



COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE STRUNJAN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND THE ELVIRA VATOVEC TRAINING CENTRE

The village of Strunjan is a rural version of the more fancy Portorož. Ever since the post-war period, the local population has been promoting the culture of the village by running a primary school, which has lately come under the direction of the central school of Lucija. The number of pupils has been varying over the years, culminating in 2014 with a total of 26 children in two split-grade classes.

Strunjan is also home to a school for children with special needs: the Elvira Vatovec Training Centre (EVTC).

Generally, elementary school pupils perceive children with specific learning problems and mental disorders as „weird“ and are reluctant to approach them. When they meet, they feel embarrassed and often laugh at them. The pupils of the Strunjan school, however, see those children on a regular basis and are thus more open to differences. The EVTC is in fact an institution that is very open to the community and the public at large.

The pupils of the two schools come together every year at art workshops. They mix during the class, collaborate with each other and produce nice and quality art works. The schools also invite each other's pupils to various community events.

As a result of such collaboration, mainstream school pupils feel more empathy for those who are different, which allows them a more rapid personality growth, while EVTC pupils feel better accepted by the community. Thanks to our joint activities, EVTC pupils see us as true friends and are always happy to cooperate with us.

Ariana Opara,
Comenius Lucija, December 2014

