - Improving access to vulnerable groups in the tourism and hospitality sector on the labour market of Međimurje and Zadar counties through gastronomic and tourism education	employability, vulnerable groups, vocational training, tourism and hospitality, soft skills development	UP.02.2.2.03.0021	Applicant



ESF	2018 - 2020	Istakni se, osvoji posao 2 (Stand out and get the job 2)	unemployment, job-seeking skills, transversal skills, digital competence, language skills	UP.01.3.1.01.0104	Partner
ESF	2018 - 2019	ISKRA - Experience of Creative Activities	senior education, cultural activities, creative activities, intergenerational learning	UP.02.1.1.03.0145	Partner
ESF	2018 - 2019	Prvi sam izbor na tržištu rada - obrazovan, kompetentan i lako zapošljiv (I am the first choice on the labour market - educated, competent and easily employable)	adult education, vocational training, employability, basic education, labour market competitiveness	UP.03.2.3.02.0025	Applicant
Erasmus+ KA204	2016 - 2019	Give Them a Chance	Roma adult education, teacher training, minority education, educational empowerment, inclusive learning environments	2016-1-SI01-KA204-021624	Partner