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## **EXTRACURRICULAR RESOURCES OF CONTINENTAL CROATIA IN THE TEACHING OF SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **Abstract**

Extracurricular teaching is a special form of teaching that takes place outside the classroom, with the primary aim of enabling students to acquire teaching content in an authentic environment through practical experience. This paper outlines the concept of extracurricular teaching, its types and forms, its educational significance, the legal framework for its implementation, and possible implementation in the teaching of *Science and Social Studies*. Following a content analysis, the research section provides an overview of potential natural-geographical and cultural-historical resources across five counties in continental Croatia. The aim of this paper is to emphasise the necessity of implementing extracurricular teaching in *Science and Social Studies* classes, as well as its benefits, given that such teaching enables students to experience directly what they are learning, thereby enhancing understanding and long-term retention of the presented content. The content analysis indicates that the largest number of potential learning resources for extracurricular teaching is found in the Osijek-Baranja County, primarily in the form of cultural and historical landmarks and other related resources. In light of the results obtained, it can be concluded that continental Croatia, one of the major subregions of central and northwestern Croatia, encompassing approximately one third of the total territory of the Republic of Croatia, is rich in diverse natural-geographical and cultural-historical resources suitable for extracurricular teaching in *Science and Social Studies*.

**Keywords:** extracurricular activities, continental Croatia, cultural and historical resources, natural and geographical resources

## **Introduction**

This article addresses the topic of outdoor education, which represents the most appropriate form of learning within the school subject *Science and Social Studies* due to its implementation outside the classroom, in the natural environment. The subject *Science and Social Studies* encompasses learning about natural and social phenomena that constitute an integral part of the immediate environment in which we live. Outdoor education is a special form of teaching and learning that takes place outside the classroom and requires additional time for effective organisation, detailed planning, preparation, task design, and implementation. Permoser (2020) emphasises that nature is a rich classroom. Through learning in nature, students achieve deeper understanding and long-term retention of content by engaging their senses and observing natural and social phenomena.

In contrast to traditional teaching methods, contemporary outdoor education within the context of *Science and Social Studies* places students at the centre of the educational process. This approach increases students' motivation to learn, facilitates the connection between theoretical knowledge and practical application, and encourages teamwork, creativity and critical thinking. It also enables students to navigate both the natural and social environment more effectively.

The aim of this article is to present the theoretical basis of the concept of outdoor education and its application within the *Science and Social Studies* curriculum. The first part of the article defines the concept, aims, tasks and types of outdoor education, as well as the legal framework regulating its planning and implementation in the Republic of Croatia. The research section provides concrete examples of potential natural and cultural-historical resources in continental Croatia that are suitable for the implementation of outdoor education.

## **Outdoor education**

Bognar and Matijević (2002) state that in antiquity people acquired their earliest knowledge through everyday work in the natural environment. In ancient times, the first learning took place outdoors: the prominent Greek philosopher and teacher Socrates taught in the open air while walking through the marketplace, and Aristotle conducted his teaching in nature (Buvinić and Majstorović, 2024:9). Numerous prominent humanist educators of the Middle Ages, such as Jan Amos Comenius, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, emphasised the importance of outdoor learning and underlined the need to

connect what was learned in the classroom with phenomena explored in *Science and Social Studies* (De Zan, 2005: 281). Comenius particularly highlighted his view that knowledge should be acquired through the study of “the sky and the earth, the oaks and the beeches,” rather than solely through reading or studying the books of others or through mediated observations (Bognar and Matijević, 2002: 300).

Teaching is a systematically designed educational process that is guided and organised by the teacher, and through which educational goals are also achieved (Skok, 2002: 5). The teaching process can generally be distinguished by the location in which it takes place and is usually divided into two basic categories: classroom instruction and instruction conducted outside the classroom. Outdoor learning has long had a strong educational and developmental impact on students and their understanding, with the teacher playing a central role in the delivery of lessons beyond the classroom. The main actors in the educational process — the student and the teacher — are continually able to select and shape the environments in which their core educational activities take place (Bognar and Matijević, 2002: 300). Throughout history, outdoor education has been referred to and described in various ways. In pedagogical literature, different terms are used for lessons that take place outside the school: outdoor teaching, teaching in nature, extracurricular teaching, teaching outside the classroom, educational excursions, field teaching, walks, visits, and similar (Kostović-Vranješ, 2015: 153). Out-of-classroom teaching has been part of the Croatian school tradition for more than 140 years and has acquired the official designation “teaching outside the classroom” in pedagogical discourse (Skok, 2002: 12). The concept is defined in different ways depending on the field of research. Any form of teaching that takes place outside the classroom can be considered teaching outside the classroom, regardless of location and duration (De Zan, 1999: 281). Within the context of the subject of *Science and Social Studies*, teaching outside the classroom occurs in settings such as the school garden, parks, production sites, meadows, streams, the sea, or other locations where the subject matter is taught through direct contact with real phenomena (De Zan, 1999: 288). Teaching and learning *Science and Social Studies* outdoors, or teaching and learning outside the classroom, is an integral component of elementary school teachers' professional practice (Anđić, 2006: 7). Out-of-classroom teaching is a unique form of teaching that takes place outside the school and the classroom, and is aimed at observing and exploring the natural, ecological and social environment. In the outdoors, students actively learn through what they do, experience and discover. Learning takes place in a natural environment where students can see, hear, touch, smell, and even taste particular

elements of the surrounding world (Kostović-Vranješ, 2015: 154). Teaching outside the classroom refers to the implementation of planned learning outcomes outside the classroom (Ministry of Science and Education [MZO], 2019), i.e. outside the school (Skok, 2002: 20).

In line with the needs of modern society, teaching approaches should be grounded in contemporary methods and forms of instruction that address the fundamental requirements of today's world. Numerous cultural, social and technological changes make it necessary to transform the education system. Contemporary teaching should be enriched with modern forms of instruction such as teaching outside the classroom, which holds special pedagogical value and is aimed at the holistic development of students. Work, learning and activities outside the classroom are particularly motivating and engaging for students, as leaving the classroom increases students' motivation to work and the assigned activities allow for the development of social skills. In the education systems of developed countries, increasing emphasis is placed on delivering lessons outside the classroom across a wide range of subjects and educational fields (Skok, 2002: 12). Teaching outside the classroom is defined by three interrelated factors: place, time, and space, all of which are mutually interconnected and functionally aligned with the curriculum. This form of teaching can be categorised according to various criteria: time, place of delivery, space, content, and methodological purpose (Husanović-Pejnović, 2011: 50). With regard to the place of teaching outside the classroom, the term *environment* can be used in a broader sense, encompassing everything that surrounds us — natural resources, cultural heritage, and all products of human activity (Kostović-Vranješ, 2015: 153). Education outside the classroom often includes visits to natural and cultural attractions, historical sites, cultural institutions, and other places that primarily serve an educational purpose. Such teaching can take place in the immediate vicinity of the school or beyond, depending on the cultural heritage to be explored, while also taking into account the aforementioned principle of local relevance (Letina & Vasilj, 2019: 15). The sources of knowledge used during teaching outside the classroom in the local environment can vary. According to Skok (2002: 24), sources of extracurricular learning can be divided into six categories:

- outdoor school spaces (e.g. the school garden, traffic practice areas, the schoolyard);
- natural sites near the school (e.g. nearby fields, forests, parks, meadows, ponds, lakes, rivers, the sea);
- economic facilities in the area (e.g. shops, farms, mills, sawmills, craft businesses, factories, etc.)

- public institutions and municipal facilities (e.g. health clinics, post offices, municipal offices, bus and train stations, harbours, etc.);
- cultural and religious facilities (e.g. libraries, reading rooms, studios, galleries, museums, theatres, cultural and religious monuments, churches and other religious buildings, as well as collections of cultural and historical significance);
- other educational and cultural characteristics of the region (e.g. local dialects, customs, folk traditions, and other characteristics of natural and social phenomena).

Didactic experts classify teaching outside the classroom differently depending on its type and concrete implementation. Skok (2002) distinguishes between class visits, lessons in nature, school trips and excursions, winter and summer camps, and field teaching. De Zan (2005) points out that teaching outside the classroom can be successfully implemented in the form of school excursions, school trips, field research, and the “school in nature” programmes. Kostović-Vranješ (2015) categorises teaching outside the classroom into three forms: visits (one- or two-hour excursions in the immediate vicinity of the school), field trips (half- or full-day excursions outside the classroom), and school trips (multi-day trips conducted beyond the school grounds).

### **The school subject *Science and Social Studies*, the curriculum and the organisation of lessons outside the classroom**

The introduction of *Science and Social Studies* as a school subject into the Croatian education system represented a significant reform in the educational structure of the Republic of Croatia. Prior to this reform, *Science and Social Studies* was taught to younger students within mother-tongue education in Grades 1 and 2, and later as part of various individual subjects in Grades 3 and 4. By separating content related to the environment and the students' immediate living environment into a separate subject — *Science and Social Studies* — students were introduced to the world of objects and phenomena around them in a manner appropriate to their age and psychophysical abilities (De Zan, 2005: 32). The subject *Science and Social Studies* was introduced into the Croatian education system in 1954 and has been part of elementary education for more than seventy years. Following the education reform of 1954, the uniform name *Science and Social Studies* was adopted, and the subject content was distributed across the first four grades of elementary school (De Zan, 1999). Today, the curriculum for the subject is implemented in accordance with official documents issued by the

Ministry of Science and Education: the *Curriculum for the Subject of Science and Social Studies for Primary Schools in the Republic of Croatia* (Ministry of Science and Education, 2019) and the *Teaching Plan and Programme for Primary Schools* (Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, 2006).

The subject *Science and Social Studies* is an integral component of the contemporary education system and a compulsory subject in the first and second education cycles. It is of particular importance, as everyday life is unimaginable without an understanding of basic natural and social concepts from the immediate environment. The content of this subject is both complex and challenging, as it includes concepts from both natural and social areas. Therefore, teaching this subject requires systematic organisation and strong involvement in the students' living environment and real life context. Students acquire knowledge more easily when they can relate the content to real-life experiences. Much of the *Science and Social Studies* curriculum can be successfully taught outside the classroom, in the students' immediate environment. The planning of *Science and Social Studies* lessons must be based on the principle of local relevance, with content closely to the students' environment both spatially and temporally (De Zan, 1999).

Teaching outside the classroom refers to educational activities that take place outside the classroom, in real-life settings. Every educational process involves three basic phases: preparation, implementation and evaluation. Teachers must carefully plan and prepare these phases in order to achieve the set objectives and tasks. The planning, preparation and organisation of teaching outside the classroom requires a sequence of steps prior to its realisation and represents a highly complex process influenced by numerous independent factors. These include actors within the school—such as the school principal, teachers and students—as well as actors outside the school, including parents, representatives of local authorities, associations, institutions, production organisations, and professionals from various fields (Husanović-Pejnović, 2011: 51). Throughout all these phases, the teacher plays a central role. A creative teacher makes purposeful use of available local resources to enrich this component of the curriculum (Buvinić & Majstorović, 2024: 14).

At the beginning of each school year, teachers are responsible for planning the lesson content and determining the methods and timing for implementing teaching outside the classroom, subsequently incorporating the selected content into the school curriculum. It is crucial that teachers implement the learning outcomes in accordance with the specifics of each subject and its content. *Science and Social Studies* lends itself particularly well to the

implementation of specific learning outcomes through teaching outside the classroom, as it focuses on learning about natural and social phenomena. In many cases, this form of teaching is particularly suitable for achieving the learning outcomes of the subject *Science and Social Studies* (e.g. natural phenomena in the environment, local flora and fauna, transportation, important institutions in the local community, local economy, cultural heritage and folk traditions) (Buvinić & Majstorović, 2024: 13).

The curriculum for the subject *Science and Social Studies* explicitly requires the achievement of certain results through lessons outside the classroom. The aim of the subject is to promote and develop the human need for exploration and the recognition of cause-effect relationships in the surrounding world. To help students achieve these goals, teachers can choose from a variety of learning and teaching methods, and the educational process can take place both inside and outside the classroom (Curriculum *Science and Social Studies*, 2019: 8). Learning outside the classroom enables students to engage with authentic reality and their immediate environment, with the primary objective of discovering and expanding knowledge about the natural world. Therefore, teaching should take place outside the classroom as often as possible. This learning environment encourages the joy of discovery, exploration and creativity, supports diverse social forms of work, promotes the development of social competencies, and contributes to the formation of high-quality relationships within the learning group (Curriculum *Science and Social Studies*, 2019: 17).

### **Legal framework for the implementation of teaching outside the classroom in the Republic of Croatia**

The implementation of teaching outside the classroom in the Croatian education system is regulated by the *Regulation on the Implementation of Excursions, Trips and Other Educational Activities Outside School* (Buvinić & Majstorović, 2024: 19). This regulation prescribes the rules and standards according to which such forms of teaching must be organised and is binding for all employees of educational institutions. The objectives of teaching outside the classroom must be aligned with the implementation of the *National Curriculum and the Teaching Plan and Programme*. The justification for implementing teaching outside the classroom is further supported by the Law on Education in Primary and Secondary Schools and by subject-specific and interdisciplinary curricula (Buvinić & Majstorović, 2024: 9).

The preparation of teaching outside the classroom is extensive. Such activities must be planned at the beginning of the school year and included in the annual school plan and programme, as well as in the school's curriculum. These documents are published on the school's website to ensure public accessibility. Regardless of the specific form of teaching outside the classroom, a detailed activity plan must be prepared. This plan should include the objectives, tasks, implementation methods, timetable, cost estimate, funding model and evaluation procedure.

When organising any form of teaching outside the classroom, it is essential to comply with the applicable legal framework. This includes familiarity with the *Act on Tourism Services and the Regulation on the Organisation of Excursions and School Trips*, as stated by Husanović-Pejnović (2011: 51). According to the *Act on the Provision of Tourism Services* (2017), an excursion is defined as a combination of at least two individual services for the same trip or vacation, consisting of transportation or other tourist and hospitality services, lasting less than 24 hours and not including an overnight stay.

The *Regulation on the Organization of Excursions and School Trips* (2014) states that out-of-classroom teaching may last several days or can be organised as a half-day or full-day trip by students and teachers to a location inside or outside the vicinity of the school. Educational institutions can organise shorter out-of-classroom activities independently (i.e. one-day or half-day), but for multi-day out-of-classroom teaching trips, they must hire a service provider and publish a tender on the institution's official website.

According to Article 5 of the *Regulation* (2014), teachers are required to inform parents about the extracurricular activities, including details about transportation, planned activities and related costs. Parents' written consent must be obtained at least three days before the activity. Article 2 of the same regulation also states that participants in such activities include students (as service users), their parents/guardians, teachers, professionals and head teachers. Service providers may include travel agencies, cultural or public institutions and other legal or natural persons involved in the provision of teaching outside the classroom.

Teaching outside the classroom is particularly valuable because students build their knowledge through interaction with the physical and social environment — i.e. their surroundings (Husanović-Pejnović, 2011: 52). It should be noted that for many students, lessons outside the classroom may be the only opportunity to visit a museum, gallery or theatre;

therefore, the inability to participate in such activities can have particularly serious consequences (Kujundžić & Bednjanec, 2020).

### **Application of teaching outside the classroom in the subject Science and Social Studies**

Teaching outside the classroom serves as an important link between school and real life and constitutes an indispensable part of modern education. Both out-of-classroom and field teaching emphasise the value of experiential learning through direct contact with nature. Field teaching is the most widespread form of teaching outside the classroom, which underlines its practical importance for elementary education.

According to Bogut (2017), Borsos et al. (2018), the importance and necessity of conducting lessons outside the classroom is emphasised, especially in today's society where children are increasingly engaged in indoor activities due to technological developments (television, video games, internet). The lack of comprehensive research on methods of conducting fieldwork and its scope in science teaching, as well as the limited availability of suitable spaces for conducting lessons outside the classroom, point to the need for further studies examining the potential of this teaching method. Existing research shows that both elementary school students and teachers possess limited knowledge of plant and animal species in their immediate environment.

Borsos et al. (2018) developed a model of outdoor teaching that has proven effective as it encourages and motivates students to learn more about nature, plants and animals. This approach supports the development of a deeper connection with nature, fosters appreciation for nature through school engagement, and with the input and professional guidance of their teachers, supports a better understanding of the environment they live in and how to care for it.

In today's multicultural society, it is vital that students actively and effectively acquire competencies related to cultural heritage through various forms of learning outside the classroom. This includes discovery learning, exploration and direct encounters with the rich spectrum of cultural heritage that form the basis for lifelong learning. According to Vasilj and Letina (2019), education aimed at appreciating and preserving the various forms of national cultural heritage forms the basis for developing the appreciation and protection of European and global heritage.

The knowledge, skills and values acquired through these activities support students in shaping their identities amid significant social change and cultural pluralism, promote understanding and respect for others and for those who are different, and encourage active and responsible participation in society. Zelembz, Žižanović and Lukaš (2022) report that analyses of curricula indicate that extracurricular education is sufficiently represented in elementary schools, encompassing various forms of implementation that recognise its importance and incorporate different models of application in their educational practice.

Didactic and methodological solutions for teaching outside the classroom should be based on the principles of modern teaching and curriculum design that promotes education as a cooperative process between students and teachers. This approach places the student — with their wishes, needs and interests — at the centre of the learning process.

## **Methodology**

### ***Research aim***

According to the national classification of statistical regions, Continental Croatia is one of the key regions of the Republic of Croatia and is rich in natural, cultural, sacral, historical, and other resources that can serve as fundamental sources of knowledge for learning through outdoor education. The aim of this study was to explore the possibilities for implementing outdoor education in Continental Croatia, particularly within the five Slavonian counties that belong to this region: Virovitica-Podravina County, Požega-Slavonia County, Brod-Posavina County, Osijek-Baranja County, and Vukovar-Srijem County.

### ***Research method and procedure***

A qualitative research approach was employed. The study was based on content analysis of materials available on the official websites of the tourist boards of the five Slavonian counties, with data collected up to 1 April 2025. In accordance with the NUTS 2 statistical classification, the spatial unit selected for the study was Eastern Croatia – Slavonia and Baranja, encompassing the five associated counties as defined in the NUTS 3 statistical classification: Virovitica-Podravina County, Požega-Slavonia County, Brod-Posavina County, Osijek-Baranja County, and Vukovar-Srijem County. The analysed content was categorised into the following groups: natural sites; institutions and municipal facilities; cultural and

religious institutions; and other resources—a category most frequently comprising various local events and manifestations. The results indicate that the natural and cultural resources of Continental Croatia have considerable potential to serve as suitable locations for the implementation of outdoor education.

### **Research results**

This section presents the results of the research. The grouped data are displayed in tabular form to facilitate the classification of the findings. Table 1 presents the spatial units within the statistical regions of the Republic of Croatia, with the relevant counties highlighted in blue, serving as the framework for organising the results of the analysis.

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA	NUTS 2 and spatial units within the statistical region		Counties (NUTS 3)
	NUTS 2 CONTINENTAL CROATIA (CC)	<i>Northern Croatia</i>	
			VŽ – Varaždin County
			MŽ – Međimurje County
			KKŽ – Koprivnica-Križevci County
<i>Central Croatia</i>			GŽG – City of Zagreb
			ZGŽ – Zagreb County
			KŽ – Karlovac County
			BBŽ – Bjelovar-Bilogora County
			SMŽ – Sisak-Moslavina County
<i>Eastern Croatia – Slavonia and Baranja</i>			VPŽ – Virovitica-Podravina County
			PSŽ – Požega-Slavonia County
			BPŽ – Brod-Posavina County
			OBŽ – Osijek-Baranja County
		VSŽ – Vukovar-Srijem County	
NUTS 2 ADRIATIC CROATIA (AC)	<i>Istria, Lika, and the Littoral</i>		PGŽ – Primorje-Gorski Kotar County
			LSŽ – Lika-Senj County
			IŽ – Istra County
	<i>Southern Croatia – Dalmatia</i>		ZŽ – Zadar County
			ŠKŽ – Šibenik-Knin County
			SDŽ – Split-Dalmatia County
			DNŽ – Dubrovnik-Neretva County

**Table 1.** Spatial units and counties according to the statistical regions of the Republic of Croatia.

Table 2 shows the results of the analysis of the natural-geographical and cultural-historical characteristics of the Virovitica-Podravina County. The results of the content analysis are

divided into the following categories: natural sites, institutions and public facilities, cultural facilities, religious facilities, and other resources.

County Code	Virovitica-Podravina County	N
Natural Sites	Papuk Nature Park, Rupnica Geological Nature Monument, Skakavac Waterfall, Lisičine Arboretum, the Slatina Mammoth Tree (giant sequoia), the Drava River landscape, educational trail "In the Embrace of the Drava", Edite Schubert Promenade, Park of the Janković Castle, Eco Spot Jankovac	10
Institutions & Public Facilities	Agrotourism Complex Pustara Višnjica, Podravina Excursion Site Zlatni Klas in Otrovanec, Public Institution Papuk Nature Park / Area of Papuk Nature Park – UNESCO Global Geopark, Public Institution for the Management of Protected Natural Areas and the Ecological Network of Virovitica-Podravina County / Area of the UNESCO Mura–Drava–Danube Transboundary Biosphere Reserve, Jankovac Mountain Lodge	5
Cultural Institutions	Geo Info Centre Voćin, Visitor and Interpretation Center EPIcenter Sequoia Slatina, Križnica Visitor Centre, Drava Story Visitor Centre in Noskovci, Tea House Visitor Centre – Oasis of Peace, Interpretation Centre House of Petar Preradović, Virovitica City Museum, Slatina Heritage Museum, Janković Castle Visitor Centre, Pejačević Castle, Janković Manor, Ružica Town (Ruins)	12
Religious Institutions	Monastery of St. Nicholas in Orahovica, Basilica of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Voćin, Church of St. Teresa of Ávila in Suhopolje, Church of St. Barbara in Sladojevci, Franciscan Monastery and Church of St. Roch in Virovitica, Monastery Treasury, Frescoes by Russian Icon Painters in Sladojevci, Aršanj – Chapel of St. Martin on Kladarski Hill, Church of St. Vitus in Pitomača, Church of St. Luke the Evangelist in Lukač, Church of St. John the Baptist in Špišić Bukovica, Church of St. Mary Magdalene in Sopje, Church of St. John the Baptist in Crnac, Church of St. Peter the Apostle in Čadavica, Church of St. Elijah the Prophet in Gradina, Church of St. Joseph in Slatina, Church of the Finding of the Holy Cross in Orahovica, Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Nova Bukovica	17
Other Resources	Ferry on the Drava River, Suspension Pedestrian Bridge, Nobility Route, Spiritual Experience Route, Green Route, Cycling along the Drava River, Birdwatching along the Drava River	7
TOTAL:		51

**Table 2.** Research results on potential natural-geographic and cultural-historical resources of Virovitica-Podravina County for use in outdoor *Science and Social Studies* education.

The results of the analysis indicate that Virovitica-Podravina County is rich in resources for outdoor education (N=51), with the highest numbers found in the categories of religious institutions (N=17) and cultural institutions (N=12). In the case of Požega-Slavonia County, the analysis reveals a higher representation of resources across all categories, except for the “other resources” category. The results are presented in Table 3.

County Code	Požega-Slavonia County	N
Natural Sites	Lipik Park and Stud Farm (Jelka’s Trail, Jelka’s Bench, Jelka’s Hill), Omanovac and Slavonski Banovac Hills in Pakrac, Papuk Nature Park, Sovsko Lake, Zvečevo Geo-educational Point, Trenkovo Park, Kutjevo Park, Natura 2000 ecological network, Trbušnjak Cave, Rastik Cave, Lipizzaner and Marten Educational Trail, Starac Educational Trail in Pleternica, Dr. Andrija Štampar Educational Trail in Brodski Drenovac	13

Institutions & Public Facilities	Duboka Adrenaline Park, Duboka Camping Rest Area, Pjeskara Picnic Site, Raminac Picnic Site, Pakurnovac Picnic Site, Omanovac Picnic Site, Duboka Adrenaline Park	7
Cultural Institutions	Interpretation Centre Terra Panonica in Pleternica, Požega House Visitor Centre, House of the Pannonian Sea Visitor-Educational Centre in Velika, State Stud Farm Lipik, Iron Age Trail Cultural Route of the Danube Region, Plague Pillar on Baroque Square in Požega, Monument to Friar Luka Ibrišimović, Old Town Požega – Baroque Cultural-Sacral Core of Požega, Old Town Velika, Old Town Kaptol, Old Town Pakrac, Old Town Viškovci, Dolački Old Town, Baron Trenk Castle (Trenkovo), Baron Trenk Castle (Pakrac), Kutjevo Castle, Noble Cellar, Rudina Archaeological Site, Kaptol Archaeological Site, Kušević Manor, Čaklovac – Čaklovac Hillfort, Kursalon in Lipik, Antun’s Spring in Lipik, Janković Complex, Bećarac Square in Pleternica, Holy Trinity Square in Požega, Graševina Square, Matko Peić Square, Diocesan Museum, Požega City Museum, Bećarac Museum in Pleternica, Pakrac City Museum, Museum of Military and War History, Požega City Library, Croatian Library and Reading Room Pleternica, Kutjevo Public Library and Reading Room, Lipik City Library and Reading Room, Požega City Theatre, Lipik Multicultural Center	39
Religious Institutions	Diocese of Požega, Baroque Cathedral of St. Teresa of Ávila, Cathedral of St. Teresa of Ávila in Požega, Treasury of the Požega Cathedral, Shrine of Our Lady of Tears in Pleternica, Monastery of the Sisters of St. Vincent in Požega, Gothic Church in Tornje, Church of St. Lawrence in Požega, Chapel of St. Andrew in Brezine, Church of St. John the Baptist (Badljevina), Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Kutjevo), Church of St. Augustine Bishop (Velika), Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Vetovo), Church of St. Michael the Archangel (Stražeman), Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Pakrac), Church of St. Nicholas (Pleternica), Church of the Holy Spirit in Požega	17
Other Resources	Duboka Camping Rest Area, Story of the Pannonian Sea: House of the Pannonian Sea, Požega Mountain Trail (PPO – six checkpoints), Hiking and Running Routes, Iron Age Trail Cultural Route of the Danube Region	5
TOTAL:		81

**Table 3.** Research results on potential natural-geographical and cultural-historical resources of Požega-Slavonia County for use in outdoor *Science and Social Studies* education.

The results of the analysis show that Požega-Slavonia County is rich in resources for outdoor education (N = 81), with the highest numbers recorded in the categories of cultural institutions (N = 39) and religious institutions (N = 17), which contrasts with the results of the previously analysed county. A significant number of natural resources was also identified (N = 13), however the results indicate that this county is particularly rich in cultural and religious assets. With regard to Brod-Posavina County, the findings indicate a higher representation of resources in the category of “institutions and public facilities” (N = 17), which is notably greater than in the two previously analysed counties. The results are presented in Table 4.

County Code	Brod-Posavina County	N
Natural Sites	Special Forest Vegetation Reserve Muški Bunar, Special Forest Vegetation Reserve Prašnik, Significant Landscape Pašnjak Iva,	9

	Special Ornithological Reserve Jelas Fishponds, Special Ornithological Reserve Bara Dvorina, Significant Landscape Gajna, Ljeskove Vode Lake, Petnja Lake, Bebrina Adrenaline Forest	
Institutions & Public Facilities	Mlaka Picnic Site, Strmac Picnic Site, Pljuskarica Picnic Site, Popovićevo Grove Picnic Site, Stribor's Forest Picnic Site, Bunker Paintball Club and Picnic Site, Poloj Sports and Recreation Centre, Sports Facilities in Nova Gradiška, Sports Facilities in Slavonski Brod, Selna Pool, Weekend Settlement Splavarska Street, Land Art Park Arteco Pavletić, Quad Track 'Ivica from the Goat', Olanović Stud Farm, Obstacle Course Hippodrome, Hospitality and Accommodation Ranch Ramarin with Stud Farm, Vijuš City Pools	17
Cultural Institutions	Kulmer Castle in Cernik, Brod Fortress (Festung), Eco-Ethno House in Vrpolje, House of Tamburica – Slavonian Musical Fairytale, Brlić House, Ivan Brlić-Mažuranić Theatre and Concert Hall, Tamburica Museum, Ivan Meštrović Memorial Gallery, Museum of Modern Art, Ružić Gallery, Nova Gradiška City Museum, Brod-Posavina Museum, Memorials in Okučani	13
Religious Institutions	Franciscan Monastery in Cernik, Franciscan Monastery in Slavonski Brod	2
Other Resources	Wine and Gastronomy Event 'Švarglijada', Carnival Horse Riding Tradition, Event 'In the World of Ivana Brlić-Mažuranić's Fairytales', International Accordion Festival 'Bela pl. Panthy', Cycling Event 'I Like My Bike', Lively Manes (Equestrian Event), Event 'In the Middle of the Market, in the Middle of Perkovci', Days of Traditional Culture in Cernik, Nova Gradiška Music Festival, Brodsko Kolo Folklore Festival, Antunovo Event in Batrina, Oriovac Harvest Festival, Staroslatina Summer Festival, Oj Sibirju Folklore Review, Brodsko Musical Summer Cultural Festival, Oriovita Agricultural Fair, Folklore Review 'We'll See on St. Elijah Who Has a Suitor', Ethno Event 'Kolo on Two Sheaves', Ethno Event 'Silk Rustles, Embroidery Spreads, and Podvinje Smells of Jam and Brandy', Stupnik Grape Harvest, Ižimača Event, Lace Exhibition 'Sikirevci Motifs', St. Catherine's Old Crafts Fair, Event 'At the Farm with Bethlehem'	24
TOTAL:		65

**Table 4.** Research results on potential natural-geographical and cultural-historical resources of Brod-Posavina County for use in outdoor *Science and Social Studies* education.

The results of the analysis show that Brod-Posavina County is rich in cultural events, which also represent its most numerous resource (N = 24). In contrast, the category of “religious institutions” is very weakly represented (N = 2). Table 4 also includes the results of the analysis of Osijek-Baranja County, which indicate that this Slavonian county leads in all categories except for “institutions and public facilities” (N = 7), and can therefore be considered the richest in terms of potential resources for outdoor education.

County Code	Osijek-Baranja County	N
Natural Sites	King Tomislav Park, Parks around the Fortress (Tvrđa), Sakuntala Park, Topolje Danube Backwater in Draž, Baranja Gullies, Location of the "Magnificent Suleiman" Bridge in Darda – Lake Đola, Old Basalt Mine and Large Cave near Popovac village, Lookout on Bansko Hill and the Vineyards of Vina Belje Winery, Kopački Rit Nature Park, Nature Monument – Steppe Meadow in Bilje, Bilje Lake (Old Drava),	28

	Green Island on the Danube near Batina, Lakes near Grabovac village, Strossmayer Park in Đakovo, Lake "Borovik" in Đakovo, Lake "Jošava" in Đakovo, Lakes "Bajer" in Đakovo, Lake "Mlinac" in Đakovačka Breznica, Park next to Pejačević Castle, Lake "Lapovac" near Našice, Castle Park in Donji Miholjac, Special Ornithological Reserve "Podpanj", Park next to Valpovo Castle, Old Drava Backwater, Jugovača Pond, Cerje Forest, Educational Trail of the Significant Landscape of Erdut, Danube Hiking Trail	
Institutions & Public Facilities	Copacabana Bathing Area, Osijek Zoo, Botanical and Zoo Garden "Garden Fairy Tale" in Čepin, State Stud Farm Đakovo, "Three Wise Men" Picnic Area, "Old Drava" Picnic Area near Donji Miholjac, Šećeransko Lake Picnic Area	7
Cultural Institutions	Water Gate and City Walls in Tvrđa, Fort Korodvar, General Barracks, Ethno Village Karanac, Šokac House in Topolje, Eco Center Zlatna Greda, Rural Estate Biser Baranje, Ethno Village Bocanjevci – Ethno Houses Apin Court and Stepina House, Holy Trinity Square in Tvrđa (Osijek), European Avenue in Osijek, Urania Cinema in Osijek, Europa Cinema in Osijek, Pedestrian Bridge in Osijek, Art Nouveau Fountain in Osijek, County Assembly Building, County Palace in Osijek, Dr. Ante Starčević Square in Osijek, Freedom Square in Osijek, Pejačević Castle in Osijek, Plague Column of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Osijek, Kragujević House, Ban Josip Jelačić Square, Crown Fortress – Picnic Area near Catacombs in Osijek, Museum of Slavonia in Osijek, Archaeological Museum in Osijek, Museum of Fine Arts in Osijek, State Archives in Osijek, Gloria Maris – Shell Museum in Osijek, City Galleries – Waldinger, Kazamat and Barutana (Osijek), Vernissage Gallery in Osijek, Osijek Idea Factory, "Autići" Collectors' Club, Knifer Gallery, Rural Museum of Old Crafts "Street of Forgotten Time" in Karanac, Memorial Complex of the Battle of Batina, Esterházy Castle in Darda, Castle in Kneževo, Tikveš Castle Complex, Eugene of Savoy Castle in Bilje, Heritage Museum and Wine Cellar Baranyai Julia in Zmajevac, Ethnological Centre of Baranja Heritage in Beli Manastir, Baranja Zoological Museum – Kopačevo, Cultural Center of Beli Manastir – Theatre and Cinema Hall, City Theater Beli Manastir, Cultural House Darda – Theatre and Cinema Hall, Đakovština Museum in Đakovo, Memorial Museum of Bishop Josip Juraj Strossmayer in Đakovo, Cultural and Tourist Centre "Lucija Karalić" in Gorjani, Đakovo Cultural Centre, Pejačević Family Castle – "Big Castle" and "Small Castle", Bizik Educational Park – Zoo in Našice Markovac, Našice Heritage Museum, Prandau Castle in Donji Miholjac, Mailath Castle in Donji Miholjac, Valpovo Prandau-Normann Castle, Medieval Tower in Valpovo, Valpovo Region Museum, "Matija Petar Katančić" Cultural Centre in Valpovo, "Belišće" Museum, "Sigmund Romberg" Cultural Centre in Belišće, Patriarchal Court in Dalj	60
Religious Institutions	Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Osijek, Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, Co-cathedral of St. Peter and Paul, Church of St. James the Apostle, Capuchin Monastery in Osijek, Church of the Most Glorious Name of Mary, Chapel of St. Roch, Church of St. Peter and Paul near Topolje, Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in Čeminac, Organ in the Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Duboševica, Reformed Church in Lug, Organ in the Church of St. Wendelin in Jagodnjak, Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes near Popovac, Cathedral of St. Peter in Đakovo, Bishop's Court in Đakovo, Parish Church of All Saints in Đakovo, Marian Shrine in Dragotin, Jewish Cemetery in Đakovo, Templar Church of St. Martin, Church and Franciscan Monastery of St. Anthony of Padua, Bedemgrad – Medieval Fortified Town, Monument to Emperor Franz Joseph I in Donji Miholjac, Parish Church of St. Michael the Archangel in Donji Miholjac, Court Chapel of the Holy Trinity, Parish	36

	Church of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Valpovo, Chapel of St. Roch in Valpovo, Organ in the Court Chapel of the Holy Trinity, Gutmann Palace in Belišće, Pekmez Street in Belišće, Memorial Train of the Slavonian-Podravina Narrow-Gauge Railway, Green Houses or Railway Houses in Belišće, Shrine of St. Anne in Bistrinci, Erdut Tower / Old Town Erdut, Church of St. Demetrius in Dalj, Shrine of Our Lady of Refuge in Aljmaš, Chapel of Sorrows	
Other Resources	Ferry on the Drava River, Watermill on the Drava, City Tram, Promenade and Winter Port, Monument to the Red Fičo, Graffiti – Osijek the Unconquered City, Osijek Antique Fair, Osijek Summer Nights, Advent in Osijek, New Year’s Eve – New Year’s Jump into the Drava, Easter in Osijek, Antunovo – Church Feast (Kermes) in Tvrđa, Flower Festival, Carnival Horse Riding in Čepin, Cultural Event Čepin Sunflowers, Corn Festival in Čepin Martinci, Pannonian Challenge in Osijek, Re-art Festival, Baranja Bećarac, Traditional Folk Custom Pudarina, Harvest Celebrations in Batina, Baranja Maskers (Carnival), Carnival Horse Riding in Baranja, Spring Fair in Karanac, Winter Fair and Čvarak Fest in Karanac, Maypole Dance in Kotlina, Tarda Fest Festival, Kakas-ütés (Vardarac, Hungarian Carnival Custom), Fishermen’s Days in Kopačevo, Ethno Meetings in Bilje, Day of Eugene of Savoy Castle, SLAMA – Land Art Festival, Pottery Workshop Asztalos in Suza, Annual Spring Procession of Queens or Ljelje from Gorjani, Cultural Event Strossmayer Days, Midsummer Bonfires, Đakovo Embroideries Festival, Šokac Alka in Đakovački Selci, Đakovo Maskers, Dionysian Festival, Lipizzaner Christmas Ball, Olympics of Old Sports in Brođanci, Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary Feast	43
TOTAL:		174

**Table 5.** Research results on potential natural-geographical and cultural-historical resources of Osijek-Baranja County for use in outdoor *Science and Social Studies* education.

Osijek-Baranja County, with a total of 174 identified resources, is the richest county in terms of overall availability and demonstrates strong representation across all categories. It stands out particularly for its high number of religious institutions, cultural and historical institutions, and various cultural events. Given that Osijek-Baranja County is the most populous in the region and functions as the economic and cultural centre of Slavonia and Baranja, these results are not unexpected.

Table 6 presents the results of the analysis of potential resources in Vukovar-Srijem County. With a total of 72 identified resources, this county falls into the category of moderately developed counties in terms of potential natural-geographical and cultural-historical resources for use in outdoor education in *Science and Social Studies*.

County Code	Vukovar-Srijem County	N
Natural Sites	Birdwatching Centre Nijemci – Sopotac Picnic Site, Adica Forest Park, Bosut Promenade of Dionizije Švigelj, Kunjevci Forest, Spačva Forests	5
Institutions & Public Facilities	Acin Salaš in Tordinci, Archaeological Park and Picnic Site Sopot, "Snašini kućari" in Gradište	3

Cultural Institutions	Bioecological-Educational Center Otočki Virovi, Vučedol Culture Museum in Vukovar, Eltz Castle in Vukovar, Odescalchi Castle in Ilok, Vučedol Culture Museum, City Museum of Vinkovci, Birth House of Ivan Kozarac, Čardak in Županja – Stjepan Gruber Heritage Museum, City Museum Vinkovci, Fortress of Nikola of Ilok, Interpretation Centre "Ilok – Gateway to Croatia", Luka Natali Heritage Museum in the Pastoral Centre in Nijemci, City Museum in Vukovar, Birth House of Lavoslav Ružička, Stjepan Gruber Heritage Museum in Županja, Suvara – Horse-powered Mill, Archaeological Site Virgrad, Forestry Museum in Bošnjaci, Archaeological Site Vučedol, Cradle of Europe – Vinkovci Archaeological Site, Medieval Archaeological Site Virgrad, Baroque Core of Vukovar, Vukovar Water Tower – Symbol of Croatian Unity, Workers' Hall (Grand Hotel), Central Kirchbaum Pharmacy, Stagecoach Post Office Building, City Magistrate Building, Srijem County Palace, Old Water Tower, Medieval Core of Ilok, Baroque Core of Vinkovci, Memorial Site – Vukovar Hospital 1991, Ovčara Memorial Home, Ovčara Mass Grave, Memorial Cemetery of Homeland War Victims, Homeland War Memorial Centre, Memorial Home for Croatian Defenders on Trpinjska Road, Central Cross at the Confluence of Vuka and Danube, Vukovar Water Tower – Symbol of Croatian Unity	39
Religious Institutions	Church and Shrine of St. John of Capistrano, Church of St. Catherine in Nijemci, Church of St. Luke – Lučica – Lipovac, Church of St. Peter and Paul – Šarengard, Church of St. Elijah at Meraja in Vinkovci, Rokovci Walls – Rokovci, Shrine of Our Lady at Vodica – Ilača, Shrine of Our Lady of Good Hope – Šumanovci, Shrine of Our Lady Help of Christians – Sotin, Church of St. Bartholomew – Novi Mikanovci, Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Bapska, Church of St. John of Capistrano in Ilok, Franciscan Monastery and Church of St. Philip and James, Chapel of St. Roch in Vukovar, Franciscan Monastery and Church of St. Philip and James in Vukovar, Church of St. Nicholas, Chapel of St. Paraskeva at Dobra Voda, Bečarski Cross	18
Other Resources	Roman Days (June 5–7) in Vinkovci, Vinkovci Autumns (September 11–20), Cultural-Tourism Event "All for One – Croatia's Best", Festival of Danube Countries – Vukovar Film Festival (July 1–4), DunavArt Festival (June 18), "Our Daily Bread – Harvest and Threshing in the Past" (July 4), Vinkovo in Ilok	7
TOTAL:		72

**Table 6.** Research results on the potential natural-geographical and cultural-historical resources of Vukovar-Srijem County for use in outdoor *Science and Social Studies* education.

The research results on the resources of Vukovar-Srijem County are almost identical to those of Požega-Slavonia County: both counties have the same number of cultural institutions (N = 39), which is also the most represented category. The results in the remaining categories are also similar. Among these, religious institutions follow (N = 18), followed by other resources (N = 7), natural sites (N = 5), and institutions and public facilities (N = 3).

County	VPC	PSC	BPC	OBC	VSC	N
Natural Sites	10	13	9	28	5	<b>65</b>
Institutions & Public Facilities	5	7	17	7	3	<b>39</b>
	12	39	13	60	39	<b>163</b>

Cultural Institutions						
Religious Institutions	17	17	2	36	18	<b>90</b>
Other Resources	7	5	24	43	7	<b>86</b>
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>443</b>

**Table 7.** Research results on potential natural-geographical and cultural-historical resources in all five Slavonian counties of Continental Croatia.

### Discussion

The research results point to numerous local resources that may serve as learning sources within the immediate environment of Continental Croatia. Osijek-Baranja County has the highest number of such resources (N = 174), while Virovitica-Podravina County has the lowest (N = 51), both serving as potential sources of knowledge for the implementation of outdoor education. In contrast to these territorial units, the remaining three counties—Požega-Slavonia (N = 81), Brod-Posavina (N = 65), and Vukovar-Srijem (N = 72)—have a relatively similar number of potential sites for outdoor education.

When comparing the selected resources that can serve as locations or objects for learning outside the classroom, cultural institutions are the most represented category (N = 163), whereas institutions and municipal facilities are the least represented (N = 39). A closer analysis of the individual counties and the collected data reveals that Virovitica-Podravina County has the highest number of religious institutions (N = 17); Brod-Posavina County leads in other educational resources (N = 24), including customs, events, fairs, festivals, and exhibitions; while the remaining three counties—Požega-Slavonia, Osijek-Baranja, and Vukovar-Srijem—are the richest in cultural landmarks.

Overall, the data indicate that cultural institutions represent the most frequently identified sources of learning across almost all counties, whereas institutions and municipal facilities are the least represented. The territorial unit offering the greatest diversity of natural-geographical and cultural-historical sites as potential locations for outdoor education is Osijek-Baranja County.

It is important to note that the results of the content analysis are based on the resources listed on the official websites of the analysed counties to ensure methodological consistency. Consequently, the findings depend to a considerable extent on the level of regular updating of

these websites, which may not be comprehensive. The practical value of this research is reflected in its empirical contribution, providing an overview of potential natural, cultural, religious, and other educational factors in Continental Croatia that can serve as local resources for the implementation of outdoor education. This study responds to the identified need for more up-to-date research on the possibilities of implementing this form of instruction, as highlighted in previous studies on outdoor education. The data collected and consolidated in this study are intended to assist educators in selecting appropriate teaching locations and facilitate the planning and implementation of curriculum-based learning outcomes through outdoor learning.

### **Conclusion**

Outdoor education refers to instruction conducted outside the classroom with the aim of fostering learning within students' the immediate living environment. This form of teaching enables students to develop a deeper understanding of curriculum content through hands-on experiences and interaction with their surroundings. Educators have long recognised the influence of spatial context on the effectiveness of instruction and the value of experiential learning in real-world settings.

The benefits of outdoor learning are manifold. Learning beyond the classroom familiarises students with primary sources of knowledge and allows them to connect school subjects with real-life contexts. Outdoor education supports the acquisition of fundamental general knowledge and contributes to the holistic development of students' competencies.

Continental Croatia is one of the most significant subregions of central and northwestern Croatia, covering approximately one-third of the country's total territory. It is rich in natural-geographical and cultural-historical resources, making it the most diverse tourist region in Croatia. Osijek-Baranja County offers the highest number of potential educational resources for outdoor learning, particularly in the form of cultural-historical landmarks and other educational assets, while Virovitica-Podravina County offers the fewest. The remaining three counties—Požega-Slavonia, Brod-Posavina, and Vukovar-Srijem—display relatively comparable numbers of potential outdoor learning resources, primarily of a cultural-historical character.

According to the data collected, the selected spatial units of Eastern Croatia—Slavonia and Baranja—are of particular significance, as they contain numerous natural and cultural-

historical resources with strong potential for the organisation and implementation of various forms of outdoor education. A comparative analysis of the data suggests that Continental Croatia possesses a greater abundance of cultural-historical resources than natural-geographical ones. This subregion is rich in a variety of natural, cultural, historical, theatrical, literary, and religious sites, all of which represent an invaluable source of content for outdoor teaching and learning.

The research has shown that Continental Croatia constitutes a valuable repository of natural and cultural-historical heritage that can serve as a foundation for knowledge acquisition through outdoor education. This form of education offers numerous and far-reaching benefits, promoting the development of comprehensive and lasting knowledge through active learning in students' local environments.

The relevance of this study lies in its grounding in real-world, empirically verifiable educational practice and challenges. The selection of the research topic was influenced by certain limitations, including outdated or poorly maintained official websites and unstructured or unclear data on the websites of the tourist boards of the analysed counties.

Future research should focus on examining teachers' perspectives and attitudes regarding the frequency and methods of implementing outdoor education, as well as the relationship between personal preferences and the use of outdoor resources. Such research could help identify the criteria and sources educators rely on when selecting outdoor learning locations. The present study may therefore serve as a foundation for further research into potential outdoor learning locations in other spatial units and statistical regions of the Republic of Croatia.

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## **IZVANNASTAVNI RESURSI KONTINENTALNE HRVATSKE U NASTAVI ZNANOSTI I DRUŠTVENIH ZNANOSTI**

### **Sažetak**

Izvannastavno poučavanje je poseban oblik nastave koji se odvija izvan učionice, s primarnim ciljem omogućiti učenicima da kroz praktično iskustvo steknu nastavni sadržaj u autentičnom okruženju. Ovaj rad opisuje koncept izvannastavne, njegove vrste i oblike, njegov obrazovni značaj, pravni okvir za njegovu provedbu te moguću primjenu u nastavi *znanosti i društvenih znanosti*. Nakon analize sadržaja, istraživački dio daje pregled potencijalnih prirodno-geografskih i kulturno-povijesnih resursa u pet županija u kontinentalnoj Hrvatskoj. Cilj ovog rada je naglasiti nužnost uvođenja izvannastavne nastave u *predmetima znanosti i društvenih znanosti*, kao i njegove prednosti, s obzirom na to da takvo poučavanje omogućuje učenicima da izravno iskuse ono što uče, čime se poboljšava razumijevanje i dugoročno pamćenje predstavljenog sadržaja. Analiza sadržaja pokazuje da se najveći broj potencijalnih obrazovnih resursa za izvannastavnu nastavu nalazi u Osječko-baranjskoj županiji, prvenstveno u obliku kulturnih i povijesnih znamenitosti te drugih povezanih resursa. S obzirom na dobivene rezultate, može se zaključiti da je kontinentalna Hrvatska, jedna od glavnih podregija središnje i sjeverozapadne Hrvatske, koja obuhvaća otprilike trećinu ukupnog teritorija Republike Hrvatske, bogata raznolikim prirodno-geografskim i kulturno-povijesnim resursima prikladnim za izvannastavnu nastavu *iz znanosti i društvenih znanosti*.

**Ključne riječi:** izvannastavne aktivnosti, kontinentalna Hrvatska, kulturni i povijesni resursi, prirodni i geografski resursi