



### 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	<a href="https://pou-cakovec.hr/en/">https://pou-cakovec.hr/en/</a>
E-mail	<a href="mailto:project@pou-cakovec.hr">project@pou-cakovec.hr</a>
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 organisation (e.g. its type, scope of work, areas of activity and if applicable, approximate number of paid/unpaid staff, learners).*

**Pučko otvoreno učilište Čakovec (POUC)** is a prominent adult education institution in Croatia, founded in 1960 and recognized as the first lifelong learning centre in Međimurje County. Dedicated to providing lifelong learning opportunities, particularly for disadvantaged groups, POUC supports the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies through innovative and inclusive programs. POUC emphasizes high-quality professional development

and holds **Erasmus+ accreditation in the field of adult education**, reflecting its strong focus on international cooperation.

### SCOPE OF WORK AND AREAS OF ACTIVITY

POUC offers over 100 formal and non-formal educational programs designed to meet the needs of learners and the labour market. Key offerings include:

- Primary adult education:** Providing free education for adult learners to complete their primary education.
- Vocational training for adults:** Over 70 programs available, covering areas such as IT, IoT, programming, sustainability, entrepreneurship, accounting, marketing, human resources, hospitality, caregiving, and project management.
- Foreign language learning:** Courses with a focus on cultural and historical knowledge.
- Croatian for foreigners:** Including state exam preparation for permanent residency.
- Agricultural education:** Tailored to rural community needs in Međimurje County, including sustainable pesticide use, organic farming, and reuse workshops.
- Digital literacy courses:** Covering topics such as digital basics, social media, digital footprints, and the ethical use of AI, these courses are designed for learners with varying levels of digital literacy.
- Programs for vulnerable groups:** For the elderly, Roma communities, and marginalized populations, with notable successes in primary adult education for the Roma community, digital literacy courses for the elderly, and training for the unemployed.
- Non-formal activities:** Creative workshops, including pottery, natural cosmetics, and culinary classes aimed at providing new experiences, developing soft skills, and promoting social inclusion.

POUC is a leader in adopting **micro-credentials**, offering over 65 accredited programs to unemployed adults through a voucher system that provides free education in green, digital, and labour-market-relevant skills. These programs primarily cater to **unemployed individuals** seeking new or upgraded qualifications. This positions POUC as an expert in designing, creating, and implementing micro-credential programs tailored to the needs of both learners and the labour market.

### COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

POUC actively fosters partnerships to promote lifelong learning and educational innovation. Locally, it collaborates with entities such as the **Town of Čakovec**, **Međimurje County**, **Croatian Employment Service**, **Faculty of Education**, **Technology Innovation Centre Međimurje**, and the **Public Institution for Development of Međimurje County (REDEA)**. On a national level, it partners with organizations like the **Agency for Vocational and Adult Education**, the **Croatian Association for Education of Adults**, and the **Ministry of Science and Education**.

Internationally, POUC has built a robust network of over **75 European partners**, including many adult education institutions, through Erasmus+ and ESF projects. These collaborations drive the development of new programs, tools, and approaches that align with **EU priorities** in adult education.

### STAFF AND LEARNERS

POUC is supported by a core team of **seven highly skilled staff members**, specializing in leadership, finance, project management, educational development, inclusion, IT, and marketing. This team works alongside **more than 70 associates and lecturers**, delivering education to **500–600 learners annually**, predominantly adults aged 18 and



older from disadvantaged groups such as the unemployed, elderly, Roma, and individuals with low literacy or socio-economic status. Over the past 25 years, POUC has proudly supported more than **16,000 learners** in achieving their goals.

*What are the activities and experience of the organisation in the areas relevant for this project?  
What are the skills and/or expertise of key persons involved in this project?*

**ACTIVITIES AND EXPERIENCES // please review the list of projects at the end of this document for more information; the final answer to this question will be formulated based on the project proposal**

POUC is a **prominent adult education institution in Croatia** with decades of experience in delivering **innovative and inclusive learning solutions**. Our expertise spans diverse areas, including **digital literacy, vocational training, sustainability education, and lifelong learning programs** tailored to adult learners.

POUC is particularly skilled in **integrating technology into education**, with extensive experience in developing **Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), e-learning hubs, and digital content**. Our **learner-centered approach** ensures accessibility and engagement, catering to participants with varying levels of prior knowledge, including those from **vulnerable or disadvantaged groups**.

Additionally, we design and deliver **micro-credential programs** that respond to the **evolving demands of the labor market**, focusing on skills in **digital technology, green practices, and entrepreneurship**. By leveraging **modern tools such as hybrid learning platforms, smart technologies, and innovative teaching methodologies**, POUC ensures that its programs meet high standards of **quality and relevance**.

Our **capacity to adapt our expertise to a project's specific needs** enables us to contribute effectively to a wide range of educational initiatives. We are committed to **tailoring our resources and methodologies** to align with the objectives and priorities of any project we engage with.

**KEY STAFF // final selection of people involved will be based on the project proposal**

**-Mario ZAMUDA, Principal - Administration Department**

Principal (2012–present), Primary Adult Education Manager and Language School Manager (2007–2012). Holds MA in Primary Education. In 2018, took up position as lecturer at **Agency for Vocational Education and Training and Adult Education**, teaching 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 for external evaluation of adult education institutions. Since 2023, member of **CEDEFOP's steering committee** for TCR on Upskilling Pathways in Croatia.

**-Marta MIKAC, Head of Andragogy - Adult Education Department**

Holds MA in English Language and Pedagogy. Lead coordinator for adult vocational education initiatives. Skilled at tracking, adapting, and incorporating new findings into POUC's educational offerings to create **quality and in-demand programmes**. Highly proficient in Photoshop, Illustrator, and InDesign. Has experience working with people with special needs. Professional interests include development of **new teaching methodologies, innovative educational programmes**, and making adult education more accessible to **vulnerable adult learners**.



**-Ivica JEĐUD, Head of Institutional and Interorganisational Cooperation – PM & IT Departments**

Project coordinator. Holds MA in English Language and Pedagogy. Background as pedagogical advisor in diverse educational settings (primary, secondary, adult). Vast experience in managing **Erasmus+ and ESF projects**, centred on **empowerment, ICT, and social inclusion**. Actively engages with NGOs and associations. Very proficient in **digital content creation** (WordPress, Moodle) with 15 years of experience. Completed **“Elements of AI” course** by University of Helsinki. Member of **CEDEFOP’s steering committee** for TCR on Upskilling Pathways in Croatia. Professional interests include **MOOCs, AI and digitisation of education, open science**, as well as **pedagogy of the oppressed**.

**-Andrea ŠTEFIĆ, Head of Language Centre - Languages Department**

Holds MA in English Language and Pedagogy. Language school managing director. 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 – Administration Department**

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.

**-Maja KUTNJAK VRTARIĆ, Co-Head of Andragogy - Adult Education Department**

MA in **Social Pedagogy**. Certified **specialist in children's rights**. Her expertise spans **social pedagogy, program evaluation, and educational program development**, with a focus on **inclusivity and support for vulnerable populations**, including **Roma communities**. Significant experience of implementing tailored interventions to support learners at risk of behavioural. Consultant for parenting programs and authored publications addressing **children's rights, inclusion, and education**. At POU Čakovec, she contributes her extensive knowledge to designing and implementing **innovative, inclusive educational frameworks and supporting lifelong learning initiatives**.

**-Nikolina BAKAČ, Financial and Accounting Officer – Finances Department**

MA in **Economics**. Professional background includes roles as a **financial advisor, team coordinator, and financial operator** in both private and public sectors. Skilled in **project budgeting and financial reporting**, Nikolina is adept at ensuring **financial transparency** and compliance in educational and community projects. Her technical proficiency includes expertise in **financial management software** and Microsoft Office, alongside strong organizational and interpersonal skills. At POU Čakovec, she plays a key role in managing financial operations and supporting the smooth execution of the institution’s diverse programs.

*Would you like to make any comments or add any information to the summary of your organisation’s past participation?*

**NOTE: the final answer to this question will be formulated based on the project proposal**

As a **longstanding institution in adult education**, POUC has participated in **numerous national and international initiatives**, enhancing its expertise in delivering **impactful and scalable educational solutions**. These projects have strengthened our competencies in areas such as **digital literacy, ICT integration, and social inclusion**, and have allowed us to develop **innovative tools and methods** to support adult learners.



Our experience includes creating **MOOCs and other digital learning formats** that provide **accessible and flexible learning opportunities** for diverse audiences. We have also worked on projects that emphasize **professional development for educators**, focusing on the effective use of **digital tools** and **learner-centred teaching strategies**.

POUC is well-versed in fostering **collaborative partnerships across Europe**, working with public institutions, NGOs, and other educational organizations to promote **lifelong learning**. Our **proactive approach** ensures that we can contribute meaningfully to a variety of initiatives, offering expertise in **program design, digital content development, and capacity-building for educators and learners alike**.

We welcome the opportunity to adapt our **skills and experience** to meet the specific goals of future projects. For more detailed information about our past contributions or tailored proposals, we remain at your disposal.

#### LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

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Position	Principal
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#### CONTACT PERSON

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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	<a href="#">HER[AI]TAGE: Preserving Intangible Cultural Heritage and Environmental Knowledge Through AI Technology</a>	artificial intelligence (AI), cultural heritage, environment, seniors	2024-2-HR01-KA210-ADU000291871	Partner
Erasmus+ KA220	2024 - 2026	<a href="#">Advancing professional learning through the implementation of Future Class Labs (FCL)</a>	classroom innovation, FCL, professional training	2024-1-PL01-KA220-VET-000250900	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2024 - 2026	<a href="#">InclusiGardens: Digital and Sustainable Pathways to Social Inclusion through Urban Gardening</a>	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	<a href="#">Microcredential Kitchen Basics for Gastronomy</a>	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	<a href="#">Raising Awareness for a Greener Tomorrow</a>	environmental education, sustainable practices, adult education, waste management, digital educational tools	2023-1-HR01-KA210-ADU-000155794	Partner
Erasmus+ KA120	2023 - 2027	<a href="#">Erasmus+ Accreditation in the field of Adult Education (2023 - 2027)</a>	Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of teaching competencies of foreign language lecturers with the</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Improvement of andragogic competences of staff and lecturers.</li> <li>Enriching the educational offer from different domains with the aim of increasing the motivation of participants for lifelong education.</li> </ul>		
ESF	2022 - 2023	<a href="#">IKT Cloud-IO</a>	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	<a href="#">Pouči me! (Teach me!)</a>	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	<a href="#">Adult Education Addressing Today's Challenges</a>	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	<a href="#">Build Quality, Ensure Success</a>	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	<a href="#">Developing the Cultural Capital of Roma Students</a>	Roma education, cultural capital, reading literacy, teacher development, inclusive education	2021-2-SI01-KA210-SCH-000050241	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2022 - 2023	<a href="#">Recycling of Waste with Handicrafts</a>	environmental protection, waste recycling, handicrafts, adult education, international cooperation	2021-1-TR01-KA210-ADU-000034997	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2021 - 2023	<a href="#">Bringing the European Dimension Closer to Remote Rural Areas</a>	rural education, digital skills, cultural heritage, environmental protection, European cooperation	2021-1-SI01-KA210-ADU-000035010	Partner
Erasmus+ KA210	2021 - 2023	<a href="#">Higher Education for Roma</a>	Roma education, teacher empowerment, vocational education, dropout prevention, educational inclusion	2021-1-SI01-KA210-VET-000032917	Partner
ESF	2021 - 2022	<a href="#">Pikač UŽIVO (Pikač ONLINE)</a>	social inclusion, intergenerational learning, cultural heritage, artistic workshops, digital skills	UP.02.1.1.14.0063	Partner
Erasmus+ KA220	2021 - 2024	<a href="#">Help to Opportunities</a>	Roma health literacy, healthy lifestyles, community education, e-learning, health prevention	2021-1-SI01-KA220-ADU-000033626	Partner
Erasmus+ KA220	2022 - 2024	<a href="#">EmpowHERment LAB</a>	women's empowerment, digital skills, ICT sector inclusion, entrepreneurship, adult education	2021-1-HR01-KA220-ADU-000029700	Applicant





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



ESF	2018 - 2020	<a href="#">Istakni se, osvoji posao 2 (Stand out and get the job 2)</a>	unemployment, job-seeking skills, transversal skills, digital competence, language skills	UP.01.3.1.01.0104	Partner
ESF	2018 - 2019	<a href="#">ISKRA - Experience of Creative Activities</a>	senior education, cultural activities, creative activities, intergenerational learning	UP.02.1.1.03.0145	Partner
ESF	2018 - 2019	<a href="#">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)</a>	adult education, vocational training, employability, basic education, labour market competitiveness	UP.03.2.3.02.0025	Applicant
Erasmus+ KA204	2016 - 2019	<a href="#">Give Them a Chance</a>	Roma adult education, teacher training, minority education, educational empowerment, inclusive learning environments	2016-1-SI01-KA204-021624	Partner