

## THE INNOVATION JOURNEY

The Employment Center for the Disabled – Institute Kocljevina runs an organic and social farm in the northeastern Slovenia, near the Hungarian border.

They started organic farming in 2015 when they leased an old military building and its associated farmland from the state and the municipality. In 2023, the ownership and management of the farm changed due to retirements. The new manager of the eco-social farm Kocljevina is 23-year-old Lucija Kadiš, who decided to take this step with the support of her family, who have experience with this type of entrepreneurship.

On the Kocljevina farm, disabled people are involved in the rehabilitation and socialization process through agricultural work. On around 5 hectares of farmland, they grow fresh vegetables, which they process into various preserves, their main product. The farm also has a large herb garden and some animals are kept, which are mainly used for therapeutic and educational purposes.

## THE INNOVATION IMPACT

The eco-social farm currently employs 12 people, of whom 10 are disabled and two are mentors. All crops and products are certified organic. Most of the produce is sold to local schools, especially fresh vegetables and preserves, while the rest

is marketed in local boutique stores and to selected restaurants.

Education and awareness-raising are becoming increasingly important at the Kocljevina eco-social Farm. This aspect has been further strengthened last year. The farm organizes various camps and workshops for children and youth and is involved in international and local projects. Lucija's long-term vision is to set up a hostel on the farm.

The Kocljevina Eco-Social Farm has established good cooperation with the municipality, local schools, associations, and others. Projects are also carried out with the Hungarian community, as the farm is located in a bilingual area.



Figure 1. The Kocljevina eco-social farm employs people with disabilities (source: Facebook Kocljevina).

## USEFUL LINKS

[www.kocljevina.com/](http://www.kocljevina.com/);

[www.facebook.com/Kocljevina/](https://www.facebook.com/Kocljevina/)