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# EOE 2026 CONFERENCE

## Outdoor Education in the Context of European Integration

*Connecting and Sharing - Outdoor Education as a Tool for  
Social and Cultural Integration*

### BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

5–8 October 2026  
CŠOD Bohinj, Slovenia

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EOE 2026 Conference

Outdoor Education in the Context of European Integration

Connecting and Sharing - Outdoor Education as a Tool for Social and Cultural Integration

5–8 October 2026, CŠOD Bohinj, Slovenia

*The international conference is organised within the framework of the project »Krepitev kompetenc strokovnih in vodstvenih delavcev na področju vodenja inovativnega vzgojno-izobraževalnega zavoda v obdobju od 2024 do 2028«, co-financed by the European Union through the European Social Fund Plus and by the Republic of Slovenia.*

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## WELCOME TO EOE 2026 CONFERENCE

**It is our great pleasure to welcome you to the EOE 2026 Conference** – Outdoor Education in the Context of European Integration, held from 5 to 8 October 2026 at CŠOD Bohinj in Slovenia.

The conference **brings together educators, researchers, youth workers, practitioners and other professionals from across Europe and beyond** to share knowledge, experience and perspectives on the role of outdoor education in today's changing society. With more than 140 participants from 25 countries, the conference provides **a valuable opportunity to connect people, ideas and practices across national and cultural boundaries.**

**The theme of this year's conference, "Connecting and Sharing – Outdoor Education as a Tool for Social and Cultural Integration," reflects the belief that learning outdoors can extend far beyond the acquisition of knowledge and skills.** Outdoor learning creates opportunities for cooperation, communication, mutual understanding and shared experiences. By bringing people together in natural environments, it can contribute to building relationships and strengthening a sense of belonging, while encouraging respect for cultural diversity.

The **European Outdoor Education Network (EOE)**, established in 1996, provides a platform for cooperation and exchange among organisations and individuals working in outdoor education and experiential learning. **Center šolskih in obšolskih dejavnosti (CŠOD)** is pleased to be an active member of this network and honoured to host the EOE annual conference in Bohinj.

Slovenia, with its diverse landscapes, rich natural heritage and established tradition of outdoor education, offers a meaningful setting for this year's conference. Bohinj provides an opportunity not only to discuss outdoor education, but also to experience the environment in which many of the ideas and practices presented at the conference take place.

**This Book of Abstracts brings together the contributions presented at the conference.** They represent a wide range of perspectives, research, practical experiences and examples from different educational and cultural contexts. We hope that these contributions will inspire further discussion, new partnerships and future projects, and encourage participants to continue sharing knowledge and experiences beyond the conference itself.

**We would like to thank all authors, presenters, participants, members of the EOE network and everyone involved in preparing and delivering the conference.** Their commitment and willingness to share make this gathering possible.

**We wish all participants an inspiring conference and many opportunities to connect and learn together. Welcome to Bohinj!**

Organising Committee



## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME:

| Monday, 5 October 2026 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 12.00 – 13.30          | Time for lunch                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
| 10.00 – 13.00          | Welcome and registration                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
| 14.00 – 14.30          | Official opening of the conference                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | Tomas Aylward, EOE chair                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | Jože Sodja, Mayor of Bohinj                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | Domen Uršič, CŠOD director                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
| 14.30 – 15.00          | <b>Keynote speaker, Florin Popa</b> , European commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture<br><b>Learning for Sustainability: Actions at EU Level</b><br><b>Moderator: Tomás Aylward</b> |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
| 15.00 – 15.30          | Coffee break                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
| 15.30 – 17.30          | Oral presentations – Parallel Sessions                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | <b>Yellow room</b><br>Moderator: Tomás Aylward                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Red room</b><br>Moderator: Mark Leather                                                                | <b>Green room</b><br>Moderator: Erika Eik Bjarkadottir                                                                                        |
| 15.30 – 16.00          | Gary Reid, Loretto School, United Kingdom, Scotland                                                                                                                                                                  | Barbara Kejžar, Matija Pogačnik, CŠOD, Slovenia                                                           | Kristina Fratrović, Snjezana Markovic-Zoraja, OŠ Dubovac, Croatia                                                                             |
|                        | A critical analysis on Outdoor learning integration in Secondary Schools in Scotland and Switzerland                                                                                                                 | Outdoor Education Without Borders: Mobility as a Pathway to European Collaboration                        | Interrelationships in Nature                                                                                                                  |
| 16.00 – 16.30          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Frances Harris, University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom                                               | Barbora Karpíšková, Petra Nejezchlebová, Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální vzdělávání Brno, příspěvková organizace, Czech Republic |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Learning Journeys in the Woods: Understanding Children's Diverse Educational Experiences in Forest School | Digital Ecology in Practice: A Synthesis of Czech Methodologies for Sustainable AI Education                                                  |
| 16.30 – 17.00          | Mareile Betz, Munster Technological University, Kerry, Tralee, Ireland                                                                                                                                               | Tina Križnar, Biotehniški center Naklo, Slovenia                                                          | Robert Franjić, CŠOD, Slovenia                                                                                                                |
|                        | "What if I don't have a world to grow up in?" - Posthuman Pedagogies as a way forward in Irish Climate Action and Sustainable Development Education                                                                  | Practical Training in the Nockberge Biosphere Reserve                                                     | Survival week - nature based outdoor program                                                                                                  |
| 17.00 – 17.30          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Selima Negros, Annalisa Silvanini, Francesca Domenichella, Irene Corazza, Marco Marcassa, Italy           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Circle time at forest school: shared practice or pluralistic concept?                                     |                                                                                                                                               |
| 17.30 – 18.30          | EOE Annual General Meeting                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
| 18.00 – 19.30          | Time for Dinner                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
| 20.00 – 21.30          | Special Interest Group Meeting: Introductions, Networking and Planning                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | 1. Higher Education, Yellow room, Moderator: Mark Leather                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | 2. Researchers, Red room, Moderator: Karen Seierøe Barfod                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | 3. Outdoor centres, Green room, Moderator: Erika Eik Bjarkadottir                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | 4. Early Years Education Outdoors, Blue room, Moderator: Tomás Aylward                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | 5. Inclusion & Diversity (breaking barriers), Dining room, Moderator: Jorge Gimeno Pawlowski                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |
|                        | 6. Outdoor Education in Schools, Dining room, Moderator: Irena Kokalj                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                               |



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| <b>Tuesday, 6 October 2026</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 7.00 – 7.30                    | <b>Breaking Through the Morning Mist</b> , Andraž Nahtigal                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 7.30 – 8.30                    | <b>Time for breakfast</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 9.00 – 10.00                   | <b>Keynote speaker, Mark Manns</b> , UNESCO, Section of Education for Sustainable Development, France<br><b>Action-oriented pedagogies - promoting ESD through experiential learning</b><br><b>Moderator: Jorge Gimeno Pawlowski</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 10.00 – 10.30                  | <b>Coffee break</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 10.30 – 12.00                  | <b>Oral presentations – Parallel Sessions</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                | <b>Yellow room</b><br><b>Moderator: Mareile Betz</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Red room</b><br><b>Moderator: Irena Kokalj</b>                                                                   | <b>Green room</b><br><b>Moderator: Graham French</b>                                                                                  | <b>Blue room</b><br><b>Moderator: Dejan Putrle</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 10.30 – 11.00                  | <b>Eugenio Otero-Urtaza</b> , University of Santiago de Compostela. Facultad de Formación del Profesorado, Spain                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <b>Tamara Chakvetadze</b> , Bunebare - Caucasus Outdoor Education Institute, Georgia                                | <b>Karen Seierge Barfod</b> , VIA University College, Denmark                                                                         | <b>Ilona Tandzegolskiene-Bielaglove</b> , Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                | Ruins in nature and the awakening of historical imagination in educators                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | From Intuition to Profession: Building Outdoor Education Systems in Emerging Contexts – The BUNEBARE Model          | Is There Any Difference? A Comparative Study of Indoor and Outdoor Teaching using Andreas Helmke's Framework of 'Good Teaching'       | Exploring Outdoor Education Practices in Schools: An Ethnographic Study of Teachers Implementing PhenoBL                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| 11.00 – 11.30                  | <b>Martin Gröger</b> , University of Siegen, Germany                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Kateřina Gorčíková, Iva Frýzová</b> , Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta, Czech Republic                | <b>Tadej Debevec</b> , University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport, Slovenia                                                            | <b>Martyna Čuladienė</b> , Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|                                | The Breath of the Earth – Carbon Dioxide as a Mediator between Inorganic Matter and Organic Life                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | One opportunity is not enough – repeated use of authentic learning environments in primary science teacher training | Approaches to Outdoor Education at the Faculty of Sport, University of Ljubljana: Insights from Mountaineering courses                | Clarifying Outdoor Education in Formal Curricula: Towards Shared Understanding and Practice                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 11.30 – 12.00                  | <b>Natálie Čeplová</b> , Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta, Czech Republic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Žan Rode</b> , University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia                                           | <b>Jakob F. Thorsteinsson</b> , University of Iceland, Iceland<br><b>Mark Leather</b> , University of Plymouth, United Kingdom        | <b>Klemen Banko</b> , Zavod sv. Stanislava, Slovenia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|                                | Curriculum hidden in the university model school garden                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | The CREA+BIRD Project: Initial Phases and Insights from Slovenia                                                    | Under the Open Sky: Building a National Outdoor Studies Program on the Foundation of International Friendship                         | Opening the Future – Expanding Horizons                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 12.00 – 13.30                  | <b>Workshops – Parallel Sessions 90 min</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       | <b>12.00-12.30 Suzana Biteznik, OŠ Podčetrtek, Slovenia</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|                                | <b>Outdoor meeting point A</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Outdoor meeting point B</b>                                                                                      | <b>Outdoor meeting point C</b>                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                | <b>Lawrence Chapman</b> , UK East Anglian Inclusion Partners, United Kingdom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | <b>Vullings Floor, Aga Lešny</b> , Scale of Cooperation V.O.F., Netherlands                                         | <b>Petra Nejezchlebová, Eva Kazdová, Lenka Šimková</b> , Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální vzdělávání Brno, Czech Republic | <b>HOKUS POKUS</b> : Outdoor and experiential science learning as a bridge for collaboration and integration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|                                | Breaking Barriers 2027 and beyond: Bringing SEND Learners Together Across Europe Through Nature/adventure-Based Encounters                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | A Map in Unknown Territory: Designing Outdoor Learning Through The Scale of Cooperation                             | The School Garden as a Community Gathering Place                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 12.30 – 14.30                  | <b>Time for lunch</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 14.30 – 16.00                  | <b>Workshops – Parallel Sessions 90 min</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                | <b>Outdoor meeting point A</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Outdoor meeting point B</b>                                                                                      | <b>Outdoor meeting point C</b>                                                                                                        | <b>Outdoor meeting point D</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|                                | <b>Jorge Gimeno Pawlowski, Joanna Bochniarz</b> , Center for Innovative Education, Poland                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Brian Wright</b> , University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom                                                       | <b>Olli Kamunen</b> , Humak University of Applied Sciences, Finland                                                                   | <b>Barbora Michaluková</b> , Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta Czech Republic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|                                | From practice to system: The Center for Innovative Education's path toward a Regional Outdoor Learning Ecosystem                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Learning from each other's places: Bringing global diversity to place-responsive outdoor education                  | The Power of Stories: Capturing the Impact of Adventure Education                                                                     | The Observation of Nature not only at the School Garden                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 16.00 – 16.30                  | <b>Coffee break</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 16.30 – 18.00                  | <b>Poster presentation</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                | <b>Yellow room</b><br><b>Moderator: Gregor Marinšek</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Red room</b><br><b>Moderator: Mark Leather</b>                                                                   |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                | <b>Jure Rejec</b> , FSC International (FSC Adria-Balkan), Slovenia / Germany: A Multi-Stakeholder Model for Outdoor Education and Circular Entrepreneurship in the Adria-Balkan Region<br><b>Breogan Gómez Requejo</b> , JFK International School, Switzerland: Crossing Borders, Shaping Learning: Rethinking Outdoor Education through International Comparative Perspectives<br><b>Diana Vogetseder</b> , OSEANA, Austria: Connecting Local Practices and European Futures: Adult Education for Social Ecological Transformation<br><b>Diana Czajkowska</b> , Niespokojne Nogi, Poland: Just around the corner<br><b>Paulina Patro</b> , CEO Nature Coaching Institute, Poland: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Education: The Children in Nature Cards as a Practical Teaching Tool<br><b>Jari Kujala</b> , Finland: Third Way Empathy in Camp School: Supporting Social Learning through Outdoor Pedagogy<br><b>Jana Menkynová</b> , Daphne - Inštitút aplikovanej ekológie, Slovakia: Citizen Science with schools and public – example of Living Bratislava Initiative<br><b>Anna Fischerová</b> , TEREZA, Educational Centre, Czech Republic: Beyond the Classroom Walls: Turning Everyday Spaces into Powerful Learning Experiences<br><b>Pavla Lényiová, Dáša Kočvarová</b> , Daphne - Inštitút aplikovanej ekológie, Slovakia: Movement-based Nature Education for Early Childhood: The Innovative Approach |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       | <b>Domen Tominec</b> , University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport, Slovenia: Promoting Physical Activity and Social Inclusion in Mountain-Region Universities: The Erasmus+ Project Climb United – Ascend Together<br><b>Luka Praprotnik</b> , University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia: The Role of Outdoor Education in Understanding Biology: An Analysis of Early Childhood Education Students' Perceptions<br><b>Miguel Cons-Ferreiro</b> , University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain: The case of a relationship between two european universities in the natural environment: 2011-26<br><b>Martin Gröger</b> , University of Siegen, Germany: From experience to knowledge about glaciers in an outdoor laboratory and virtual learning environment<br><b>Frances Harris</b> , University of Hertfordshire, UK: Development of a Citizen Science Project to Teach and Engage Children and Young People with Nature<br><b>Agnieszka Kudraszow</b> , Fundacja trzy czte rył, <b>Urszula Namiotko</b> , University of Białystok, Poland: Nature as an Everyday Space for Formal Education: Twelve Years of the Puszczyk Nature-Based Education Model |
| 18.00 – 19.30                  | <b>Time for Dinner</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 20.00 – 21.00                  | <b>Marketplace</b> , presentation of participants' organisations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|                                | <b>Free evening activities - campfire</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |



| Wednesday, 7 October 2026 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7.00 – 7.30               | Morning Stretching in Nature, Tina Grm                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 7.30 – 8.30               | Time for breakfast                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 9.00 – 9.30               | <b>Keynote speaker, Sandi Vrabec</b> , Head of basic education department, Ministry of Education, Science and Youth Slovenia<br><b>The Slovenian Blueprint for Outdoor Education</b><br><b>Moderator: Karen Seierøge Barfod</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 9.30 – 10.00              | Coffee break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 10.00 – 12.00             | <b>Oral presentations and Workshop</b> – Parallel Sessions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   | <b>Workshops</b>                                                                                                                                   |
|                           | <b>Yellow room</b><br><b>Moderator: Jorge Gimeno Pawlowski</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | <b>Red room</b><br><b>Moderator: Jakob F. Thorsteinsson</b>                                                                                             | <b>Green room</b><br><b>Moderator: Tadej Debevec</b>                                                                                              | <b>Outdoor meeting point A</b>                                                                                                                     |
| 10.00 – 10.30             | <b>Veronika Lisjak Banko</b> , CIRIUS Kamnik, Slovenia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | <b>Verity Howell</b> , United Kingdom                                                                                                                   | <b>Graham French</b> , Bangor University, United Kingdom                                                                                          | <b>Ivana Poláčková</b><br>CEEV Živica, Slovakia<br><b>Workshop 10.00-11.30</b>                                                                     |
|                           | How to enable participation in outdoor activities for even the most health-challenged children and adolescents                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | How Refusal Could Be the Greatest Win: reflections on working with trauma-impacted children in care                                                     | From the margins to teacher formation? Outdoor learning professionals, pedagogy, and legitimacy in initial teacher education                      | Experiential learning how to teach about climate change outdoors<br><b>Workshop 10.00-11.30</b>                                                    |
| 10.30 – 11.00             | <b>Riehl Jochen</b> , Mühlenkraft e.V., Germany                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <b>Francisco Lombo de León</b> , Porta Natura, Spain                                                                                                    | <b>Ismael Zosso</b> , Haute Ecole Pédagogique Vaud, Switzerland                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
|                           | Breaking Barriers - Barrierfree Nature Experience as a Process of European Integration                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Collaborative Outdoor Education for Inclusion and Accessibility: A Community-Based Model Integrating Nature, Language Learning and Data-Driven Practice | Governing Outdoor Education in Teacher Education: The Institutionalisation of a Transversal Field                                                 |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 11.00 – 11.30             | <b>Tomás Aylward</b> , Munster Technological University, Ireland<br><b>Erwin Borremans</b> , Live, Finland                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Elena Diana</b> , Università di Pisa, Italy                                                                                                          | <b>Christiana Glettler</b> , Private Pädagogische Hochschule Augustinum, Austria                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                    |
|                           | Empowering Abilities: Adventure Education and Experiential Learning for All - A case study from Erasmus+                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | The Intersection of Inclusion and Education Outside the Classroom in Italy: The Role of Support Teacher                                                 | Gardening for Future - supporting Teachers in an integrative gardening practice                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 11.30 – 12.00             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                         | <b>Breogán Gómez Requejo</b> , JFK International School, Switzerland<br><b>Miguel Cons-Ferreiro</b> , University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain | <b>Sarah Grocutt</b><br>Fitness Excel Training & Education, United Kingdom<br><b>Workshop 11.30-13.00</b>                                          |
|                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                         | The CŠOD Model: A Slovenian National Framework for Integrating Outdoor Education into the School Curriculum                                       | Exploring Somatic Motion in Natural Spaces– A Walking and Pilates Movement Practice for Embodied Presence and Calm.<br><b>Workshop 11.30-13.00</b> |
| 12.00 – 13.30             | <b>Round table discussion</b><br><b>Learning Beyond the Classroom: Partnerships with UNESCO Sites for Transformative Education for Sustainable Development</b><br><b>Moderator: Gregor Torkar</b><br><b>Roundtable discussants:</b><br><b>Heather Prince</b> , University of Cumbria, UK<br><b>Franz Rauch</b> , University of Klagenfurt, Austria<br><b>Mojca Pintar</b> , Triglav National Park, Slovenia<br><b>Final discussant:</b><br><b>Mark Manns</b> , UNESCO, France<br><b>Sandi Vrabec</b> , Ministry of Education, Science and Youth, Slovenia |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 13.00 – 15.00             | Time for lunch                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 15.00 – 18.00             | <b>Study visit</b><br><b>Visit to Bohinjska Bistrica Primary School (by bus)</b> , Guide: Erika Melthen<br><b>Lake Bohinj and Mostnica Gorge Exploration (by canoe)</b> , Guide: Marija Zupanc, Tina Grm<br><b>Cycling through the Bohinj Valley and Visit to Bohinjska Bistrica Primary School</b> , Guide: Andraž Nahtigal, Robert Franjič<br><b>Rock Climbing below Skalca</b> , Guide: Igor Puhan, Laura Blaznik                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 18.30 – 20.30             | Closing dinner                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |
| 20.00                     | <b>International Social Evening</b><br><b>Moderator: Robert Franjič, Živa Pečavar</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                    |



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|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thursday, 8 October 2026           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 7.30 – 8.30                        | Time for breakfast                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 9.00 – 10.00                       | Keynote speaker, Pavel Zgaga, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia<br>Indoors vs. outdoors: Some reflections on education, nature and culture<br>Moderator: Gregor Torkar                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10.00 – 10.30                      | Coffee break                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10.30 – 12.30                      | Oral presentations – Parallel Sessions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                  | Workshop                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                    | Yellow room<br>Moderator: Erika Eik Bjarkadottir                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Green room<br>Moderator: Karen Seierøe Barfod                                                                                                    | Outdoor meeting point A<br>Moderator: Simona Ž. Menart                                                                                                                                  |
| 10.30 – 11.00                      | Marjanca Kos, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Camilla Maria Aviles, Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia, Italy                                                                                | Franz Rauch, Institute of Instructional and School Development, University Klagenfurt, Christiana Glettler, Private Pädagogische Hochschule Augustinum, Austria<br>Workshop 10.30-12.00 |
|                                    | Nature for the Very Young: Assessing the Effectiveness of Structured Activities and Nature Didactic Games in Natural Environments for Learning Biology in the Early Years                                                                                                                                                              | Outdoor Education as an Organisational Process: A Processual Perspective on Teaching Competence                                                  | Action, Reflection, Participation: How to start an Action Research process?<br>Workshop 10.30-12.00                                                                                     |
| 11.00 – 11.30                      | Chiara Borelli, University of Bologna, Italy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Vanda Sigurgeirsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                    | Reframing Outdoor Education Through Intersectionality and Critical Feminist Posthumanism                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Freshman field trips in Leisure Studies: Using field trips and natural spaces as a key to successful integration of new students into university |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 11.30 – 12.00                      | Heather Prince, University of Cumbria, United Kingdom                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Živa Pečavar, CŠOD, Slovenia                                                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                    | Teacher-identified needs for support to expand curricular outdoor learning in schools in England                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Promoting outdoor learning through seminars for teachers                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 12.00 – 13.00                      | Plenary Session and Conclusion<br>Presentation by the moderators<br>Presentation of the Special Interest Group plans<br>Conference conclusions and plans for EOE 2027                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 13.00 – 14.30                      | Time for lunch and departure                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Thursday, 8 October 2026 afternoon |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Optional in the afternoon          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 15.00 – 18.00                      | Repeated Study Visits<br>Lake Bohinj and Mostnica Gorge Exploration (by canoe), Guide: Marija Zupanc, Laura Blaznik<br>Hike to Mount Peč, Guide: Robert Franjič                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Friday, 9 October 2026             |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                    | Optional Post-conference activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|                                    | One-Day Hike to Viševnik (2,050 m above sea level) – guided by CŠOD teachers. Additional cost: €20, Guide: Igor Puhon, Mateja Vertelj<br>Rafting in the Soča Valley – Additional cost: €100, Guide: Meta Vončina Gnezda<br>Mountain Tour in the Julian Alps – self-organised, with CŠOD providing advice and assistance with planning. |                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                         |



## Learning for Sustainability: Actions at EU Level

Florin Popa

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, European Commission

### Keynote presentation

#### Abstract

This presentation provides an overview of EU actions helping education systems to adapt to the impacts of climate change and drive the green transition. It outlines the challenges environmental and climate-related challenges facing education today and the systemic gaps, including the gap between valuing sustainability and taking concrete action, and the shortfall in specialized teacher training. The presentation highlights key EU policy frameworks and strategic tools, such as the 2022 Council Recommendation on learning for the green transition and the GreenComp sustainability competence framework. It also showcases relevant initiatives across Europe, such as whole-school case studies, online learning resources like the EU Academy MOOC, and targeted funding initiatives under Erasmus+.

#### About the author

Florin Popa is currently working in the European Commission's DG Education and Culture, dealing mainly with the implementation of the Erasmus+ programme in the fields of adult education and vocational education and training. Previous assignments in the Commission included the implementation of European Structural and Investment Funds and of the Technical Support Instrument. Florin has previously worked in the academia for 14 years, being involved in several European research projects on sustainable development and biodiversity. He has a PhD in political philosophy.



## Action-oriented Pedagogies - Promoting ESD through Experiential Learning

Mark Manns

UNESCO, Section of Education for Sustainable Development, France

### Keynote presentation

#### Abstract

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) offers an important framework for supporting learners in developing the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to engage with the challenges of a changing world. Within this context, action-oriented and experiential approaches to learning can provide meaningful opportunities to connect educational content with real-life situations, places and experiences. The presentation will draw on the broader context of ESD and the UNESCO ESD for 2030 framework and reflect on approaches and pedagogies that can support learning for sustainability. Particular attention may be given to the role of experiential, place-based and site-based learning, as well as to the development of sustainability competencies and their relevance to learning and learning outcomes. Against the backdrop of rapid technological and societal change, the presentation will offer reflections on the role of action-oriented pedagogies in creating learning experiences that connect learners with their surroundings and with real-world sustainability challenges.

#### About the author

Mark Manns is a Senior Project Officer with the Section of Education for Sustainable Development at UNESCO. His work focuses on the implementation of the ESD for 2030 Roadmap and framework, particularly supporting UNESCO Member States in developing national strategies and initiatives to achieve the ESDfor2030 goals, and coordinating the ESD-NET, the global network of countries and partner organizations that promotes mutual learning, knowledge sharing, advocacy and monitoring of ESD. Mark has over 20 years' experience in education in Asia, Africa, Europe and North America, first as a teacher, followed by working with countries and partners in education policy, planning and programmes that address education quality, competency-based learning, learning assessments, global citizenship education and education for sustainable development.



## Indoors vs. Outdoors: Some Reflections on Education, Nature and Culture

Pavel Zgaga

University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia

### Keynote presentation

#### Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between indoor and outdoor education from perspectives opened up by the philosophy of education. Neither concept can be satisfactorily explained by a single, universally valid definition, as both are grounded in diverse perspectives and conceptualisations of education, historical and contemporary. Modern understanding often views outdoor education as a practice that follows the established model of indoor education. However, a closer examination of the latter – situated indoors, within the school building – reveals that the distinction cannot be explained simply in terms of physical space (i.e. indoors vs outdoors; “behind the door” and “in front of the door”). While physical space is a significant factor, the social and political forces that shape the school environment are equally important. Our analysis places special emphasis on a third factor, defined here as an “epistemological given” – an established system of knowledge that defines instruction and education in general. We consider this third factor in relation to philosophical dilemmas that have persisted since antiquity, articulated primarily through the dichotomies of the sensual versus the spiritual and nature versus culture. In the modern era, these debates led to the view that “the mind may exercise its right over nature” (Bacon). The industrial age and its post-industrial successor bear witness to the limitations and unsustainability of such a one-sided assertion of the mind’s dominance over nature. The deepening environmental crisis provides clear evidence of this. Outdoor education can contribute significantly to raising awareness of this crisis and shaping lifestyles that address it, though only in close connection with indoor education. The two concepts form an essential whole.

#### About the author

Dr Pavel Zgaga is professor emeritus at the University of Ljubljana. He has held several research fellowships and led or participated in numerous national and international research projects, mainly addressing current issues in higher education, educational policy and reforms in the contemporary European context, as well as teacher education as a specific area of higher education. In the 1990s he was State Secretary for Higher Education (1992–1999) and Minister of Education and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia (1999–2000). After his return to academia, he was Dean of the Faculty of Education and co-founder of the Centre for Educational Policy Studies. In the early years of the Bologna Process, he served as general rapporteur (2001–2003) for the Berlin Conference, as a member of the Board of the Bologna Follow-up Group (2004–2005) and as rapporteur of the BFUG working group on the external dimension of the Bologna Process (2006–2007). He has also worked with international organisations in his field, e.g. the Council of Europe, the European Commission, UNESCO and the OECD, and has been a consultant and invited speaker in a number of countries.



## Learning Beyond the Classroom: Partnerships with UNESCO Sites for Transformative Education for Sustainable Development

Gregor Torkar, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia

### Round Table Discussion

#### Abstract

This roundtable explores the critical role of partnerships between outdoor education initiatives and UNESCO-designated sites in advancing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). Drawing on insights from the publication “UNESCO Sites as Partners for Education for Sustainable Development: An Implementation Guide” by UNESCO, the discussion will highlight how sites such as Biosphere Reserves, World Heritage Sites, and Global Geoparks can serve as dynamic learning hubs that connect learners with real-world sustainability challenges. Participants will examine how these collaborations foster a deeper understanding of the relationship between humans and nature. The roundtable will showcase existing initiatives that promote sustainability and community engagement through place-responsive education in diverse local contexts. At the same time, the discussion will critically address key constraints that limit the full potential of such partnerships - ranging from institutional barriers and limited resources to gaps in coordination between educators and site managers. Emphasis will be placed on identifying strategies to overcome these challenges through more systematic, cross-sectoral collaboration. By bringing together educators, researchers, and teachers, the roundtable aims to uncover actionable pathways for strengthening partnerships with UNESCO sites, ultimately contributing to more resilient, inclusive, and sustainability-oriented education systems.

#### About the author

Dr. Gregor Torkar is a full professor of biology education at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His research focuses on biology and environmental education across preschool, primary, secondary and tertiary education, with particular interests in ecology, conservation education and education for sustainable development. He is the Chairholder of the UNESCO Chair on Teacher Education for Sustainable Development at the University of Ljubljana. He also chairs the Programme Committee of the Centre for School and Outdoor Education, Slovenia. He is involved in national and international research and educational projects related to science education, environmental education and sustainable development.



## Outdoor Education as an Organisational Process: A Processual Perspective on Teaching Competence

Camilla Maria Aviles, Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia, Italy

### Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education

#### Oral Presentation

##### Abstract

This contribution offers a theoretical reflection on outdoor education as a tool for pedagogical and organisational innovation in the contemporary school context, with the aim of integrating the analysis of educational processes related to outdoor education with that of their organisational governance. Outdoor education should not be understood solely as a methodological-didactic choice but must also be interpreted as a complex organisational process.

The theoretical framework is based on Bruno Maggi's epistemological tripartition, which distinguishes three concepts in the study of organisational phenomena. The first of a positivist and functionalist nature, considers organisation as a predefined system governed by universal principles. The second, inspired by phenomenology and social constructivism, interprets social phenomena as cultural constructs based on values, meanings, and symbols. The third overcomes the system–subject dichotomy and conceives of organisation as a process of actions and decisions guided by limited rationality. From this perspective, there is no separation between actor and system; organisation is a constantly evolving process in which means and ends are continuously reorganised through actions and decisions.

Expected outcomes, technical actions, and their regulatory modalities constitute the central elements of the organisational process and are evaluated at every decision-making level on the basis of their internal consistency and their adequacy in relation to given objectives. Competence is understood as the ability to evaluate actions in relation to the overall process in which actors mobilise all their resources—experience, knowledge, skills, and culture—contributing to structuring the process not only by applying existing rules but also by developing new ones, organising their actions according to an intentional and limited rationality.

From this perspective, the competencies of teachers who teach outdoors can be seen not as a set of predefined techniques or methodologies applied in a standardised way, but as the ability to assess and adapt educational activities in open, dynamic, and not entirely predictable contexts. Teachers are called upon to constantly evaluate the consistency between educational objectives, environmental conditions, safety, student well-being, available resources, and emerging constraints.

The aim of this contribution is to offer an interpretative framework capable of integrating pedagogical analysis and organisational theory, thereby contributing to the scientific debate on outdoor education as a lever for teacher professional development and for the transformation of educational and organisational processes in schools.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; organisational process; processual perspective; teacher competencies.

##### References:

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##### About the author

Camilla Maria Aviles is a PhD fellow in Reggio Childhood Studies at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia and Fondazione Reggio Children, Italy. She is a primary school teacher of special education and English language, graduated in European Languages and Cultures and in Primary Teacher Education. Her studies focus on special education, neurodiversity, and language learning difficulties and recently she has explored the potential of outdoor education through active teaching practices. Her current research focuses on outdoor education as an organisational and social process within educational contexts.



## Empowering Abilities: Adventure Education and Experiential Learning for All - A Case Study from Erasmus+

Tomás Aylward, Munster Technological University, Ireland

Erwin Borremans, Live, Finland

### Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

The empowerment of an individual who experiences disability is central to their rights under both the UN Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). In teaching and leading adapted adventure education programmes, outdoor professionals should acknowledge and seek to manage the dynamic of that learning situation and enable those persons experiencing disabilities (PED) to achieve their potential. The EASE model is an evolving framework for Adaptive Adventure Education (AAE). This presentation will share the model and its ongoing development in 2025-26. It bridges the gap between outdoor experiential learning and inclusive pedagogy by grounding its approach in the three core pillars of Universal Design for Learning or UDL (Kelly et al., 2022). The adventurous learning model by Beames and Brown (2016) brought to bear sound research from the world of sociology into the field of adventure education. The four concepts of agency, authenticity, mastery and uncertainty created a framework for youth workers, teachers and outdoor educators to plan their lessons outdoors and to evaluate how well they were addressing the needs of their participants. This framework is also applicable for PED and for participants who might feel challenged by adventure education because of other factors such as neurodiversity, social deprivation or any factor which might cause an individual to feel 'othered'. We drew from a scoping exercise of the academic and the grey literature associated with the participation of PED in adventure education and outdoor learning settings. The concept of critical pedagogy (Freire, 1980) and care in education (McKenzie & Blenkinsop, 2006; Noddings, 2005) were included. In this model, these themes were amalgamated with the four pillars of the adventurous learning model. We believe these pedagogical principles, when underpinned by multiple means of engagement, representation, and action & expression; the three pillars of UDL present a comprehensive reference point for educators in approaching inclusive outdoor programming. Our goal was to create a model which supports the learner with additional needs so that they might both access and thrive in adventurous environments. This presentation will share our experiences of piloting the model on a three-day winter adventure education programme in Finland in March 2026. The programme involved outdoor educators, special education teachers, psychologists and student teachers exploring, experimenting and reviewing the model through an inclusive programme of winter adventure education populated by students with and without disabilities.

**Keywords:** adaptive adventure education; inclusion; critical pedagogy; care in education; outdoor learning; universal design for learning.

#### About the authors

Tomás Aylward is a lecturer at the School of Health & Social Sciences at Munster Technological University on the Atlantic coast of southwest Ireland.. He is programme leader for a BA degree in outdoor learning. He also teaches on degrees in Health, Sport and Exercise, Adapted Physical Activity and Early Childhood Education and Care. His research interests include persons experiencing disability in outdoor learning/OE, Critical Pedagogy and early years education in the outdoors.

Erwin Borremans is a Belgian-born physical educator, researcher, and advocate for inclusive physical and outdoor education. For more than 20 years, he has worked with students requiring special support at Live Vocational College in Finland. Educated in Belgium, Finland, and the United States, he holds a PhD in Adapted Physical Activity. Passionate about the outdoors, he embraces nature as a year-round learning environment and promotes outdoor experiences as a means to foster participation, inclusion, and wellbeing.



## Opening the Future – Expanding Horizons

Klemen Banko, Zavod sv. Stanislava, Slovenia

### Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning

#### Oral Presentation

##### Abstract

I will present the cooperation between a primary school from Slovenia and a partner school from Norway within the framework of Erasmus+ programmes. This collaboration began at a time when the Slovenian school was developing the concept of an outdoor classroom and was actively seeking concrete practices and effective approaches for its implementation. The need for practical experience and proven methods encouraged the partnership with the Norwegian school, which had extensive experience in this field.

The cooperation took place within two international projects focused on outdoor learning and experiential learning. Both projects were based on the exchange of good practices, the joint development of pedagogical approaches, and the strengthening of professional competences of teachers and students in the field of learning outdoors. The total duration of both projects was five years: the first project lasted two years, while the second lasted three.

An important part of the cooperation was the mobility of teachers from both countries. Twelve teachers from Norway visited Slovenia, while more than fifteen Slovenian teachers travelled to Norway. These exchanges enabled direct observation of teaching, the exploration of different didactic approaches, and a deeper understanding of the importance of the natural environment as a learning space. Teachers shared experiences, methods, and concrete practices that promote active, inquiry-based, and experiential learning.

In addition to teacher mobility, students from both schools were also involved in the projects. They had the opportunity to participate in international activities, meet peers from another country, and develop intercultural competences. Joint activities were designed to encourage collaborative learning, independence, and a connection with nature.

An important aspect of the cooperation was mutual support in developing and implementing concrete outdoor learning practices. The schools jointly planned and tested various approaches that integrate the natural environment into different subject areas. Special emphasis was placed on the joint development and implementation of the concept of so-called “risk play” in the educational environment. This approach encourages children to face challenges and take risks, which positively contributes to their development in many areas.

In addition to professional collaboration, teachers also connected on a personal level. Through joint work, exchanges, and informal socialising, strong friendships were formed and maintained even after the projects ended. This further strengthened trust, openness to cooperation, and willingness for future joint initiatives. One concrete example of this was the support provided by the Slovenian school to the Norwegian school when it faced the threat of closure by local authorities. A letter of support was addressed to the local authorities, who later withdrew the proposal.

The cooperation significantly contributed to the professional development of teachers, enriched the learning process, and strengthened international connections. At the same time, it enabled the sustainable transfer of knowledge and good practices into everyday educational work at both schools.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; primary school; Erasmus+.

##### About the author

I come from a primary school in Slovenia, where I work as a teacher in the after-school extended stay programme. Throughout my professional career, I have devoted a great deal of attention to training for implementing the educational process in a natural environment. For this purpose, I have attended various courses and training programmes which, above all through practical experience, have enabled me to offer students alternative ways of exploring the world around us and learning.

A strong emphasis in my work is placed on concrete experiences that students gain through different types of camps and outdoor activities. I would like to highlight two of the most notable ones. I am actively involved in a school cycling expedition project, where students embark on a multi-day adventure that includes cycling, setting up camp, and preparing meals in nature. Another important form of experiential learning is a multi-day camp for students that includes fishing as well as survival skills in the natural environment.



## Is There Any Difference? A Comparative Study of Indoor and Outdoor Teaching using Andreas Helmke's Framework of 'Good Teaching'

Karen Seierøe Barfod, VIA University College, Denmark

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

This study investigates the pedagogical and didactical similarities and differences between school-based outdoor education ("Udeskole") and traditional classroom teaching in Denmark, with focus on indicators of high-quality instruction. Udeskole is defined as a regular, curriculum-based teaching approach conducted outside the school buildings, engaging students with real-world environments and communities. Although one-fifth of Danish schools uses Udeskole, empirical comparisons with classroom teaching remain limited and often rely on case-based evidence.

The study employs the structured observation tool 'Einblicknahme in die Lehr- und Lernsituation' (Insight into the teaching and learning situation), which assesses teaching across six domains: classroom management, learning environment and motivation, instructional structuring and consolidation, student activation, differentiation, supplemented with an Outdoor Education category emphasizing creativity, practical tasks and movement. Data were collected as part of the MOVEOUT study from 11 schools and 15 classes, including the contexts of 33 outdoor sessions (mean duration 92.5 minutes) and 145 classroom sessions (mean duration 73.9 minutes). Observations were evaluated using a four-point scale across 43 indicators.

Our analysis tests a null hypothesis of no observable difference between the two contexts (indoor and outdoor). Findings indicate that, overall, high-quality teaching characteristics are not inherently dependent on the two physical contexts, supporting the null hypothesis. However, nuanced differences emerge across domains. Udeskole tends to enhance aspects of student motivation, engagement, and opportunities for varied and problem-based learning, often connecting academic content to students' lived experiences.

Challenges in Udeskole include maintaining classroom management with increased potential for distractions in outdoor environments. Despite challenges, Udeskole demonstrates strengths in fostering alternative pedagogical practices, including experiential learning and differentiation through diverse tasks and contexts.

The study concludes that while Udeskole sessions does not automatically result in a general higher teaching quality, it offers distinct contextual affordances that result in practices that can complement classroom instruction. Integrating both approaches may provide a more holistic and effective educational model.

**Keywords:** education outside the classroom; teaching quality; teaching; Udeskole.

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### About the author

Karen Seierøe Barfod is research leader in outdoor studies at VIA University College, Denmark. She is a graduate of Biology (Aarhus University, 1991) and Physical Education (Odense University, 1993), and has obtained a Ph.D. degree at Science, University of Copenhagen (2018) with the thesis: 'Teaching in udeskole. Perspectives on Teacher's Work'.

In 2014 she was awarded the national 'udeskole' (outdoor teaching) prize, and in 2022, she was awarded with the NOVO prize for Science Educators at the Teacher Education.

As Research Leader in VIA, she works with research and development within udeskole, nature kindergartens, external learning environments and teaching outside the classroom. In addition, she teaches basic teacher education in Biology and Nature / Technology as well as Udeskole. Karen is a well-known and often used speaker at conferences, developer and initiator in the field of Education Outside the Classroom, both nationally and internationally.



# “What if I don’t have a world to grow up in?” - Posthuman Pedagogies as a Way Forward in Irish Climate Action and Sustainable Development Education

Mareile Betz, Munster Technological University, Kerry, Tralee, Ireland

## Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Scholars across disciplines emphasise the urgent need for transformative educational responses to escalating environmental, social, and political crises (Ward, 2025). This research responds to current and ongoing discussions, especially focusing on how to effectively respond to increasing global climate and nature emergencies, in the context of Irish formal education systems. Situated within current curricular developments in the Irish education system and the introduction of the new senior cycle Leaving Certificate subject “Climate Action and Sustainable Development” (CASD) in September 2025, this research explores current practices and pedagogies of education for sustainable development (ESD) through a posthuman lens. In this context, it aims to identify gaps and opportunities in the current education system to incorporate posthuman pedagogies as a way forward in formal Irish CASD Education. Positioned in a posthuman, relational materialist framework (Hultman & Lenz Taguchi, 2010; Barad, 2007), this research addresses persistent critiques that ESD thus far remains fragmented, anthropocentric, and insufficiently transformative (Clarke & Mcphie, 2020). In this regard, it draws on posthuman theories to decentre the human, supporting the idea that posthuman ontologies might provide a valuable basis for urgently needed pedagogies in this context (Mannion et al., 2025). Drawing on theories of place-responsiveness, this research thus contributes to the quest of preparing teachers for outdoor teaching in the specific context of CASD in Ireland. To identify gaps and opportunities for incorporating posthuman and relational pedagogies in CASD, this study adopts a multicase methodology (Mannion et al., 2025). Close cooperation with six selected schools provides the frame to co-generate the empirical materials that inform this research. A combination of observations, teacher interviews, student focus groups and a creative story-completion exercise co-generate the empirical materials for the critical evaluation of current ESD practices and a deeper understanding of potential directions for transformed ways of knowing, being, and doing in Irish secondary education. These empirical findings will inform the next phase of the overarching PhD research, aiming to prepare teachers to bring CASD teaching outside and adopt more posthuman pedagogical approaches to students' learning experiences. Initial rhizomatic analysis indicates tensions between curriculum intentions, teacher's attunement to the more-than-human world and classroom practice, highlighting opportunities for relational and more-than-human pedagogies to reshape climate education.

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#### About the author

Mareile Betz holds a Nordic Master in Friluftsliv Studies (Outdoor Studies). Her interests include human engagement with the more-than-human world, and the implications of these relationships in environmentally precarious times. She has worked as an outdoor educator and guide in Scotland, Norway, and Iceland, and is currently undertaking a PhD in Education for Sustainable Development at MTU (Kerry), Ireland.



# HOKUS POKUS: Outdoor and Experiential Science Learning as a Bridge for Collaboration and Integration

Suzana Bitežnik, OŠ Podčetrtek, Slovenia

## Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

At Primary School Podčetrtek and its branch school Pristava pri Mestinju, the science day Hokus pokus has been implemented for several years, involving pupils from Grades 1 to 3. The initiative takes place simultaneously at both locations, with activities adapted to each local environment. Although pupils from the branch school do not physically join the central school, teachers design parallel outdoor inquiry-based activities, ensuring equal access to meaningful learning experiences while maintaining a shared pedagogical framework. In this way, the programme strengthens both local embeddedness and a sense of belonging to a wider learning community.

Hokus pokus is conceptualised as an example of inquiry-based, experiential, and outdoor learning, grounded in constructivist learning theory and inquiry-based science education. Its core principle is not merely to transfer classroom activities outdoors, but to allow the natural environment to actively shape the learning process. Through observation, experimentation, movement, and reflection in authentic contexts, pupils construct knowledge in ways that are tangible, engaging, and relevant.

A key feature of the programme is its strong outdoor dimension. Learning takes place in schoolyards, meadows, and other nearby natural spaces, which become dynamic learning environments. Nature acts as an active teaching partner: pupils identify plants and signs of seasonal change, explore natural materials such as water, soil, wood, and stones, and investigate their properties through hands-on inquiry (e.g., floating, dissolving, absorbing). They also observe small habitats, recognise traces of living organisms, and reflect on the importance of caring for the environment. Movement-based tasks—measuring, collecting, building, and problem-solving—further connect scientific understanding with physical activity, curiosity, and collaboration.

Pupils work in heterogeneous, mixed-age groups, which enables both vertical and horizontal learning. Older pupils guide and support younger ones, while younger pupils contribute through observation, questioning, and exploration. This structure enhances cooperation, responsibility, confidence, and social cohesion, while outdoor settings further encourage communication, shared problem-solving, and spontaneous interaction.

The programme consists of thematic stations distributed across outdoor spaces, integrating interdisciplinary content and hands-on scientific exploration. Activities include simple chemical experiments, investigations of physical properties, and biological exploration supported by sensory experience and occasional digital tools. The initiative also builds on knowledge gained through the Erasmus+ project Let's teach outside!, coordinated by CŠOD, by systematically integrating outdoor learning approaches and interdisciplinary collaboration into everyday school practice.

Beyond its educational value, Hokus pokus serves as a platform for collaboration among pupils, teachers, and school units. It reflects strong interdisciplinary cooperation and, at times, includes older pupils as facilitators, further strengthening community ties. More broadly, the initiative represents a micro-level model of how outdoor education can foster inclusion, participation, and social integration. By connecting learners with nature, with each other, and with their local environment, it promotes shared experiences and key competences for active participation in a cohesive and sustainable society.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; inquiry-based learning; experiential learning; social integration; collaboration.

#### About the author

I am a primary school teacher with English module. I'm teaching pupils from grades 1 to 5, with a focus on third grade in recent years. I strive to create an active and inclusive learning environment by integrating diverse activities, movement, and experiential learning, and whenever possible, I extend this learning environment into nature, where outdoor settings further enhance exploration and understanding. I also participated in the Erasmus+ project Let's Teach Outside!, which enriched my teaching practice. At the conference, I would like to share examples of good practice and highlight the value of outdoor learning in fostering curiosity, collaboration, and meaningful connections with nature.



# Reframing Outdoor Education Through Intersectionality and Critical Feminist Posthumanism

Chiara Borelli, University of Bologna, Italy

## Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Outdoor education is increasingly recognized as a pedagogical field that has the potential to promote participation, inclusion, and social and cultural integration, together with sustainability. However, its transformative potential should not be taken for granted. This contribution argues that outdoor education requires critical theoretical grounding if it is to avoid reproducing the same hierarchies and exclusions it seeks to challenge.

The presentation proposes intersectionality and critical feminist posthumanism as two key frameworks for rethinking outdoor education. These perspectives allow us to question the assumptions that often shape educational practice in natural settings, particularly the idea that contact with nature is inherently beneficial, neutral, or inclusive. Instead, outdoor education must be understood as a socially and culturally situated practice, structured by power relations that affect both human and more-than-human worlds.

The contribution focuses on the persistence of dominant paradigms that have historically supported forms of exclusion linked to gender, sexuality, race, ability, and species, and that remain relevant in the implementation of outdoor educational practices today. From this perspective, intersectionality offers tools for analyzing the entanglement of multiple forms of oppression, while critical feminist posthumanism makes it possible to rethink subjectivity, relationality, and agency beyond anthropocentric frameworks.

By placing these approaches in dialogue with ecotransfeminism, decolonial thought, Indigenous relational perspectives, and queer theory, the contribution outlines an understanding of outdoor education as a relational, ethical, and politically situated pedagogical practice. In this view, outdoor learning is not simply education that takes place outside, but a space in which relationships, identities, environments, and forms of coexistence are critically negotiated.

The presentation finally reflects on the implications of this framework for educators' initial and continuous preparation. It argues that outdoor education should move beyond generic notions of connection with nature and instead foster critical reflexivity, attention to power, and responsibility toward both human and more-than-human others. In this sense, intersectionality and critical feminist posthumanism provide conceptual resources for developing more inclusive and socially engaged outdoor pedagogies.

**Keywords:** intersectionality; critical feminist posthumanism; outdoor educators' training.

#### About the author

Chiara Borelli is a research fellow in the Department of Education Studies at the University of Bologna, and an adjunct lecturer at the University of Parma, where she teaches Pedagogy of Differences, as well as at the University Studies Abroad Consortium in Reggio Emilia. She has also worked as a teacher, special education teacher, educational-preventive psychomotricist, and teacher trainer. Her research focuses on outdoor adventure education in relation to social marginality, intersectionality and gender issues, family pedagogy, and neurodivergence in educational settings.



## From Intuition to Profession: Building Outdoor Education Systems in Emerging Contexts – The BUNEBARE Model

Tamara Chakvetadze, Bunebare - Caucasus Outdoor Education Institute, Georgia

### Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

This study explores BUNEBARE, the first forest kindergarten in Georgia and the initiative that introduced the forest school approach in the country, as an example of how outdoor education can emerge and develop in contexts with limited systemic support.

Over more than five years of continuous practice, BUNEBARE has grown not only as a learning environment for children but also as a space where new professional roles, pedagogical approaches, and forms of advocacy around children's rights have taken shape. Working without established frameworks has required ongoing reflection, adaptation, and learning through practice.

At the center of this work is the BUNEBARE Professional Formation Model, a competency-based framework that includes areas such as understanding behaviour as communication, environmental literacy, children's rights in urban contexts, risk assessment, reflective practice, and inclusive approaches. Based on long-term observation and work with children and parents, the study traces how practitioners move beyond activity-based work toward more complex roles - as facilitators of learning, interpreters of children's experiences, and advocates for their well-being.

The findings suggest that regular engagement in outdoor environments helps reduce digital fatigue, strengthens social interaction, and supports the development of ecological awareness. At the same time, the case shows that structured and consistent outdoor education practice can be built even in the absence of formal policy support. In this sense, the study offers a practice-based approach to developing the professional field of outdoor education in similar emerging contexts.

In settings where children's right to play is often limited by structural conditions, BUNEBARE also creates space for participation, voice, and social resilience. Within the broader context of European integration, it offers an example of how outdoor education can grow from the ground up and contribute to more inclusive and sustainable education systems.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; forest school; professional development; child rights; urban context.

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#### About the author

Tamari Chakvetadze is an outdoor education specialist, researcher, and founder of BUNEBARE, the first forest kindergarten in Georgia and a pioneering model redefining outdoor education in the South Caucasus. Her work focuses on designing and building outdoor education systems in contexts where they do not yet exist, connecting field practice with research, policy, and professional training. She is a lecturer at Ilia State University and a researcher at the Child Development Institute, where she advances new approaches to educator formation and child-centered learning. Her work engages with international agendas on sustainability, climate justice, gender, and children's rights to public space and the city.



## Breaking Barriers 2027 and Beyond: Bringing SEND Learners Together Across Europe Through Nature/Adventure-Based Encounters

Lawrence Chapman, UK East Anglian Inclusion Partners, United Kingdom

### Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education

#### Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

##### Abstract

This workshop explores how outdoor and experiential education can be used to bring together young people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) from across Europe in ways that are practical, meaningful and genuinely inclusive. Drawing on more than three decades of international special education, youth mobility and outdoor learning, the session will revisit the development of the Breaking Barriers approach within the wider European outdoor education movement and show how shared experiences in nature can create connection, confidence and belonging across national, cultural and educational differences.

At the heart of the workshop is a simple but powerful idea: nature heals, and access to nature should belong to everyone. Too often, disability, disadvantage or difference are treated as reasons to limit participation. This workshop challenges that thinking by demonstrating that, with creativity, partnership and thoughtful planning, outdoor learning can become a meeting place where young people of all abilities can learn with and from one another. Participants will be invited to take part in short interactive activities and reflection tasks that explore barriers to inclusion in their own contexts, identify what already works, and generate ideas for future cross-European collaboration.

The session will also have a forward-looking and practical focus. It will introduce the potential for bilateral and multilateral youth meetings involving SEND learners, educators and support professionals, with Erasmus+ presented as a tool for partnership, mobility and empowerment. Particular attention will be given to the development of a future collaborative project inspired by the Breaking Barriers interest group, including a possible exchange centred on the B-Free Destination in Western Pannonia in 2027 and/or 2028.

Participants will leave with three outcomes:

- a stronger understanding of how outdoor learning can support inclusion for SEND learners across Europe;
- practical ideas for planning accessible international youth encounters and;
- opportunities to connect with potential partners for future Erasmus-based cooperation.

Ultimately, the workshop invites participants to see inclusion not as a specialist add-on, but as a shared European practice of learning, travelling and growing together.

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- Michl, Werner & Riehl, Joachim – Leben gewinnen - A strong reference point for experiential learning, personal growth, survival, and improving quality of life through education.
- EOE Network – Breaking Barriers Interest Group - Useful as a practical and historical reference for the European development of inclusion in outdoor and experiential education.
- Harrison, George – All Things Must Pass - This works best as a reflective or symbolic reference rather than an academic one, suggesting change, development and hope

##### About the author

Lawrence Chapman is a senior educational leader specialising in SEND, inclusion and outdoor learning across the UK. As Regional Director for SEND and Outdoor Learning, he supports schools to strengthen inclusive practice, improve provision for children and young people with additional needs, and develop high-quality opportunities for learning beyond the classroom. Lawrence has worked on and led groups in various collaborative Breaking Barriers projects in Germany and the UK over the last 15 years. His work combines strategic leadership, school improvement, partnership building and practical innovation in curriculum, safeguarding and participation. He is particularly interested in how outdoor experiences and international collaboration can widen access, build confidence and create meaningful opportunities for all learners across diverse educational communities in Europe and beyond today.



## The Case of a Relationship between two European Universities in the Natural Environment: 2011-26

Miguel Cons-Ferreiro, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

### Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning

#### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

Since 2011, there has been a collaboration between the University of Cumbria (United Kingdom) and the University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain) due to the experiential learning between two of their outdoor education degrees.

A longitudinal case study is presented that examines the pedagogical and institutional dimensions that are related to current European guidelines.

The experiential learning theory methodology, conceived as holistic, is a direct experience, structured reflection, and construction of knowledge (Kolb & Kolb, 2009) training by cognitive, social, and health evidence, thanks to the benefits of learning abroad (Becker et al., 2017).

Students from both institutions participate in experiences that alternate in trekking, environmental interpretation, and problem solving, which is coupled with the development of interpersonal skills, emotional development, and transformative learning as indicated by Asfeldt & Hvenegaard (2014) and Mann et al. (2022).

During the 10 years of experience, it can be verified that external learning environments are better catalysts for intercultural dialogue and social cohesion, since international meetings allow for the improvement of the professional identity formation of future educators and their skills in sustainability and leadership (O'Neil, 2018).

This experience, therefore, allows both participating students and teachers to improve.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; experiential learning; European integration; international mobility; higher education; sustainability; intercultural competence.

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## The CŠOD Model: A Slovenian National Framework for Integrating Outdoor Education into the School Curriculum

Breogán Gómez Requejo, JFK International School, Switzerland

Gregor Torkar, Faculty of Education University of Ljubljana, Slovenia

Miguel Cons-Ferreiro, University of Santiago de Compostela, Spain

**Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education**

**Oral Presentation**

### Abstract

This study examines the Centre for School and Outdoor Education of Slovenia (CŠOD) as a pioneering public institution in outdoor education (OE), analysing the characteristics and quality of its sports programme activities. It stems from a collaboration between CŠOD, the University of Ljubljana, and the DAEN Master's Degree at the University of Santiago de Compostela. The project involved preparing an internal report and adapting it into a Master's thesis, with the aims of identifying and exchanging educational practices in natural environments and developing a model that could potentially be transferred to other European educational systems, among others.

Founded in 1992 under the Slovenian Ministry of Education, CŠOD manages 25 residential centres across the country, serving more than 77,000 students annually. Its distinctiveness lies in the successful integration of outdoor learning into the national curriculum as a compulsory component of the nine-year basic education system, delivered through "Days of Activities" and "School in Nature" programmes. Notably, Slovenia has effectively decoupled outdoor education from a narrow focus on adventure sports, embedding it instead as an interdisciplinary, cross-curricular experience that fosters personal, social, and environmental development (Skribe Dimec & Kokalj, 2018; Rožman, Kokalj & Torkar, 2025).

A total of 10 of the 25 CŠOD centres were visited, and approximately 50 sports programme activities were observed and evaluated using a mixed qualitative approach. It combined direct observation, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and the use of a research diary. The variables analysed included teaching approaches, learning outcomes, assessment practices, equipment use, teacher–student ratios, and cross-curricular connections.

The findings highlight several key strengths, including highly experienced and qualified instructors, well-developed sports facilities situated in diverse natural environments, a broad range of pedagogical approaches, and a strong commitment to holistic education. In addition, the study identifies meaningful opportunities for further development, such as enhancing assessment practices towards greater standardisation, encouraging a continued shift from predominantly teacher-centred approaches to more learner-centred models, improving consistency in documentation across centres, and optimising time allocation for activities. A SWOT analysis was conducted to synthesise these insights and to inform strategic, evidence-based directions for future improvement.

In summary, the CŠOD model offers valuable insights for European educational systems seeking to institutionalise outdoor learning. In particular, its framework for curricular integration, sustained public funding, and interdisciplinary scope provide a compelling and transferable reference for the development of more cohesive, inclusive, and nature-connected educational practices across Europe.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; Slovenia; CŠOD; curriculum integration; outdoor sports.



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## Just Around the Corner

Diana Czajkowska, Niespokojne Nogi Diana Czajkowska, Poland

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

Where can we find peace, inspiration, and adventure? Often, all we need to do is step outside our home, school, or workplace and take a closer look at our immediate surroundings. The nature that accompanies us every day can be just as captivating as distant mountains or exotic beaches. Hidden within familiar landscapes are countless opportunities for exploration, creativity, learning, and meaningful encounters. Local ecosystems provide not only beauty and inspiration but also natural materials and experiences that help us reconnect with ourselves and the places we inhabit.

“Just Around the Corner” explores the idea that extraordinary experiences can emerge from ordinary places. It focuses on the potential of nearby nature as a dynamic environment for education, personal development, and creative practice. The presentation draws on experiences of discovering local landscapes and engaging with their resources through forest bathing, outdoor learning, nature-based coaching, and hands-on craft workshops. These activities demonstrate how direct interaction with natural surroundings can support experiential learning and encourage a more attentive relationship with the environment.

Looking at familiar places from a new perspective reveals their hidden richness. Parks, roadsides, meadows, vacant spaces, and backyard gardens become meaningful settings for observation, reflection, and creative exploration. Rather than being passive backgrounds of everyday life, they can serve as living classrooms where participants develop curiosity, sensory awareness, and a deeper understanding of ecological connections.

Exploring nearby nature also strengthens a sense of belonging and responsibility toward local environments. By engaging with what is already available around us, we can develop more sustainable practices and appreciate the resources offered by our surroundings. “Just Around the Corner” invites us to slow down, notice what is often overlooked, and rediscover familiar places as sources of knowledge, inspiration, and transformation. It is a reminder that meaningful contact with nature is not reserved for remote destinations—it can begin with a single step outside our door.

**Keywords:** outdoor learning; forest bathing; well-being; local nature; adventure.

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#### About the author

Diana Czajkowska is Outdoor learning instructor, nature coach, forest therapist and dog therapist. Graduate of environmental protection studies. Creator of the original development programs “Kids in Hammocks” and “Concerts in Hammocks,” which promote relaxation in nature. Member of the Polish Society for Forest Bathing and Forest Therapy.

She leads forest bathing sessions, relaxation workshops in hammocks, and nature-inspired craft classes that support the development of mindfulness, well-being, and mental balance. An advocate for exploring the world right around the corner. In her work, she draws on the belief that nature is a key source of regeneration, balance, and mental resilience. She shares her knowledge and practice, supporting others in building a lasting life balance and improving their quality of life.



## Curriculum Hidden in the University Model School Garden

Natálie Čeplová, Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta, Czech Republic

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Model school gardens are an integral part of six universities in the Czech Republic that provide biology teacher training. It has been used as a site for biology teacher training in various forms since the late 19th century.

The growing trend in the use of school gardens both for teaching pupils (Walshe et al., 2024) and in teacher training (Feille, 2021) led us in 2025 to conduct research that answered questions about: (1) initial teacher training carried out in the environment of university model school gardens, (2) changes in this education in the context of changes in the national biology curriculum, and (3) challenges associated with maintaining and further developing these model school gardens.

Due to the absence of information about the university model school gardens in official university documents, in the first phase of research, a botany teacher and a biology didactic teacher personally visited the university gardens. In the second phase, a detailed questionnaire was distributed for comparison among the individual university model school gardens. In the third phase, the research survey's conclusions were discussed with the respondents to supplement any context and agree on the research's conclusions for publication.

The research survey highlighted that teacher training in the garden not only leads to the obtaining of biology content knowledge but also to the acquisition of skills related to observing and determining living organisms. Furthermore, this training provides students with their first experience of teaching pupils in an outdoor environment, helping to shape their attitudes towards biology education. Initial teacher training carried out in a model school garden thus goes beyond the outcomes specified in official curriculum documents and forms part of the hidden curriculum in the garden.

**Keywords:** university school garden; teacher training; garden-based education.

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#### About the author

Natálie Čeplová is a botanist specializing in urban ecology, with a long-term research focus on plant diversity in cities, alien species and plant traits. As a university teacher she is involved in teacher training with a focus on outdoor learning.



## Clarifying Outdoor Education in Formal Curricula: Towards Shared Understanding and Practice

Martyna Čuladienė, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Outdoor Education is increasingly recognised across word as a powerful approach for experiential, place-based, and socially connected learning. However, its role within formal school curricula remains unclear and inconsistently defined. This presentation aims to clarify how Outdoor Education is conceptualised formal education and to identify key conditions that support its meaningful integration, contributing to shared understanding across diverse educational contexts. In doing so, it responds to a growing need for conceptual clarity as Outdoor Education gains visibility in policy and practice, yet risks being interpreted in fragmented or superficial ways.

The study draws on concept analysis using the framework of Walker and Avant, which allows for systematic clarification of complex and contested educational concepts. This approach supports the development of a common language for Outdoor Education across research, policy, and practice. It also enables the identification of boundaries between Outdoor Education and related approaches, such as environmental education or outdoor learning, which are often used interchangeably.

A systematic literature review was conducted across ERIC, Web of Science, EBSCOhost, Springer, and Scopus. Following PRISMA guidelines, peer-reviewed articles published between 2021 and 2025 were screened. From 1,590 initial records, 32 studies focusing on Outdoor Education within formal curricula were selected and analysed qualitatively to identify recurring conceptual patterns.

The analysis highlights a central tension: while Outdoor Education is widely valued for connecting learners with nature, communities, and each other, it remains theoretically underdefined in formal education. The presentation will outline key defining attributes, including experiential and immersive learning, place-responsiveness, relational learning processes, and learner agency. It will also discuss enabling conditions such as teacher competence, institutional support, and collaboration with local communities.

By clarifying the concept of Outdoor Education, this study contributes to building a shared foundation for dialogue, exchange of practices, and teacher preparation across the word. The findings support stronger connections between research and practice and highlight how Outdoor Education can act as a bridge between schools, communities, and natural environments.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; concept analysis; formal curriculum; experiential learning.

#### About the author

PhD student at Vytautas Magnus University.



## Approaches to Outdoor Education at the Faculty of Sport, University of Ljubljana: Insights from Mountaineering Courses

Tadej Debevec, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport, Slovenia

### Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

The main purpose of this presentation is to outline strategies and organizational approaches that are utilised at the Faculty of Sport University of Ljubljana to achieve learning aims with prospective physical education teachers. In Slovenia, where mountainous landscapes and a strong tradition of outdoor recreation shape everyday life, outdoor education plays a central role across all levels of education.

During their undergraduate (three-year programme) and master (two-year programme) studies, the physical education students undergo various courses inherently connected to outdoor education from swimming, skiing, outdoor camping as well as courses focused on mountaineering contents. In relation to the latter the students first gain basic knowledge of summer hiking within the obligatory Mountaineering course as well as sport climbing and orienteering competencies within the Activities in Nature course with both being part of the obligatory curriculum. Student can also attend elective course on Sport Climbing where they can expand and reinforce the climbing related knowledge. On the master level the expand their mountaineering knowledge during the Ski mountaineering course which focuses on activities and particularly safety in winter.

The pedagogical approach is grounded in outdoor adventure education, hands-on learning, and field-based experiential methods. Such approaches create environments in which participants from diverse backgrounds can connect, communicate, and develop mutual understanding through shared experiences in nature. Emphasis is also placed on sustainability, environmental responsibility, and green exercise, aligning with broader European priorities for sustainable development and active lifestyles. Such outdoor activities are ideally suited for the focused topics and provide an excellent opportunity for cross-curricular platform developments.

In conclusion we argue that outdoor education represents a powerful tool for connecting individuals and communities, supporting cultural exchange, and strengthening a sense of belonging. By equipping future teachers with the competencies to design inclusive outdoor learning environments, higher education institutions can contribute to the development of more cohesive, resilient, and environmentally conscious European societies.

**Keywords:** teaching approaches; outdoor education; mountaineering; ski touring; sport climbing.

#### About the authors

Authors: Tadej Debevec & Domen Tominec

Dr. Debevec holds positions of Full Professor of Sport Science at the Faculty of Sport, University of Ljubljana and Scientific Councillor at "Jozef Stefan" Institute and currently heads the Department of Mountaineering, Skiing and Sport recreation at the Faculty of Sport at University of Ljubljana. He received his Ph.D. for the work on different altitude/hypoxic training modalities and conducted his post-doctoral fellowship at University of Cape Town, Faculty of Health Sciences Department of Human Biology, UCT/MRC Research Unit for Exercise Science and Sports Medicine. Dr. Debevec also conducted parts of his postdoctoral training at University of Lausanne and University Savoie Mont Blanc. His teaching is focused on various outdoor sports and environmental physiology while his research primarily aims investigate physiological adaptations of humans to different environmental stressors in particular oxygen fraction and temperature in health and disease.



## The Intersection of Inclusion and Education Outside the Classroom in Italy: The Role of Support Teacher

Elena Diana, Università di Pisa, Italy

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

This study explores inclusion in Education Outside the Classroom (EOtC) in Italy, analyzing the opportunities and challenges presented by this environment, as well as the role of the specialized support teacher. Starting with Law 517 of August 4, 1977, which abolished special classes and promoted the integration of students with disabilities into regular schools, Italy initiated a process of inclusion. This law tasked Support Teachers (ST) with assisting students with special educational needs, contributing to the creation of a more inclusive educational context. However, experiences of EOtC with regular classes that include students with disabilities remain underexplored, as does the role of the SNT in these outdoor contexts.

The study adopts a qualitative mixed-methods approach with a phenomenological focus and ethnographic perspective. Six observations were conducted for each teacher in three different primary school in Tuscany, along with walking interviews with three Italian teachers. The data were analyzed through reflective thematic analysis. The results indicate that the presence of the support teacher can foster more inclusive teaching strategies, but challenges related to classroom management in a less structured environment also emerge. Some teachers view EOtC as an opportunity for inclusion, while others report practical and organizational obstacles. These results suggest the need for further training on EOtC and inclusive practices for both regular and ST.

**Keywords:** Education Outside the Classroom (EOtC); inclusion; support teacher; primary school.

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#### About the author

Elena Diana holds a PhD in Philosophy, with a curriculum in Pedagogy and Education at the University of Pisa and the University of Florence. Her research focuses on Education Outside the Classroom (EOtC), with particular attention to teachers' practices and the relationship between school and place in Italian and Danish primary schools. She is a qualified primary school teacher and specialized support teacher, with professional experience in public schools. Her scholarly work is rooted in qualitative inquiry and an empathic, relational perspective, with particular interests in outdoor education, inclusion, teacher reflexivity, the transnational exchange of teaching practices, and the educational value of lived experience.



## Beyond the Classroom Walls: Turning Everyday Spaces into Powerful Learning Experiences

Anna Fischerová, TEREZA, Educational Centre, Czech Republic

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Poster Presentation

##### Abstract

Teaching outdoors is often imagined as something natural and intuitive – yet many teachers discover that stepping beyond the classroom walls brings a mix of excitement and uncertainty. The Teaching Outdoors: Learning with Nature course by Lessons in Grass helps educators transform that uncertainty into confidence through a highly practical, hands-on training approach where real experience becomes the core method of learning. Instead of long theoretical sessions, the course invites teachers to step outside, try things out, experiment with simple materials, and feel directly how outdoor learning transforms teaching and student engagement.

Throughout the week, participants spend most of their time outside: in parks and urban corners that provide rich learning opportunities. They explore activities across subjects – from math and science to languages, arts and wellbeing – and discover how sensory engagement, movement and simple materials can turn any outdoor space into a lively learning environment. Short theory inputs provide just enough grounding to understand the principles behind outdoor learning, but the heart of the course lies in doing, observing and reflecting.

This playful, experiential approach helps teachers realize that outdoor learning does not require perfect conditions, special equipment or a forest behind the school. What matters most is the willingness to step outside, notice what the space offers, and build learning experiences from what is already there. Participants often describe moments of surprise – quick student engagement, natural collaboration, and the discovery that even a small courtyard can become an outdoor classroom.

A distinctive strength of the program is the international community it creates. Teachers from different countries learn, play and explore together, sharing experiences, challenges and creative ideas. Because the group spends the entire week outdoors side by side, strong bonds naturally form. This shared adventure deepens confidence, broadens perspective and enriches professional identity.

The program supports educators from kindergarten to secondary level, as well as teacher trainers and school leaders. Many leave with renewed enthusiasm, practical tools and a clear plan for integrating outdoor learning into their everyday teaching. Most importantly, they carry home something that cannot be transferred through theory alone – a lived, personal experience of what outdoor learning feels like, why it matters, and how achievable it is. Learning and exploring outdoors together strengthens a sense of belonging and connection – to each other and to the natural world – reminding participants that outdoor learning is not only practical and effective, but also deeply human and enriching.

**Keywords:** outdoor learning; experiential teacher training; hands-on pedagogy; international teacher community.

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##### About the author

Anna Fischerová has dedicated her career to education, combining her background in English and American Studies with Environmental Studies. She has taught learners of all ages – from preschool to university – and worked with organizations focused on environmental and global education both in the Czech Republic and abroad. At TEREZA Educational Center, she supports teachers in bringing outdoor learning into everyday practice and leads the international program Lessons in Grass. Her work is inspired by travel, nature and sharing experiences with educators worldwide.



## Survival week - Nature Based Outdoor Program

Robert Franjić, Center šolskih in obšolskih dejavnosti, Slovenia

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

My contribution presents a week-long outdoor survival programme that was first implemented in the 2025/26 school year at CŠOD Bohinj with 7th grade pupils aged 11–12. Outdoor survival is a broad field that goes far beyond a few basic skills for staying alive in challenging conditions. It encompasses diverse knowledge and abilities, offering rich opportunities for cross curricular integration. The school's natural surroundings and the Triglav National Park provide excellent conditions for carrying out such activities with pupils.

The survival week is designed as an experiential programme focusing on group dynamics, mutual support, personal growth, and the individual's adaptation to the group. Survival skills serve primarily as a tool for developing these competences. Through various challenges, pupils confront their fears, self-image, and their ability to function under stress and discomfort. The programme takes place in the natural environment around CŠOD Bohinj, where meadows, forests and the lake all become an outdoor classroom.

Participants use ropes, fire strikers, climbing equipment, sleeping bags and canoes. The programme is suitable for groups of up to 30 pupils aged 12 and above. Prior preparation is essential, but the content and schedule of the programme remain unknown to the pupils beforehand; information is given to them gradually. Although no exceptional physical fitness is required, the children frequently find themselves outside their comfort zone.

Pupils learn basic orientation skills, identify tree species, and recognise some edible and poisonous plants. They prepare their own equipment and food for bivouacking and spend a night outdoors. They take part in an orienteering hike with first aid tasks, practise fire making, water finding and the use of basic tools. One of the activities is also spending time alone in the forest. In addition, pupils engage in sensory awareness exercises, prepare a theatre performance, go climbing and canoeing, and conclude the week with a group reflection.

The programme was very well received by participants and ran without notable difficulties. At a time when children are increasingly exposed to a passive lifestyle and are less accustomed to discomfort, such a programme offers an important opportunity to develop independence and resilience and serves as strong motivation for its continued implementation.

**Keywords:** outdoor survival education; experiential learning; student resilience; cross-curricular integration; nature-based programme.

#### About the author

Robert Franjić was born in Bohinj, Slovenia. He graduated at Faculty of Sport in Ljubljana. During his studies, he began working at a sports agency, where he spent several years as a manager of sports programs for adults and children. He led sports activities for students during school trips and sports days, worked as a guide for various outdoor programs and conducted teambuilding programs for adult groups. After completing his studies, he carried out his practical training at the primary school in Bohinjska Bistrica. Since 2018, he has been employed at CŠOD Bohinj and continues working with children.



## Interrelationships in Nature

Kristina Fratrović, Snježana Marković-Zoraja, OŠ Dubovac, Croatia

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Oral Presentation

##### Abstract

In the Biology subject, in the topic "Interrelationships in Nature", students learn about the connection between living and non-living nature, the importance of producers in the ecosystem, the circulation of matter and the flow of energy, the sustainability of living nature, and extracurricular classes are organized in the school park. The subjects Mathematics, Biology and Chemistry are integrated in the teaching. An example shows learning through research in which biological measurements are performed using measuring tools and applications.

During teaching and learning, students solve tasks in direct reality and learn to apply certain skills in everyday life.

In the school park, students work in groups and mark with tape the trees assigned to their group (students receive working materials - a picture of a geographical area with trees that they will measure). Each group performs measurements on five trees.

After marking the trees with tape, students determine the plant species using the PlantNet application for species determination.

After determining the plant species, they measure the height of the trees using different methods; using the GLOBE Observer application, a pencil and a mirror (application of the principle of triangle congruence, Thales' principle, the principle of triangle similarity). At the end of the measurements, the students compare the results obtained. The students measure the circumference of the tree at a height of 135 cm and calculate the diameter of the circle from the known circumference, or apply the knowledge in the field by calculating the diameter of the tree.

After the measurements are made, in the classroom, the students calculate the amount of stored carbon and absorbed carbon dioxide according to the given mathematical formulas. They explain the process of carbon absorption and the formation of biological compounds, describe the circulation of substances in nature using the example of a tree, the flow and conversion of energy in a tree.

The students also calculate the age of the trees according to the biological age coefficient in order to compare the amount of stored carbon in young and old trees. After calculating the amount of stored carbon and absorbed carbon dioxide, they compare the age of the trees and the stored carbon and draw a conclusion about the importance of trees in the carbon cycle. The students display the results of their fieldwork on posters in Canva.

Students learned to work according to the principles of scientific methodology, to think critically, to interpret observed phenomena and interrelationships based on observations of nature and simple research, to draw conclusions based on measurements.

Work with students includes PBL (project – based learning), develops the STEM area of learning, develops the 4C learning method (critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity). By applying and selecting technology, students develop ICT skills. By measuring and analyzing the results obtained, students develop natural science and mathematical competencies. By applying the described work methods, students are able to apply mathematical knowledge in everyday life and in further research in nature.

**Keywords:** carbon cycle; outdoor education; math.



### About the authors

Kristina Fratrović is a Mathematics and Computer Science teacher with extensive experience in mentoring students in national competitions. She has authored teaching materials and contributed to STEM education by developing solutions and workbooks for students.

She mentors students participating in mathematical competitions and contributes to the development of competition tasks and the organisation of these events.

She has guided students whose research projects received major awards in Europe and Eurasia and had the opportunity to present their work at an international conference in the USA. As a speaker, she regularly presents on STEM education and student research at conferences in Croatia and abroad.

Kristina is also actively involved in professional networks, contributing to the development of mathematics education and participating in international collaborative projects aimed at enhancing educational practices.

She is a GLOBE teacher.

Snježana Marković-Zoraja, prof. of biology and chemistry, teacher advisor at OS Dubovac, Karlovac, Croatia. She is the head of the regional GLOBE council in Croatia. She is a member of the GLOBE State Commission. She regularly participates as a presenter at conferences in Croatia where the STEM field is promoted (Carnet Users Conference, Enter etc.)

She is a presenter at the county expert councils of Biology and Chemistry, at the inter-county councils of GLOBE, state meetings of GLOBE. She regularly participates in the work of EU-Scientix - the European Community for the STEM field. It is the winner of the award for the best teaching scenario in the EU - Scientix. eu for 2021 and 2025. which was published on Scientix web page. Research projects are published on fine international websites. gov. – student research. Research papers for IVSS GLOBE were published on globe.gov, and in 2024 the research project "Monitoring and protection of Marmont Alley" was awarded as a winner in Europe and Eurasia. Professional articles on work with students and application of GLOBE in teaching were published in the biological journal of the Faculty of Science and Mathematics in Zagreb, Croatia.

<https://doi.org/10.32633/eb.8.4>

<https://doi.org/10.32633/eb.10.8>

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## From the Margins to Teacher Formation? Outdoor Learning Professionals, Pedagogy, and Legitimacy in Initial Teacher Education

Graham French, Bangor University, United Kingdom

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Outdoor learning is increasingly recognised within curriculum policy across the UK, particularly in relation to wellbeing, inclusion, and holistic development (Waite, 2011; Nicol and Higgins, 2023). However, research consistently suggests that its integration within initial teacher education (ITE) remains uneven and fragile, often dependent on local cultures, individual advocacy, and informal partnerships (Kendall et al., 2006; Barrable et al., 2020). This presentation examines how outdoor learning is positioned within ITE, with particular attention to the role of outdoor learning professionals and the pedagogical and professional implications of different models of collaboration.

Drawing on a critical synthesis of teacher education and outdoor learning literature, policy analysis across the four UK nations, and research-informed illustrative cases, the paper identifies three recurring roles occupied by outdoor learning professionals in ITE: external contributors, embedded members of ITE delivery teams, and student teachers entering programmes with prior outdoor expertise. Building on research that emphasises the relational and affective dimensions of teacher learning (Christie et al., 2016; Priestley et al., 2015), the paper explores how collaboration is enacted pedagogically, and how professional identities and legitimacy are negotiated within teacher education contexts.

The analysis highlights tensions between rhetorical policy support for outdoor learning and its marginal positioning within assessment, professional standards, and programme structures. While episodic contributions can enhance confidence and enthusiasm among student teachers (Barrable et al., 2020), they may also reinforce perceptions of outdoor learning as supplementary rather than integral to pedagogy. More sustained collaborative models offer greater coherence, but raise questions about qualification, recognition, and whose expertise is legitimised within ITE. Student-teacher perspectives further demonstrate how confidence, motivation, and prior experience shape engagement with outdoor learning, challenging assumptions of universal enthusiasm.

The presentation argues that advancing outdoor learning within ITE requires attention not only to curriculum alignment, but to pedagogical relationships, affective dimensions of learning, and professional boundaries. It concludes by discussing implications for teacher educators, outdoor learning professionals, and policy makers concerned with strengthening teacher formation and professional learning across diverse educational contexts.

**Keywords:** initial teacher education; teacher identity; pedagogy and affect; collaboration and partnership.

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## One Opportunity is not Enough – Repeated Use of Authentic Learning Environments in Primary Science Teacher Training

Iva Frýzová, Kateřina Gorčíková, Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta, Czech  
Republic

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

As part of Primary teacher training at Masaryk University in the Czech Republic, long-term attention has been devoted to science education outside the classroom. As part of the study program's innovation, we have prepared a series of recurring opportunities that, as time and financial demands increase, embed learning in authentic environments into follow-up subjects. Initially, this involves using the faculty courtyard for tens of minutes and holding lessons in the urban surroundings of the faculty and educational institutions (museum, planetarium). Later, the lessons are transferred to the university's model school garden and nearby environmental centre. At the end of their third year of study, students spend a week of residential outdoor learning experience in the Moravian Karst.

We tested the effectiveness of this innovation over three consecutive years (2023–2025) using the focus group method, in which students were divided into groups and discussed issues related to comparing their experiences from previous levels of education with their experiences from teacher training, barriers and benefits of implementing teacher training in an authentic environment, and their ideas about using an authentic environment in their future professional practice.

The students' responses were independently recorded and subjected to thematic analysis by two researchers, and the findings of both were compared across individual grades. The results of the study confirmed that the innovation's aims had been met, particularly in changing students' attitudes towards science education, which they perceive as interesting and enjoyable compared to their experiences at previous levels of education. In addition, the analysis revealed an increase in students' self-efficacy in educational areas outside the classroom, not only in science education but also in primary education in general.

**Keywords:** primary teacher training; science education outside the classroom; self-efficacy

#### About the authors

Iva Frýzová is involved in initial teacher training at the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University in Brno, particularly in primary science education. She specialises in science education outside the classroom and garden-based education.

Kateřina Gorčíková is an assistant professor at the Department of Geography, Faculty of Education, Masaryk University, where she completed her master's and doctoral studies. She continuously advances her expertise in modern teaching methods. Her professional focus includes geography didactics, map skills, and inquiry-based learning. A strong advocate for taking geography beyond the classroom, she is deeply involved in leading fieldwork and outdoor education for future geography teachers, helping them connect theory with real-world landscapes. She integrates these extensive outdoor experiences into her university teaching and textbook authoring.



## Gardening for Future - Supporting Teachers in an Integrative Gardening Practice

Christiana Glettler, Private Pädagogische Hochschule Augustinum, Austria

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Children benefit from spending time in nature in many ways - in their social development, their psychological and cognitive development, their motor development, their environmental awareness and in their general health (Chawla, 2002; Raith & Lude, 2014; Gebhard, 2013). These facts are by now well known also by teachers. However in everyday school practice, many teachers face difficulties trying to incorporate regular outdoor practices into their teaching. Mostly the concerns are related to safety, legal issues such as needing a second or third teacher to go outdoors, lacking didactical knowledge and fear of not being able to meet the demands of the curriculum in the major subjects (Glackin, 2016; von Au & Jucker, 2022).

Gardening initiatives can work well in alleviating at least some of teachers' concerns. However, lacking didactical and methodological knowledge and in some cases basic gardening skills are still often barriers hindering a successfully incorporation of gardening into school life.

The Gardening for Future project meets these barriers. Working together with 2 primary schools in each of Styria's education regions, we offer targeted support to teachers who want to start gardening. This includes workshops for the teachers at the start of the project and three months into gardening, a guidebook with ideas for connecting gardening work with specific curricular topics ranging from science over mathematics to arts and crafts and two school visits where gardening experts work with the children at school and can answer specific questions the teachers might have.

The aim of the project is to equip the teachers with the necessary knowledge and methodology to start them off on their own gardening journey. After the first year, the project will be evaluated and continued support will be provided based on the evaluation results. We also hope to establish a network of teachers who will then be able to support each other by sharing good practice methods.

**Keywords:** school gardens; teacher education; primary school; network.

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#### About the author

Christiana Glettler has studied Biology and has worked as a teacher in different schools before starting her PhD work. She has written her doctoral thesis on the relationships between Outdoor Learning and Sustainability Education. Currently she is a professor for Science Education in primary schools at the private teacher education college Augustinum in Graz. In her teaching and research activities she focusses on outdoor learning, education for sustainable development and steam education.



## Crossing Borders, Shaping Learning: Rethinking Outdoor Education through International Comparative Perspectives

Breogán Gómez Requejo, JFK International School, Switzerland

### Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education

#### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

This poster presents a comparative analysis of two well-established outdoor education models developed within distinct European educational contexts. The first case is based on an internal report completed in June 2022 through a collaborative effort between the Centre for School and Outdoor Education, the University of Ljubljana, and the DAEN Master's Degree at the University of Santiago de Compostela. This report, by analysing mainly but not only sports-activity programs from 10 out of its 25 centres, provides a comprehensive description of the structure, objectives, and pedagogical framework of CŠOD, with particular emphasis on its institutional role within the Slovenian education system and its contribution to experiential and outdoor learning at a national level.

The second case study focuses on the outdoor education programme developed at the JFK International School, located in the Bernese Alps. As previously presented at the last EOE Conference placed in Rimini, this programme adopts a holistic and cross-curricular approach, engaging pupils aged 6 to 14 in structured outdoor learning sessions and excursions. It integrates multiple subject areas and promotes active learning in natural environments and beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Given my dual role as co-author of the Slovenian report and director of the Swiss programme, this poster aims to explore how outdoor education is practically organised and implemented in both contexts. The comparison focuses on key pedagogical and organisational dimensions, including approaches to learning and teaching strategies, learning objectives and assessment methods, the use of equipment and resources, the allocation of time and learning spaces, teacher involvement, group composition, and thematic learning outcomes.

By examining these elements, the poster seeks to identify both convergences and divergences between the two models. Furthermore, it highlights the added value of international collaboration in outdoor education, emphasising how mobility, intercultural dialogue, and the exchange of organisational practices can significantly enhance educational innovation, while also demonstrating the benefits of cross-border cooperation and shared expertise.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; comparative analysis; experiential learning; cross-curricular approach; international collaboration.

#### About the author

I am currently working at JFK International, managing the Outdoor Education and Academic Trips program. I hold a Bachelors in Primary & Physical Education as well as a master's degree in Outdoor Education and, besides Switzerland, I have been acquiring experience and developing my educational career in countries like Spain, Ireland, Sweden and Slovenia. I am convinced that Outdoor Education offers students the possibility to make real-world connections through transdisciplinary teaching, and a more student-centred approach by fostering experiential and project-based learning during lessons.



## Exploring Somatic Motion in Natural Spaces – A Walking and Pilates Movement Practice for Embodied Presence and Calm

Sarah Grocutt, Fitness Excel Training & Education, United Kingdom

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

### Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

#### Abstract

Somatic walking and Pilates emphasize mindful movement and internal awareness encouraging us to tune into bodily sensations, breath and alignment. Through slow, exercise and imagery, it fosters a deep connection between mind and body, improved proprioception, ease of movement and a heightened sense of embodied presence. Through a series of Pilates-based exercises, we'll explore how the body responds in an outdoor space using the natural environment as our classroom. The movement sequences will emphasize grounding through the feet and pelvis, spinal articulation, and breath-led movement incorporating imagery, inviting participants to sense the body not just internally, but also in relation to the environment.

Participants will experience outdoor movement-based practices and gain practical, somatic tools they can integrate into their teaching practice to enhance presence, support student engagement which foster and support wellbeing. Through embodied walking and Pilates incorporating nature and the natural landscape, they will deepen their awareness of how movement shapes learning, increases energy, enhances focus and develop strategies to promote holistic engagement and bring mindful body approaches into their classrooms and daily routines reducing stress and anxiety.

Situated in the Slovenia forested natural environment, characterized by the presence of trees, open ground provides a supportive ecological context for somatic movement practice. Using principles of tree biology, the session invites mindful observation of growth, respiration, and seasonal change, particularly the autumnal processes of slowing, release, and conservation. Through gentle somatic movement and walking practices in forested environments, participants cultivate embodied awareness, support nervous system regulation, and experience both physical and psychological health benefits of spending time among trees. The forest setting encourages reflection on parallel life cycles and adaptive rhythms within the human body, fostering resilience, stress reduction, and a deeper sense of connection to natural systems. Exposure to natural settings has been shown to support parasympathetic nervous system regulation. Practicing somatic movement outdoors allows participants to engage in embodied inquiry that is shaped by sensory input from the environment—such as variations in light, sound, texture, and temperature—thereby fostering grounded attention, postural adaptability, and relational awareness between body and landscape. This ideal setting supports movement as a process of self-regulation, perception, and integration within a living ecosystem.

**Keywords:** natural spaces; movement; therapeutic; somatic.

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### About the author

Sarah Grocutt is an experienced science educator specialising in biology, with over 35 years of practice in designing and delivering personalised learning programmes. As an outdoor therapeutic practitioner and qualified Pilates instructor, she integrates scientific knowledge with health and wellbeing to offer a holistic approach to teaching and professional development. She works with both students and practitioners across educational and therapeutic settings. Sarah leads workshops and retreats for adults, incorporating mindful walking, forest-bathing-informed therapeutic practices, and Pilates to promote embodied learning and wellbeing.

Her MA research in Outdoor Education examined the benefits of long-distance walking, embodied movement, nature immersion, landscape engagement and wellbeing. This work was informed by extensive travel across Europe and Asia, during which she also presented at academic conferences.



## From Experience to Knowledge about Glaciers in an Outdoor Laboratory and Virtual Learning Environment

Martin Gröger, University of Siegen, Germany

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

Glaciers in Europe are mostly confined to high mountain ranges and are difficult for many to access. Glaciers are therefore often abstract for many people. However, they serve as a prime example of the drastic impacts of human-induced climate change. With our project GlacierXperience ([www.glaciereducation.com](http://www.glaciereducation.com)), which was founded as an EU-Erasmus+ school project, we aim to bring the topic of glaciers into science education. By creating both an outdoor laboratory and a virtual learning platform, GlacierXperience makes glacial science tangible for students not only as a real-life experience on the ground – but regardless of their location. The outdoor glacier lab, implemented on Austria's Dachstein glaciers, offers students a half-day program where they investigate real-world glacial phenomena.

For students who cannot visit glaciers in person, the project offers a digital learning environment that replicates the experience virtually. The platform features 360° panoramic tours of the Hallstätter Glacier in Austria and the Steindalsbreen Glacier in Norway. The virtual experience is enhanced by compatibility with VR headsets, providing an even more immersive exploration. Each scene in the digital environment corresponds to a specific experiment from the outdoor lab, such as cryoconite analysis or albedo measurements, and more experiments with regard to chemistry, biology, physics, and geography, ensuring consistency between physical and virtual learning. QR codes in the lab booklet link directly to the digital platform, enabling seamless integration of both formats.

The development of GlacierXperience followed an iterative design process grounded in Educational Design Research. Pilot implementations with school groups revealed that students often entered the program with fragmented knowledge and misconceptions about glaciers, as well as their formation and retreat.

The poster provides insights into the outdoor glacier lab and our freely accessible 360° learning environment. It also showcases model experiments (e.g., the formation of typical karst landforms, heavy metal accumulation through the melting of permafrost) for use in classrooms.

**Keywords:** glacier; outdoor and virtual learning.

#### About the author

Authors: Philipp Spitzer, Martin Gröger, Volker Heck, Jan Höper.

Martin Gröger is professor for didactics of chemistry at the University of Siegen and interested in teaching natural sciences in nature resp. outside the classroom. He is the director of the student science labs Science Forum and FLEX, whereby FLEX is an outdoor lab to teach natural sciences in nature.



## The Breath of the Earth – Carbon Dioxide as a Mediator between Inorganic Matter and Organic Life

Martin Gröger, University of Siegen, Germany

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

This contribution presents an ERASMUS+ Small-scale Partnership in School Education involving universities and secondary schools from Slovenia, Austria, Germany and Norway.

Within the project, students explore local karst landscapes during field excursions and investigate characteristic karst phenomena using scientific experiments and geographical approaches. Karst as a rock type serves as an exemplary context for understanding interactions between the lithosphere, atmosphere and hydrosphere within the carbon cycle and for examining the central role of carbon dioxide. Metaphorically, the Earth can be described as “breathing” carbon dioxide, which mediates between inorganic matter and organic life. In the excursions the students first have a look at and investigate the soil on which they live and recognize the many different ways in which it affects their lives. Thus we start with a “down-to-earth” approach and try to “ground” the students. This perspective – as part of an education for sustainable development – highlights the fundamental interconnectedness of natural systems, emphasizes human responsibility towards the planet, and also shows that international action is necessary and can be particularly effective.

Karst phenomena are examined from chemical, physical, biological, geographical, economic and social perspectives. The project aims to foster interest in STEM subjects by embedding learning in authentic real-world contexts and by promoting outdoor education. Students apply a design thinking approach to develop locally relevant project ideas which, in the spirit of service learning, provide added value for local communities.

Data, results and visual materials (images and videos) are digitally processed and shared on an online platform, enabling international comparison, communication and collaboration among participants. In this way, subject-specific learning, practice-oriented fieldwork, innovative pedagogical methods and intercultural exchange are combined within a single educational framework.

The integration of outdoor education, design thinking and service learning represents an innovative, learner-centred approach that connects scientific inquiry with real-world problem solving and supports the development of sustainability-oriented competencies.

**Keywords:** EDS; Karst; carbon dioxide; design thinking.

#### About the authors

Authors: Martin Gröger, Nika Cebin, Matjaž Dlouhy, Volker Heck, Jan Höper, Reinhard Ottowitz, Sabine Seidl, Philipp Spitzer, Kadir-Kaan Turan, Veronica Viken

Martin Gröger is professor for didactics of chemistry at the University of Siegen and interested in teaching natural sciences in nature resp. outside the classroom. He is the director of the student science labs Science Forum and FLEX, whereby FLEX is an outdoor lab to teach natural sciences in nature.



## Development of a Citizen Science Project to Teach and Engage Children and Young People with Nature

Frances Harris, University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

Fundamental to developing more sustainable behaviours is the development of an underlying ethos of care for the environment. This presentation reports on a project in which a citizen science project is being set up to encourage teenagers to engage with their local environment. Alongside this, the project aims to monitor engagement with nature, through pre- and post-participation surveys of nature-relatedness, through the NR-6 survey (Nisbet and Zelenski, 2013).

Citizen science projects are commonly used across the world for environmental monitoring, providing a way to engage the public with environmental issues through providing methods and resources for large-scale (geographically speaking) data collection on environmental issues. Through participation, people are learning about an environmental issue, learning about scientific methods, and contributing scientific data. Thus, projects combine research, education and environmental stewardship. Further, when children and young people (CYP) are engaged, citizen science can support learning in schools, and also promote connection to nature, which is known to support physical and mental health (Bratman et al, 2019; Jimenez et al., 2021).

This project takes place in Amman, Jordan, a city in a desert environment. Following focus group discussions with secondary students, it became aware that their engagement with nature was low. The project has developed a citizen science project designed to help CYP learn more about nature which is around them, including identifying trees, and knowing which are native to the region, and which are exotic species which have been brought in from other areas of the world. It is also designed to encourage CYP to notice and connect with nature.

This citizen science project is aimed at secondary-school children (roughly 14-16 years old), and has the following goals for their learning:

- Development of observational and botanical skills as they learn to identify trees, using a key provided.
- Improving knowledge of local flora, and the distinction between native and non-native species.
- Enhancing awareness of the impact of environmental change on local vegetation.
- Encouraging children and young people to notice, identify, name and connect with nature, with the hope that this will benefit their mental health and wellbeing, and that they will, in the future, take on the challenge of being stewards of the earth's resources.

This presentation will report on the findings concerning student's engagement with nature, based on pre- and post-participation surveys of nature-relatedness, through the NR-6 survey.

**Keywords:** citizen science; nature relatedness; children and young people.

#### About the author

Frances Harris is a Reader in Education and Environment at the University of Hertfordshire. Her research relating to outdoor education focusses on children's connection to nature through outdoor learning, specifically forest school, farm education and citizen science.



## Learning Journeys in the Woods: Understanding Children's Diverse Educational Experiences in Forest School

Frances Harris, University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Oral Presentation

##### Abstract

Forest School is a common form of outdoor pedagogy in the UK, with widespread anecdotal and empirical support for its benefits. However, there remains a lack of robust theoretical frameworks explaining the underlying mechanisms of how and why the approach works across the diversity of children attending sessions.

This presentation addresses this gap by synthesising findings from a study into practitioner perspectives regarding the significance of taking children from the classroom to an outdoor learning space; what children learn at forest school; and how children responded to forest school sessions. The findings suggest that the efficacy of Forest School is rooted in the synergy between a child-led ethos and the 'permissive' nature of the outdoor space. This combination allows each child to navigate the activities offered at forest school according to their individual needs and agency.

This presentation argues that the synergy of learner autonomy, a child-led ethos, and the permissive nature of the woodland environment enables children to engage with Forest School according to their specific developmental needs. By offering a diverse range of activities, and accommodating a range of starting points, the setting facilitates bespoke 'learning journeys' that support individualised educational, social, and emotional growth. As children can navigate various activities and goals at their own pace, Forest School supports a broad spectrum of educational and socio-emotional outcomes tailored to personal developmental needs.

Consequently, the approach's strength lies in its capacity to generate multiple, unique success stories within a single cohort; while every child's outcomes differ, the collective benefit to the class is comprehensive. This model explains the approach's widespread success: it provides a platform for a class to thrive collectively through the aggregation of unique, individual learning trajectories. The paper proposes a new conceptual model illustrating how these individual learning journeys aggregate to produce collective benefits for the whole class, supporting arguments for the continued integration of Forest School in primary education.

**Keywords:** forest school; outdoor learning; environmental education.

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##### About the author

Frances Harris is a Reader in Education and Environment at the University of Hertfordshire. Her research relating to outdoor education focusses on children's connection to nature through outdoor learning, specifically forest school, farm education and citizen science.



## How Refusal Could Be the Greatest Win: Reflections on Working with Trauma-Impacted Children in Care

Verity Howell, United Kingdom

### Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning

#### Oral Presentation

##### Abstract

Children in care have often experienced many Adverse Childhood Experiences, disrupted attachment, and abuse, exploitation, and neglect. Working in a specialist care provision means that children usually have multiple and complex trauma histories.

My organisation focuses on using “the outdoors” to support children during short-term crisis placements. This requires a shift in perspective and practice, reframing risk and success. While physical and environmental risks in outdoor activities can often be predicted and managed, individual, relational and psychological risks, rooted in trauma and impaired attachment, are less visible and often more significant, requiring different perspective and approach.

There can be no “McDonaldisation” of activities; instead of a prepackaged “adventure in a bun”, outdoor programmes must be highly individualised. Each child brings a unique set of experiences, triggers, and needs, meaning that activities, environments, and expectations must be carefully adapted to account for personal and psychological risk, not just physical challenge.

For some children, particularly those who have experienced grooming or exploitation, the ability to recognise bodily cues and refuse participation may represent a significant achievement. In this context, “refusal” is not resistance, but agency, indicating emerging safety, self-awareness, and trust, challenging dominant narratives of participation and achievement in outdoor education.

Outdoor activities can provide a healthy and constructive outlet for children who have previously sought adrenaline, risk, or stimulation through harmful means. Adventurous activities are often framed as a way to build resilience, engage in alternative education and develop a healthier approach to risk-taking, but in practice, the most meaningful moments emerge from stillness, connection, and reflection. These experiences can support secure attachment, which serves as the foundation for engagement, mobility, and broader developmental progress.

When approached in a trauma-informed way, “the outdoors” can offer both high-energy experiences and slower, reflective moments that support emotional regulation, attachment, and a sense of achievement.

The presentation also highlights the central role of relationships. Building trust is not only essential for safe participation in outdoor activities, but also underpins secure attachments. Shared experiences in outdoor settings can strengthen connections between children and their wider care teams, offering opportunities for co-regulation, communication, and positive relationship building.

Trauma-informed outdoor practice can enable children not only to access opportunities, but also to feel safe enough to engage with them. This presentation reflects on how practice with trauma-impacted children requires a fundamental shift in how success, risk, and participation are understood.

**Keywords:** children in care; trauma; attachment; outdoor activities.



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## About the author

Verity Howell works as an Outdoor Practitioner for a specialist care provider in England that provides therapeutic care to trauma-impacted children during short-term crisis intervention placements. She previously completed a BA(Hons) in Outdoor and Adventure Education at the University of St Mark & St John (Plymouth, UK) and a Masters in Outdoor and Experiential Learning.



## The Power of Stories: Capturing the Impact of Adventure Education

Olli Kamunen, Suomen Humanistinen Ammattikorkeakoulu Oy, Finland

### Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education

#### Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

##### Abstract

How can we meaningfully describe the personal and transformative experiences created through outdoor adventure education? This workshop introduces the Most Significant Change (MSC) method—a narrative-based approach that helps uncover the deep shifts, insights, and moments of growth that participants experience. Originally used in international development cooperation, MSC is highly effective in outdoor, youth, and experiential learning contexts where change is complex and personal. In addition to collecting evaluation data the method is a useful tool that you can be used in reflection of experiences with different groups. In our experience, this makes the method very practical in collecting impact-evaluation data from youth groups.

Participants will explore how MSC brings forward authentic voices, highlights unexpected but meaningful outcomes, and strengthens qualitative impact assessment. In the workshop, everyone will craft or verbalize their own “Most Significant Change” story connected to adventure education. These stories will be shared in small groups, where key themes and patterns will be identified. The workshop includes an introductory lecture on the topic and a practical workshop in which participants will get a chance to test using the method in a workshop session organized outdoors.

In the workshop you will learn how to apply Most Significant Change -method in evaluating and reporting the impact of outdoor adventure education programs. After the workshop you understand how storytelling can make the value of adventure education more visible—and more powerfully communicated in your own future projects.

The workshop is based on our experiences of applying the MSC method in workshops and evaluating the outcomes of the FATE (From Adventure Toward Education and Employment) Erasmus+ funded international development project. The project is coordinated by Valo-Valmennusyhdistys ry together with Humak University of Applied Sciences, SFERA International (North Macedonia), and Innovative Generation (Inovatyvi Karta, Lithuania). The project supports young people who are outside education and employment in accessing studies and job opportunities through adventure education.

**Keywords:** adventure education; outdoor learning; experiential learning; evaluating impact of learning; qualitative impact assessment.

##### About the author

Olli Kamunen is an educator and senior lecturer with broad experience in outdoor and adventure education, early childhood education, teacher education and international educational development. At Humak University of Applied Sciences, he serves as Head of Degree Programme for Adventure and Outdoor Education and Wellbeing and the Futures of Youth and Community Work. His work focuses on experiential and outdoor learning, nature-based pedagogy, group facilitation and community education. Olli is also involved in research and development projects and is currently conducting doctoral research in education. His professional background combines higher education, teacher training, international cooperation and the development of innovative educational programmes.



## Digital Ecology in Practice: A Synthesis of Czech Methodologies for Sustainable AI Education

Barbora Karpíšková, Petra Nejezchlebová, Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální vzdělávání Brno, příspěvková organizace, Czech Republic

**Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning**

**Oral Presentation**

### Abstract

Today's adolescents face a profound internal conflict: while artificial intelligence (AI) is an inseparable part of their lives, it also triggers significant climate anxiety. Research indicates that up to 41% of Gen Z representatives feel anxious about technology, which can lead to paralysis and the rejection of tools essential for the future labor market. This presentation introduces a synthesis of educational approaches from leading Czech organizations (e.g., AI dětem, Emocionální Kompas) that help teachers transform environmental grief into active digital competence. The methodology, narrative, connects theoretical classroom analysis with practical outdoor experience. In the first phase, students use inquiry-based learning to deconstruct media myths. Instead of a black-and-white perception, they compare the energy intensity of AI with other digital activities, such as video streaming or online meetings, whose impact on data center cooling is often overlooked. Students learn to distinguish between the one-time footprint of training models and the repeated consumption during query response (inference). A crucial element is understanding economic contexts, such as the Jevons Paradox—the risk that making technology more efficient (e.g., optimized models) paradoxically increases its total global consumption. The methodology also reflects the concept of embodied carbon, emissions associated with the production of hardware itself, emphasizing the need to extend device lifespans. The practical portion takes place outdoors, for example, at a smart greenhouse equipped with sensors. Here, students discover the concept of ambient intelligence and observe in real-time how AI actively saves resources by optimizing irrigation based on soil moisture and temperature sensors. This "Green-by AI" approach demonstrates that technology can protect nature more effectively than its own operation costs. In the final phase, students design prototypes of their own "Green AI" applications using efficient methods like pruning (model reduction) and transparent energy labeling. The goal is to equip educators and students with digital resilience and the ability to act as responsible creators of a sustainable future.

**Keywords:** climate anxiety; Jevons paradox; ambient intelligence; inquiry-based learning.

### About the authors

Barbora Karpíšková is a teacher, lecturer, and educational methodology creator. She works with the organization AI dětem, where she co-authored the first Czech AI curriculum for primary and secondary schools, which received the Czech AI Award in education. Her work focuses on connecting digital technology with outdoor learning and fostering critical thinking in the age of algorithms.

Petra Nejezchlebová is a lecturer at Lipka (specifically the Rozmarýnek facility) who bridges environmental teaching with AI education. In her practice, she utilizes AI-driven technologies and sensors, such as those in smart greenhouses, to demonstrate how precise data can optimize resource consumption and protect nature.



## The School Garden as a Community Gathering Place

Petra Nejezchlebová, Eva Kazdová, Lenka Šimková, Lipka – školské zařízení pro  
environmentální vzdělávání Brno, příspěvková organizace, Czech Republic

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

##### Abstract

How can we motivate students to take an interest in and care for the area around their school?

Engage them in investigative research using our new tool – climate garden cards. What is the biodiversity in the garden? Where is the shade, and where does the sun shine? What is the soil like in the garden? How is water managed in the garden?

After careful investigation, brainstorm together on how to improve the garden so it can better withstand climate change. Have students design the garden's equipment and appropriate arrangements so that it can serve as a place for learning and relaxation, as well as a gathering place for the local community around the school.

Organize a grand opening, a garden party, or create informational signs about your garden for visitors.

Not sure about certain elements? Look for someone in the area who can advise you; involve experts, companies, or civic organizations.

Lipka brings its many years of experience from teacher seminars and work with schools and is eager to share them across Europe. During the workshop, you'll try an introductory activity to develop sensitivity to the outdoor environment and inquiry-based learning using climate garden cards. For inspiration, we'll also present outcomes from student mini-projects.

**Keywords:** school garden, community gathering place, climate garden cards, inquiry-based learning

##### About the authors

Mgr. Petra Nejezchlebová – graduate of the Faculty of Education, University of South Bohemia. Pedagogical practice – after 15 years of teaching at primary schools, since 2018, educator, lecturer, and methodologist at Lipka – School Facility for Environmental Education (Rozmarýnek department), Brno. Specialist in methodology and didactic materials, including the development of illustrations for educational trails, MENDELU educational comics, and Klimagarden learning cards. Expert in climate education, inquiry-based learning, and outdoor education. Methodologist for formal/informal education projects, cross-border climate projects and climate programs for the Slovak and Austrian regions.

Mgr. Eva Kazdová – graduate of the Faculty of Science, Masaryk University, Brno, majoring in biology-geology and geography teaching, pedagogical practice – since 2001, educator in the organization Rezekvítek, z.s., since 2002 Lipka – School Facility for Environmental Education Brno. Pedagogical worker, lecturer and organizer of educational events for primary and secondary school teachers, project manager of the project introducing garden therapy to the Czech Republic, mentor of the KaPoDaV project focused on the development of entrepreneurship, mentor of the project Long-term environmental programs for schools and teachers, the mentor of Outdoor education.

Mgr. Lenka Šimková – graduate of the Faculty of Science, Masaryk University, Brno, majoring in environmental protection, pedagogical practice – since 2004, educator, lecturer and methodologist at Lipka – School Facility for Environmental Education (Lipová department), Brno. Organizer of summer camps and family events. Methodologist of formal/informal education projects and climate programs. Author of methodological material and a set of tools for primary school teachers Climate through play. Lecturer and organizer of educational events for primary school teachers. Inter-workplace coordinator in the field of environmental education programs and leisure education. Mentor and educator for leisure club leaders.



## Outdoor Education Without Borders: Mobility as a Pathway to European Collaboration

Barbara Kejžar, Matija Pogačnik, Center šolskih in obšolskih dejavnosti, Slovenia

### Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning

#### Oral Presentation

##### Abstract

The paper explores the role of international mobility within the Erasmus+ programme as a key tool for establishing and strengthening international cooperation in the field of outdoor education. Drawing on several years of experience of the Centre for School and Outdoor Education (CŠOD), the paper presents the development of partnerships between Slovenian educational institutions and foreign organisations hosting participants for job shadowing and professional training.

The contribution highlights how international mobility activities go beyond their primary purpose of individual professional development and increasingly serve as a platform for long-term institutional collaboration. Over multiple project cycles within the Erasmus+ accredited mobility consortium for staff mobility, strong partnerships have been established, enabling continuous exchange of knowledge, pedagogical approaches, and experiences in implementing outdoor learning across diverse national and cultural contexts.

These collaborations often begin as reciprocal visits, where participants not only observe teaching practices but also actively engage, reflect on shared experiences, and gain deeper insight into the role of outdoor education within the broader educational systems of partner countries. Such experiences contribute to a deeper understanding of shared European values and support the development of innovative teaching approaches.

Some of these collaborations have further led to the development of joint ideas and new practices, resulting in collaborative project proposals for KA1 and KA2 projects within the Erasmus+ programme Call 2026. This demonstrates a progression from mobility-based exchange towards more strategic and development-oriented forms of international cooperation.

As a concrete example of in-depth collaboration, the paper presents the partnership with an Irish college, which has evolved into a reciprocal model of cooperation. The Irish partner hosts teachers from CŠOD and consortium partner schools for job shadowing and training activities, while CŠOD hosts Irish students for three-week internships at its centres.

This case of collaboration with the Irish partner will be introduced by colleague Matija Pogačnik. As a participant in job shadowing in Ireland and a mentor to Irish students at the CŠOD Planica centre, he will provide first-hand insights into the practical aspects, impacts, and future potential of such cooperation.

The contribution thus highlights international mobility as a powerful instrument for fostering connections, exchange, and the co-creation of high-quality outdoor education within the European context.

**Keywords:** international mobility; outdoor learning; cross-institutional collaboration; knowledge transfer and practice exchange.

##### About the author

Dr Barbara Kejžar is a project coordinator at the project office of the Centre of the School for Outdoor Education (CŠOD). She also serves as the coordinator of the accredited mobility consortium within the Erasmus+ project “Poučujmo zunaj! / Let’s Teach Outside!”, where she organizes international mobilities for CŠOD educators and teachers from 12 partner Slovenian primary schools. Through her work, she has gained extensive experience in project partnership management and international collaboration, contributing importantly to the development of cross-border professional learning opportunities.

Matija Pogačnik is a teacher at CŠOD Planica, who daily carries out outdoor educational activities with visiting school groups and teachers from Slovenian primary schools.



# Nature for the Very Young: Assessing the Effectiveness of Structured Activities and Nature Didactic Games in Natural Environments for Learning Biology in the Early Years

Marjanca Kos, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia

## Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Early childhood is a crucial period for fostering positive attitudes towards nature (Kahn & Kellert, 2002). It is also the starting point for establishing foundations in biology concepts and developing science skills such as observation, comparison, and classification (Tunnicliffe & Ueckert, 2011). Natural environments, with their wealth of natural objects and materials, offer unparalleled potential for learning biology (Adams & Savahl, 2017; Wilson, 2008). Although there is extensive literature describing activities for young children in nature, there is a conspicuous lack of research with robust study design and concrete data that clearly reveal what children actually gain through such activities (Kuo et al, 2019). This research aimed to bridge this gap by assessing the effectiveness of two sets of structured activities (focused on forest invertebrate fauna and freshwater fauna) and a set of three nature didactic games (“duplication”, “treasure hunt”, and “gnomes’ houses”) in natural environments for learning biology and developing science skills. Six preschool groups (each with 20–22 children aged 5–6 years) participated in the study. The research procedure adhered to the European Commission’s recommendations on ethical dimensions in research methodology. First, semi-structured one-on-one interviews were conducted with all children to assess their initial ideas about freshwater animals and forest invertebrates and their baseline science skills. The children in the experimental groups then engaged in age-appropriate activities in the forest and at the stream, which included hands-on, playful interactions in and with nature. The control groups followed their usual daily preschool routines and had no planned activities related to the research themes. After the activities were performed, the same interviews were conducted again with both the experimental and control groups to investigate progress in the children’s biology knowledge and science skills. The children’s answers were analysed quantitatively. The results revealed a significant improvement in biology knowledge and science skills among the children in the experimental groups. The activities conducted with young children proved to be an effective educational tool for fostering biology knowledge and science skills in the early years. We suggest that preschool educators implement such activities in their curricula, test their effectiveness, and thus contribute to the body of research on outdoor learning in early years.

**Keywords:** biology education; early years; early science; outdoor play and learning; preschool children.

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#### About the author

Dr. Marjanca Kos is an assistant professor at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia, where she teaches in the Preschool education program. Her main research interests lie in early science education, with focus on experiential learning through direct contact with living organisms, play and learning in natural environments, and cross-curricular integration in early childhood education.



## Practical Training in the Nockberge Biosphere Reserve

Tina Križnar, Biotehniški center Naklo, Slovenia

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

For more than fifteen years, Biotechnical Centre Naklo – Secondary School has maintained a successful partnership with the Nockberge Biosphere Reserve in Austria. Within the framework of the Erasmus+ VET accreditation, students enrolled in the Nature Conservation programme participate in work-based learning activities in the reserve. Every year, a group of students takes part in a twelve-day programme based on experiential learning and practical work in a natural environment. This form of education effectively combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience while promoting an understanding of the sustainable management of protected areas.

The practical training programme includes maintaining hiking trails, removing invasive plant species, preventing the overgrowth of alpine pastures, constructing traditional wooden fences, and visiting local farms, beekeepers, and the partner agricultural school, Litzlhof. Students also become familiar with the natural and cultural heritage of the region, as well as the work of the biosphere reserve and its rangers, who play a vital role in connecting nature conservation, local communities, and visitors. Through these activities, students gain a deeper understanding that successful nature conservation depends on close cooperation with local stakeholders.

Direct contact with the natural environment enables students to develop professional knowledge, practical skills, and a responsible attitude towards nature. Working in both mid-mountain and alpine environments helps them understand the influence of climatic factors, geological and geomorphological features, and the diversity of local flora and fauna. At the same time, students acquire valuable experience in safe mountain movement and learn the importance of appropriate equipment and preparation for fieldwork. This type of learning also strengthens their independence, teamwork, and sense of responsibility while carrying out practical tasks.

The exchange programme is equally valuable for accompanying teachers, providing opportunities to transfer examples of good practice into classroom teaching while strengthening international cooperation in nature conservation education. The partnership is reciprocal, as representatives of the Nockberge Biosphere Reserve also visit Biotechnical Centre Naklo to present their educational programmes and approaches to protected area management to students.

This long-standing cooperation demonstrates that the natural environment is an irreplaceable learning space for developing professional competences, sustainable thinking, and an understanding of the relationship between nature conservation and the well-being of local communities. Practical training in nature enables young people to acquire knowledge and experience that cannot be fully achieved in the classroom, while reinforcing the awareness that protecting natural and cultural landscapes is a shared responsibility that extends beyond national borders.

**Keywords:** work-based learning; nature conservation education; experiential learning; protected areas; Erasmus+ VET.

#### About the author

Tina Križnar is a geography teacher at Biotechnical Centre Naklo – Secondary School, Slovenia. She teaches students enrolled in the Nature Conservation Technician programme, with a particular focus on geography, outdoor education, and nature conservation. She has extensive experience in coordinating Erasmus+ mobility projects and integrating experiential learning into vocational education and training (VET). Her professional interests include environmental education, sustainable development, field-based learning, and international cooperation in nature conservation. She regularly mentors student projects and contributes to the dissemination of good educational practices through professional conferences and publications.



## Nature as an Everyday Space for Formal Education: Twelve Years of the Puszczyk Nature-Based Education Model

Agnieszka Kudraszow, Fundacja trzy cztery!, Poland

Urszula Namiotko, University of Białystok, Poland

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

The Puszczyk Nature-Based Education Model has been developed over twelve years as a way of integrating regular contact with nature and outdoor learning into the Polish formal education system. It is practised at Puszczyk Forest Preschool, established in 2015 as Poland's first forest preschool, and Puszczyk Forest School, operating since 2018 as the first forest school in Poland.

This poster presentation will show how nature-based education works in the everyday practice of a preschool and primary school that also meet national curriculum requirements. Going outdoors is not treated as a special event, a school trip or a reward, but as a regular part of the daily and weekly rhythm. Children learn throughout the year in forests, meadows and other local natural spaces, in all seasons and varied weather conditions.

The poster will present a simple outline of this daily practice: preparing to go outdoors, travelling through the landscape, free exploration, learning activities, play, rest, returning and reflecting on the experience. It will provide examples of how time in nature can be combined with curriculum content, project-based learning, physical activity, relationship-building and the development of children's agency.

The presentation will also identify the basic conditions needed to make this approach possible: preparing children and adults, appropriate clothing and equipment, the organization of teachers' work, safety practices and cooperation with parents. It will briefly address everyday challenges connected with weather, formal requirements and the diverse educational and developmental needs of children.

The experience gained at Puszczyk is shared through teacher training, study visits and support for initiative groups establishing their own educational settings. Today, dozens of preschools, schools and educational initiatives across Poland draw on the practices and solutions developed by Puszczyk.

The purpose of the presentation is not to offer a single ready-made solution for replication, but to share a practice that has been developed, tested and refined over twelve years. The Puszczyk experience demonstrates that nature can be more than an occasional setting for educational activities: it can become a permanent and fully integrated environment for formal education.

**Keywords:** nature-based education; forest school; formal education; outdoor learning; educational practice.

#### About the authors

Agnieszka Kudraszow is the founder and chair of Fundacja trzy cztery! and the creator of the Puszczyk Nature-Based Education Model, developed over twelve years. She founded Puszczyk Forest Preschool and Puszczyk Forest School, which combine everyday nature-based learning with the requirements of Poland's formal education system. She trains teachers and supports initiative groups establishing their own educational settings. Dozens of preschools, schools and educational initiatives across Poland now draw on the experience and practices developed by Puszczyk.

Urszula Namiotko is an educator, psychologist, and outdoor education practitioner affiliated with the University of Białystok and Forest School Puszczyk in Poland. Her academic interests and professional practice focus on nature-based education, intercultural education, and the social and emotional development of children and young people. She is currently developing a research project exploring education through nature and its role in supporting students' social and emotional development.



## Third Way Empathy in Camp School: Supporting Social Learning through Outdoor Pedagogy

Jari-Pekka Kujala, Independent Researcher, Finland

Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

Poster Presentation

### Abstract

Camp school is a non-formal pedagogical setting where learning develops through co-creation, emotional resonance, and group interaction. This poster presents Third Way Empathy as a framework for understanding how camp school can support social learning, emotional safety, and transformative learning.

The framework includes three modes: self-directed, other-directed, and third relational. These modes may operate in parallel rather than in sequence. The self-directed mode relates to orientation toward the self, structure, and safety; the other-directed mode to cooperation, shared norms, and relation to others; and the third relational mode to situations where the environment itself mediates learning through shared embodied and emotional experience.

In camp school, this third mode can be seen in practices such as storytelling, reflection, and shared outdoor activity. The poster argues that camp school is a valuable context for exploring how empathy develops through both interpersonal and environmental relations.

By connecting empathy development with outdoor pedagogy, the presentation contributes to discussion on social learning and emotionally sensitive practice in non-formal education.

**Keywords:** outdoor pedagogy; social learning; empathy; non-formal education; teacher education.

### About the author

Independent researcher in adventure education and empathy-centered pedagogy with 30+ years' experience in youth work; currently developing Träskändan Nuorisokeskus as an empathy-based camp school organisation in Finland.



## Movement-based Nature Education for Early Childhood: The Innovative Approach

Pavla Lényiová, Dáša Kočvarová, Daphne - Inštitút aplikovanej ekológie, Slovakia

### Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning

#### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

Early childhood represents a critical period for developing a lifelong relationship with nature. Positive experiences in natural environments can influence children's cognitive, emotional and physical development, while early contact with biodiversity contributes to the formation of environmentally responsible attitudes. However, many children today have fewer opportunities for direct interaction with nature and spend less time outdoors. Innovative approaches are therefore needed to reconnect children with the natural world through meaningful, age-appropriate experiences. Rozhýb labky (Move Your Paws) is an innovative nature education programme developed within the LIFE IP Natura 2000 project in Slovakia. The programme combines biodiversity education, movement-based learning, outdoor experiences and family engagement to introduce preschool children to the diversity and importance of species and habitats protected under the Natura 2000 network. The core principle of the programme is that children do not only learn about nature, but learn through nature. Movement, play and sensory experiences are used as tools for exploration and understanding. Through specially designed activities, children discover the characteristics and ecological roles of different species, imitate animal movements, explore natural processes and develop awareness of the relationships between organisms and their habitats. The activities are structured as a year-round programme, with interconnected themes following seasonal changes in nature, allowing children to gradually deepen their knowledge and build a stronger connection with the environment. A unique feature of Rozhýb labky is its interdisciplinary approach. The programme brings together expertise from nature conservation, early childhood education, movement pedagogy and work with families. By integrating physical activity with environmental learning, the programme supports children's healthy development while strengthening their understanding of biodiversity. It also creates opportunities to involve parents, who often discover new aspects of local nature through their children's experiences. The programme demonstrates the potential of movement-based nature education as a nature-based solution for early childhood learning. It contributes to several European priorities, including biodiversity awareness, sustainable competences (GreenComp), children's health and well-being, and the One Health approach linking human health with healthy ecosystems. The Rozhýb labky approach provides a transferable model that can be adapted to different geographical contexts and biodiversity themes. By combining movement, play and nature discovery, it offers a practical pathway for creating stronger emotional connections between children and the natural world – an essential foundation for future biodiversity conservation.

**Keywords:** early childhood education; nature-based learning; movement; biodiversity; outdoor.

#### About the author

Pavla Lenyiova is a PR and project manager in Institute for Applied Ecology DAPHNE. She worked as a current affairs reporter at Slovak Radio, where she focused mainly on sustainability and environmental issues. She later worked at the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic. At the Daphne Institute of Applied Ecology, she is responsible for communications and PR, and, as a project manager, she co-developed the 'Rozhýb labky' (Move Your Paws) educational programme for nursery schools.



## How to Enable Participation in Outdoor Activities for even the Most Health-Challenged Children and Adolescents – Flexibility and Resourcefulness of the Teachers/educators and the Organization as a Condition for the Performance

Veronika Lisjak Banko, CIRIUS Kamnik, Slovenia

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Oral Presentation

##### Abstract

I work in the institution for education, rehabilitation and training of physically disabled children and adolescents, CIRIUS Kamnik. Learning and outdoor activities have always been a challenge for teachers and educators in our programs. The population coming to us is increasingly demanding in terms of health, which means that we need a lot of adjustments just to go out. Implementing outdoor education, camping, and colonies at another location are becoming increasingly difficult and expensive due to the need for additional staff. Some children need assisted ventilation, others are very sensitive to temperature changes, and some have severe allergies.

We also encounter (hyper)protective parents who often reject their child's participation in external activities because they are afraid of a potentially dangerous situation regarding their child's health occurring.

We are constantly looking for ways to bring nature closer to the children and enable them to meet and socialize with their peers in a natural environment.

To achieve this, we try to use the resources we have in our institution. We have created a sensory vegetable garden with adapted accessibility, where we focus on observing micro processes, using senses, and gradually exposing ourselves to new situations. We have planted 50 to 100 different plants, many of which are edible, from which we can prepare various dishes, teas, and drinks.

We organize a camp on our field by the school every year to enable participation for those with the most health requirements. We also invite children and adolescents from other institutions for children with special needs and occasionally children from nearby schools to join us around the campfire, in order to create an inclusive environment where they gain positive experiences from living in nature. We place the equipment that some of them need in the tents - oxygen machines, raised beds, and we turn them regularly at night.

Camps and outdoor schools are always a special challenge, because we have to take into account all the health restrictions. We usually have medical staff with us, and first aid medicine. Sometimes we manage to organize the camps where our children socialize with peers from regular schools.

We want to establish new ways of cooperation with schools and dormitories in the future. We would like to establish new inclusive environments where our children and adolescents can participate and experience nature together with their peers.

**Keywords:** special needs; outdoor education; flexibility.

##### About the author

Veronika Lisjak Banko is an educator with 25 years of experience working with children with special educational needs. She works at the CIRIUS Kamnik Institute for Education, Training and Rehabilitation, where she has devoted much of her professional work to outdoor education and learning.

Together with her colleagues, she has introduced new approaches and adaptations that enable children with special educational needs to participate in outdoor learning. Experiential pedagogy is an important element of social learning, developing independence, and gaining valuable life experiences at the institution. She has led colonies, camps, and other experience-based projects and has also introduced adapted gardening and sensory gardens into educational practice.



## Collaborative Outdoor Education for Inclusion and Accessibility: A Community-Based Model Integrating Nature, Language Learning and Data- Driven Practice

Francisco Lombo de León, Porta Natura, Spain

Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning

Oral Presentation

### Abstract

This paper presents a collaborative and inclusive model of outdoor education developed in a rural context in northern Spain, based on the experience of the Albergue Juvenil de Soncillo, located in the region of Las Merindades. The model is grounded in cooperation between educational enterprises, public schools, and local community agents, and aims to connect non-formal education, outdoor learning, language acquisition, and social inclusion.

The case study focuses on school-based residential programs, primarily attended by students from public schools, which integrate nature-based experiential learning and foreign language education. These programs are designed as immersive learning experiences in which outdoor activities, leisure, and daily life in a residential setting become pedagogical tools fostering intercultural dialogue, social interaction, and personal development.

The innovation of this model lies in its articulation through the Access Tour Data project, an inclusive accessibility framework that introduces assistive technologies for people with visual, auditory, and physical disabilities within the environment of the hostel and its educational programs: A summary of the project can be found here: [www.alberguemerindades.es](http://www.alberguemerindades.es).

Youtube: "Resumen del proyecto Access Tour Data - Albergue de Soncillo":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLXS0oYwfxs>

Through these technologies, the hostel becomes a shared learning environment where students with and without disabilities interact naturally, promoting physical, social, and emotional mobility. Accessibility is therefore not treated as an add-on, but as a core educational value embedded in program design.

A centralised data management system supports this process by collecting and organising accessibility-related information, enabling continuous improvement of educational programs and facilitating their replication in other contexts. This data-driven approach allows educational practitioners to adapt activities, environments, and methodologies to diverse needs, strengthening inclusive practices over time.

The paper also highlights the crucial role of local community agents—such as activity providers, service companies, and rural stakeholders—whose collaboration is essential for accessibility in rural environments, where infrastructure and services are often limited. The project actively encourages partner organisations to progressively adapt their leisure and educational activities towards greater inclusivity.

This case demonstrates how collaborative outdoor education models can contribute to shared European values by linking education, leisure, accessibility, and community engagement, offering a transferable framework for inclusive and socially integrated outdoor learning across diverse European contexts.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; inclusive education; community collaboration; non-formal learning; accessibility in rural contexts.



### About the author

Currently director of the companies Evergreen Naturaleza y Cultura and the group PORTA NATURA ([www.portanatura.es](http://www.portanatura.es)), studied Philosophy and Anthropology at the Universities of Salamanca (Spain) and K.U.Leuven (Belgium) and has collaborated with the Spanish Ministry of Education to implement language nature-based programs within rural areas in Cantabria, North of Castile and Leon and Aragon. he has also been director of other programs such as inclusive music festivals and other events.



## Citizen Science with Schools and Public – Example of Living Bratislava Initiative

Jana Menkynová, DAPHNE - Institute of Applied Ecology, Slovakia

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

Citizen science has gradually become a standard part of the scientific environment. It expands data collection beyond research and scientific institutions and involves the public. Thanks to the development of modern technologies – smartphones, GPS, and online platforms – this model has become part of everyday life. Such a record is useful for research because it includes photographic documentation, time of observation, and especially exact coordinates. If a sufficient number of observations are collected, a fairly accurate picture of species distribution, changes in their occurrence over time, or the presence of invasive or rare organisms emerges.

In the spring of 2025, as part of the Living Bratislava initiative, we launched a separate project of the same name on the iNaturalist platform. By the end of July, we managed to gather a surprisingly rich set of data on urban biodiversity. We engaged schools and the public through guided excursions to different parts of Bratislava, online webinars led by personalities and great speakers from various fields of science, as well as through thematic events for families with children.

Such a dataset is already interesting today not only for amateur naturalists but also for professional workplaces. It allows, for example, monitoring differences in biodiversity between dense residential areas and park or meadow habitats, identifying urban areas with higher species diversity, mapping the spread of invasive species, or tracking the seasonal dynamics of nature from year to year – such as the timing of plant flowering.

The highlight of the initiative was a two-day event called BioBranie in the most populated part of Bratislava. It took place symbolically in May on the occasion of International Biodiversity Day. It was an urban event inspired by the “BioBlitz” format, which is regularly held in cities or city districts around the world. During a set period of time, as many naturalists and volunteers from the public as possible try to record as many species of organisms as they can in a specific area. The goal of the event was not just to record the observed species, but to create a working citizen science network where schools, experts, and the public collaborate.

Our goal is to spark interest in biodiversity conservation, practically contribute to research and nature protection, connect science with the general public, and also support meaningful ways to spend free time.

**Keywords:** citizen science; monitoring; biodiversity; outdoor learning.

#### About the author

Jana Menkynová is an environmental education senior expert with more than 15 years of experience working with schools and public. She has worked on several national and European projects focused on IBL – inquiry based learning and citizen science. She has a lot of experience both in preparing and running events for different target groups, as well as creating educational and popular science materials.



## The Observation of Nature not Only at the School Garden

Barbora Michalcová, Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta, Czech Republic

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

#### Abstract

Multisensory observation is the primary source of information about nature and the natural environment. It is considered to be one of the basic scientific process skills within the scientific education.

As with other skills, mastery does not come naturally; rather, it should be developed gradually. To successfully master the skill of observation, students should receive both; ongoing instruction and the tools needed to work independently during observation or after the formal lesson has concluded. In the process of lesson preparation, it is crucial to consider not just the age and number of students, their prior experience, and individual needs, but also the natural conditions provided by the environment itself. For instance, the presence of specific plant species at a certain location, the season in which the lesson is conducted and other pertinent factors must be taken into consideration.

Despite the availability of contemporary tools that facilitate active exploration of nature, such as name trails, name tables, and identification applications, their use with students is hindered by their complexity and the lack of a tangible connection to a specific location or region.

It is therefore vital for educators to be able to adapt and customise these tools to suit the requirements and capabilities of their students, as well as the inherent characteristics of the particular location.

The issue is being addressed in a proactive manner at the educational garden of the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University. During the workshop, participants will be familiarised with the processes involved in creating these tools and will have the opportunity to utilise many of them while exploring the natural environment of Lake Bohyně.

**Keywords:** identification; name trails; name tables; observation.

#### About the author

The author's primary focus is on creating biological illustrations and educational materials, which she personally designs and tests with students in the faculty garden. In addition to the teaching tools employed at the university, she has published a notebook and an educational atlas featuring the invertebrates of the Adriatic Sea for the Czech environmental education centre Lipka.

She is involved in the Czech AI anti-disinformation browser tool, Verifree, which is sponsored by Google. Her contribution project involves creating individual exercises for an educational application that teaches elementary school students to recognise misinformation on the internet.



## Circle Time at Forest School: Shared Practice or Pluralistic Concept?

Selima Negro, Irene Corazza, Francesca Domenichella, Marco Marcassa, Annalisa  
Silvanini, Italy

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

“Educare nel bosco” is a national network of Forest Kindergartens promoted by the social cooperative Canalescuola that started in Verona in 2015 and it now comprises 19 projects in different regions in Italy. Since 2024 I have been collaborating with the network for training and periodical pedagogical support to facilitators.

In 2025 the network identified the need to strengthen its pedagogical identity and renew the awareness of its core values. As one of the steps that have taken toward this goal, a study has been launched on “circle time”, which is both a very common practice across the network and an element that often brings out different perspectives and sensibilities between facilitators (Gans 2019).

We started with two “simple” questions: can we describe “circle time” as a core element of the pedagogical identity of the network? Why does it not always “work” as expected?

A team of 20 facilitators from different Forest Kindergarten volunteered to be part of the research. We build together the research design step by step, following their questions and needs, in line with the approach of the emergent curriculum which is one of the core tools in our forest school ethos (in Italian “pedagogia del bosco” Negro, 2019). We started to work with different methods, from autobiography to ethnographic observation, from focus groups to interviews, to identify elements of “circle time” that are relevant for each facilitator, trying to reflect the diversity of experiences and views of the adult people involved in each project (Biesta 2019).

At the beginning of our research we identified a central problem: defining what is “circle time” has not been as straightforward as expected. Under the label “circle time” emerged different experiences and expectations, not completely explicit or clear in their differences. We have been working to map all practical, theoretical and linguistic elements that make up the concept of “circle time” and that imbue its practice with meanings and expectations that are sometimes latent, with the broader objective to facilitate more significant horizontal exchange on pedagogical issues within the network, while developing tools to observe and evaluate learning possibilities and wellbeing at circle time to consolidate best practices.

**Keywords:** forest school; circle time; best practice; learner led.

#### About the authors

Authors: Selima Negro, Irene Corazza, Francesca Domenichella, Marco Marcassa, Annalisa Silvanini

Selima Negro earned her degree in Education Sciences focusing her thesis on the pedagogical dimensions of risk. In 2015 she established the association “Fuori dalla scuola” (Out of School) and started a Forest Kindergarten in collaboration with other families. In 2018 it expanded to include a project for children over six years old. Since then, Negro has been actively engaged in providing training for practitioners, teachers, and parents. In 2019, she published “Forest Pedagogy: Educating in Nature to Raise Free and Healthy Children” and has continued to research and promote this educational approach across various contexts.



## Ruins in Nature and the Awakening of Historical Imagination in Educators

Eugenio Otero Urtaza, University of Santiago de Compostela. Facultad de Formación del  
Profesorado, Spain

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

This paper focuses on the study of ruins in natural spaces from the perspective of their impact on students' historical consciousness. Hiking in nature frequently uncovers the memory of ancient settlements, some inhabited centuries ago and others more recently, due to depopulation. The educational potential of ruins in the natural spaces of a mountain region in Galicia (Spain) is described, as well as the learning it suggests to students training as school teachers.

The act of walking in unfamiliar places is one of the most valuable learning experiences for a young trainee teacher. The landscape bears many traces of the past, revealing how time has transformed it. The elements gradually erode the ruins until they vanish beneath a carpet of vegetation concealing the debris. Meanwhile, it remains an architectural relic, telling a story and awakening unexpected insights in the consciousness of those who visit the site.

Nature is not only an educational tool in its intrinsic value. It is important to discover how mankind interacted with the place in earlier times. There are ruins immersed in natural landscapes that allow us to travel through time, to worlds that have vanished. Using a methodology based on place-based-education, we have guided students toward understanding and appreciating the meaning of ruins in abandoned rural spaces.

These activities allow us not only to reconstruct the past in the places where the events occurred but also to awaken the imagination and foster critical thinking. Reflective walks through the ruins encourage students to awaken the spirits that dwell among them, to place themselves in a time when nature was an integral part of the community. We invite students to recreate that way of life and believe that developing a "critical imagination" affects their cultural certainties, their understanding of existence, their social habits and values, and possibly their moral convictions. The combination of history, drama, and reflection, based on the concept of *dadirri* among some Australian Aboriginal peoples—a deep contemplative process of listening to one another—fits well with a narrative pedagogy of place for training educators.

**Keywords:** historical consciousness; nature education; critical imagination; haunted ruins; place-based education.

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#### About the author

Professor Emeritus at the University of Santiago de Compostela. Historian of education. He has studied the "Institución Libre de Enseñanza" (Free Institution of Teaching), with special attention to its main figures, Francisco Giner and Manuel B. Cossío, as well as the Pedagogical Missions in rural Spain (1931-1936) and their international relations. In addition, he researches the impact of landscape transformation and ruins on students' historical consciousness. He coordinated the Master's program in Management of Educational Activities in Nature from 2011 to 2023. He was president of the Spanish Society for the History of Education from 2017 to 2021.



## Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Education: The Children in Nature Cards as a Practical Teaching Tool

Paulina Patro, Patro-Sfera, CEO Nature Coaching Institute, Poland

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Poster Presentation

##### Abstract

Outdoor education is increasingly recognised as an essential component of contemporary education, supporting children's cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development while strengthening their connection with nature. Despite growing evidence demonstrating the benefits of learning outdoors, many teachers report feeling insufficiently prepared to plan and facilitate meaningful educational activities beyond the classroom. Limited methodological resources, lack of confidence, and uncertainty about organising outdoor learning often remain significant barriers to implementation.

This poster presents the Children in Nature Cards, a practical educational tool developed to support teachers in integrating outdoor education into everyday school practice. The cards were designed as an accessible, evidence-informed resource that helps educators organise engaging nature-based activities without requiring extensive prior experience in outdoor education.

The activities encourage observation, curiosity, creativity, mindfulness, sensory exploration, cooperation, emotional regulation, and environmental awareness. They are flexible enough to be implemented in school gardens, parks, forests, and other nearby natural environments, allowing teachers to adapt outdoor learning to their local context and available green spaces. The tool promotes experiential learning and active participation while helping children develop a stronger relationship with nature and greater appreciation of biodiversity.

The poster also introduces a teacher preparation model in which the Children in Nature Cards form part of a broader professional development approach. During training, educators gain practical experience in leading outdoor activities, learn how to align them with educational objectives, and develop the confidence needed to use outdoor environments as regular learning spaces. The emphasis is placed on providing simple, ready-to-use methods that reduce barriers to implementation and encourage long-term adoption of outdoor education practices.

The project responds to the growing need for practical solutions that empower teachers to reconnect children with nature in an increasingly digital and urbanised world. It demonstrates how structured educational resources can facilitate the transition from classroom-based instruction to experiential outdoor learning while supporting children's well-being, social inclusion, environmental responsibility, and engagement with learning.

The Children in Nature Cards illustrate how practical teaching tools, combined with appropriate teacher preparation, can contribute to embedding outdoor education within everyday educational practice and support the broader goals of sustainable, inclusive, and nature-connected education across Europe.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; teacher preparation; nature-based learning; children in nature; nature connection.

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#### About the author

Paulina Patro is a university lecturer, founder and CEO of the Nature Coaching Institute, outdoor education trainer, and an EMCC-accredited coach and mentor (EIA Foundation). She specializes in nature-based education, mental well-being, burnout prevention, and resilience. She is the creator of the **\*\*Children in Nature Cards\*\*** and develops teacher training programmes that prepare educators to deliver meaningful outdoor learning experiences. Her work combines scientific evidence with educational practice, promoting nature as a powerful environment for learning, health, and personal development. She delivers training for teachers, healthcare professionals, and organisations, supporting the implementation of evidence-informed approaches that strengthen well-being, foster children's connection with nature, and promote outdoor education.



## From Practice to System: The Center for Innovative Education's Path toward a Regional Outdoor Learning Ecosystem

Jorge Gimeno Pawłowski, Center for Innovative Education, Poland

Joanna Bochniarz, Centrum Innowacyjnej Edukacji, Poland

### Field: Policy Support & Local Community Collaboration

### Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

#### Abstract

Outdoor Learning is often implemented through isolated projects or short-term programmes. While these initiatives demonstrate strong impact at participant level, they rarely translate into sustainable, system-level change within education and regional structures. This contribution presents the evolving model of the Center for Innovative Education (CIE) in Poland, which aims to move beyond project-based delivery towards the development of a regional Outdoor Learning ecosystem.

Over the past eleven years, CIE has delivered more than 50 outdoor expeditions and engaged over 2,000 participants across diverse target groups, including educators, young people entering the labour market, women at risk of exclusion, and individuals with disabilities. This practice has been supported by a network of approximately 30 trainers and a growing portfolio of national and European projects. Building on this operational experience, CIE is currently structuring its activities into a more integrated model that connects experiential learning, educator training, institutional partnerships, and public funding mechanisms.

The proposed ecosystem approach is being developed in the Podlasie region in North-East Poland, in cooperation with local authorities, the University of Białystok, and natural environment partners such as Biebrza National Park. The model combines several interdependent components: (1) training pathways for educators, including the development of postgraduate studies; (2) field-based learning through multi-day expeditions; (3) collaboration with regional stakeholders, including schools, NGOs and public institutions; and (4) strategic use of public funding to enable access and scale. A key element under development is the establishment of a dedicated Outdoor Learning Centre, which aims to provide a permanent infrastructure anchoring these activities in the region.

The presentation will critically reflect on the transition from a project-based organisation to a system-oriented approach. It will explore both enabling factors and structural challenges, including reliance on public funding, the complexity of multi-stakeholder coordination, and the ongoing process of embedding Outdoor Learning within formal education frameworks. The contribution offers a real-time case of ecosystem building, highlighting lessons learned, open questions, and conditions required for replication in other regional contexts.

By focusing on organisational design and territorial integration, this paper contributes to the discussion on how Outdoor Learning can move from impactful practice to sustainable educational and social infrastructure.

**Keywords:** outdoor learning; regional ecosystem; educator training; systemic change; public funding.

#### About the author

Jorge Gimeno Pawłowski is a Senior Advisor for Institutional Relations and Public Funding at the Center for Innovative Education (CIE) in Poland, where he has contributed to the design and delivery of over 50 outdoor expeditions engaging more than 2,000 participants across eleven years. As a trainer of trainers with expertise in European project development and multi-stakeholder coordination, he works at the intersection of experiential education, public policy and regional ecosystem building.



## Promoting Outdoor Learning through Seminars for Teachers

Živa Pečavar, Center šolskihi in obšolskih dejavnosti, Slovenia

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

In CŠOD we believe that outdoor learning should not be limited to school trips, but that it is important to help teachers find ways to take students out as often as possible during their 'regular' lessons. Many teachers don't know how to do that, feel out of their element, or need ideas and encouragement. To bridge that gap and give them support, CŠOD organizes different seminars about outdoor learning for school and preschool teachers.

In Slovenia teachers have 5 days per year allocated for continuous professional development. Some seminars are organized by schools for all their teaching staff, while teachers can usually also choose some seminars and topics that interest them. The Ministry of Education encourages and (at least partly) finances these programs, which are therefore in a way a part of our school system. Taking part in seminars is also important (and required) for teachers' career advancement and salary rise.

Different organizations and agencies prepare seminars on different topics, ranging from technical knowledge to dealing with discipline issues or stress. CŠOD carries out seminars that promote outdoor learning and help teachers with ideas.

Each of our seminars focuses on one topic or aspect of outdoor learning. At the moment, we have 7 different titles, which (amongst others) include developing language skills in the outdoors, anaesthetic approach to teaching, and teaching for sustainability. The seminars are very practical and give teachers ideas for what they can do with their students and how to take their lessons to the outdoors. We also discuss why's and how's, address teachers' questions, and think about how to implement these ideas into lessons and adapt them for various age groups.

These seminars are very well received by teachers, and the applications usually fill up fast.

In this presentation we will explain how we tackle preparing a new seminar, how long they are and why, how long the preparation process is, how many people are usually on the organizing team, how many participants we like to have, how we find (or come up with) topics and activities, how we structure the seminars to get the best results, how they are funded, and how new ideas, that participants develop, are shared. We will also explain why organizing these seminars is not only important for participants, but also for CŠOD as an organization and the people involved.

**Keywords:** seminars; promoting outdoor learning; continuous professional development.

#### About the author

Živa Pečavar has been a teacher at an outdoor education centre for 18 years, primarily working with primary aged children. She leads natural science activities, teaches outdoor living skills, orienteering and other topics. She finds joy in coming up with new activities and games in the hope of bringing children closer to nature or understanding it better. She is a part of a few CŠOD teams that organize seminars on outdoor learning. She was a part of a 3-year international project called Real World Learning Network and has presented in a few EOE conferences.



## Experiential Learning - How to Teach about Climate Change Outdoors

Ivana Polackova, CEEV Živica, Slovakia

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

##### Abstract

In the context of the ongoing climate crisis, educators face the challenge of building not only a knowledge base but also emotional resilience and motivation for action in young people. This proposed 90-minute interactive workshop presents two complementary approaches to outdoor education designed for upper secondary students (ages 14–18).

The first part of the workshop focuses on the method of mindfulness. Participants will practically engage in techniques of conscious observation and silent walking in a natural setting. The goal is to deepen the sensory connection with nature, develop the ability to perceive the regenerative processes of ecosystems, and mitigate eco-anxiety. This introspective experience serves as an emotional grounding for subsequent critical discussions on climate change.

The second part of the workshop transitions from lived experience to analytical thinking and carbon footprint analysis. Through role-playing and the creation of models using natural materials, participants will explore the carbon footprint of plant and animal production. The workshop vividly demonstrates the vast differences in CO<sub>2</sub> and methane emissions between various food types - ranging from nuts to beef. Participants will learn why the composition of one's diet is more significant for the climate than the geographic origin of the food.

The objective of the workshop is to demonstrate that outdoor learning does not have to be limited to passive observation, it can be a dynamic fusion of reflection, scientific data, and the search for sustainable lifestyle solutions. Participants will receive ready-to-use methodological sheets and practical tips on how to bring themes of ethics, biology, and environmental education from the classroom directly into the field.

**Keywords:** outdoor climate education; mindfulness in nature; carbon footprint analysis; eco-resilience.

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##### About the author

Ivana Poláčková is a leading expert in environmental and outdoor education in the Hurá von! platform in Slovakia. She holds a Master's degree in Environmental Science from the Comenius University in Bratislava. With over 25 years of experience in the NGO sector, Ivana served as CEO of CEEV Živica from 2019 to 2025 and has managed numerous international projects focused on biodiversity, climate adaptation, and sustainable lifestyles. She is an author and editor of educational materials, including several editions of Methodology for Outdoor Learning. In 2024 she and her team received the honorary mention of European Union Prize for Citizen Science.



## The Role of Outdoor Education in Understanding Biology: An Analysis of Early Childhood Education Students' Perceptions

Luka Praprotnik, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

This paper examines preschool education students' perceptions of fieldwork within the course Early Science – Biology. The fieldwork was conducted across diverse outdoor settings, including a coastal ecosystem, forest ecosystems in autumn and winter, as well as a botanical and a zoological garden, thereby enabling students to engage directly with a range of ecological contexts.

The study is based on a qualitative analysis of 77 student reflections from both full-time and part-time study programmes at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia. Data were collected through open-ended questions and analysed using thematic coding. The questions addressed students' positive and negative experiences, suggested improvements, the perceived contribution of field activities to their understanding of biological content, and the ways in which they would integrate such activities into their future work as preschool teachers.

The findings indicate that students perceive fieldwork as a highly valuable learning environment, with most reporting a substantial contribution to their knowledge acquisition. Key factors supporting learning include experiential engagement, direct contact with natural environments, and the integration of theoretical and practical components. Students frequently report enhanced understanding of biological concepts and more durable knowledge retention, underscoring the educational value of authentic learning contexts. Nevertheless, certain limitations were identified, particularly in relation to organisation, time constraints, and weather conditions. Analysis of students' suggestions for improvement highlights the need for clearer organisation, more explicit instructions, better time allocation, and a reduced volume of written assignments. Part-time students additionally emphasise financial and logistical challenges associated with participation. Students express strong intentions to transfer these approaches into their future professional practice, particularly through the implementation of outdoor learning, inquiry-based and experiential activities, direct interaction with living organisms, and the use of didactic games. They also stress the importance of adapting content to children's developmental levels, fostering positive attitudes towards nature, and integrating science with other areas of learning.

Overall, the findings confirm that fieldwork represents an effective approach to teaching biology in early childhood education, with its impact largely contingent upon the quality of its pedagogical and organisational design.

**Keywords:** fieldwork; experiential learning; early childhood education; biology education; student perceptions.

#### About the author

Mag. Luka Praprotnik holds a university degree in biology, a master's degree in biology, and is a biology teacher. He is employed at the Faculty of Education as an assistant in biology education.



## Teacher-identified Needs for Support to Expand Curricular Outdoor Learning in Schools in England

Heather Prince, University of Cumbria, United Kingdom

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

School-based outdoor learning, where outdoor teaching and learning is integrated into the curriculum and the school day, has many benefits and outcomes that are well-documented and evidenced. Recent systematic reviews of research on children and adolescents indicate that outdoor learning and nature exposure provide a variety of significant benefits, including enhanced memory and mood, increased cognitive benefits, improved overall wellbeing and positive behaviour outcomes (Miller et al., 2021). However, there is limited research on teacher perspectives on their professional development and needs for support to enable them to embed outdoor learning in their schools (Ayotte-Beaudet et al., 2024; Prince et al., 2026).

This study explores enablers and challenges for teachers through a sequential mixed method design involving an online survey of educational professionals and focus groups with teachers in primary schools in England. It comprised research for part of a larger project commissioned by a UK government agency (Natural England), which seeks to expand 'time in nature' for children and young people in formal education.

This research presents the prioritisation of resources and support practising teachers feel they need to implement effective outdoor learning in the curriculum and a model of the relationship between the challenges and enablers identified. These include limited resources, curriculum pressures, time constraints, funding issues, staffing levels, and lack of teacher confidence addressed by strong school leadership, access to suitable outdoor spaces, a flexible approach tailored to the specific context, and teacher-determined priorities with ongoing professional development fostering collaboration and the sharing of best practices. Teachers also emphasise the importance of support relevant to their school context, location, and stage of development in respect of outdoor learning provision. The results of this study are also compared with findings from the Department for Education (UK government) on the preparedness of teachers to implement climate change and nature education. This process allows the identification of further research needed to optimise teachers' implementation of effective outdoor teaching and learning in the curriculum.

The research was funded by Natural England and led by Cumbria Education Development Centre (CDEC), UK.

**Keywords:** outdoor learning; teacher-identified priorities; support; curriculum .

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### About the author

Heather Prince is Professor Emerita of Outdoor and Environmental Education at the University of Cumbria, Associate Tutor at the University of Edinburgh, Visiting Professor at Plymouth Marjon University and Associate of Cumbria Development Education Centre (CDEC). Her main research and practice interests are focused on accessibility and inclusion in school-based outdoor learning, sustainability and adventure. She teaches on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in outdoor studies and is a consultant in research, pedagogic practice and curriculum development in schools and higher education. She is a strong advocate of enabling all children and young people to learn outdoors.



## Action, Reflection, Participation: How to Start an Action Research Process?

Franz Rauch, Institute of Instructional and School Development, University Klagenfurt,  
Austria

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

#### Abstract

The workshop will explore the characteristics of action research. Participants will have the opportunity to take the first steps in an action research process. Experiences with participatory evaluation will be reflected upon using the evaluation of the outdoor education project of Gesäuse National Park in Austria as a case study.

#### About the author

Dr. Franz Rauch is a Professor at the Institute of Instructional and School Development (IUS) at the Alpen-Adria University Klagenfurt (Austria). He holds a master's degree in Natural Sciences (teaching certification), a Ph.D in Education at Graz University and a Habilitation in Education (with a focus in Environmental Education). He has been involved in research and development projects internationally and nationally for many years. He served as visiting scholar in Newcastle upon Tyne, England, and as Fulbright scholar in St. Louis, USA. He is one of the editors of *Educational Action Research Journal* and serves on editorial boards of other Journals (like *The Journal of Environmental Education*). His areas of research, teaching and publication are education for sustainable development, networks in education, school development, science education, continuing education for teachers and action research.

<https://www.aau.at/unterrichts-und-schulentwicklung/mitarbeiterinnen-2/wissenschaftliche-mitarbeiterinnen/franz-rauch/>



## A Critical Analysis on Outdoor Learning Integration in Secondary Schools in Scotland and Switzerland

Gary Reid, Scotland - Loretto School, United Kingdom

**Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education**

**Oral Presentation**

### Abstract

A growing body of research strongly suggests that outdoor learning can improve pupils' level of engagement with learning, academic attainment, critical thinking, communication, creativity, empathy and collaboration in and out of the classroom. Outdoor learning (OL) appears well embedded in nursery and primary education settings yet lacking at secondary level. This international comparison study of outdoor learning provision within secondary schools in Scotland and Switzerland focuses on understanding the embedding of these concepts in policy, the approaches to delivery, and barriers and facilitators of outdoor learning. Through policy analysis, literature review, and the identification of case studies the study findings indicate that both contexts integrate outdoor learning concepts in educational policy from the overarching UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) 2030 agenda, although within Scotland outdoor learning concepts are more explicitly embedded at national policy level than Switzerland. At regional policy level in Canton Vaud in Switzerland outdoor teaching and education for sustainability concepts were embedded. Across both settings the most common promoted approach to deliver outdoor learning was the whole school approach. Although within case studies and literature it was evident that enactment of outdoor learning policy visions into practice were not happening as intended. Both Swiss and Scottish contexts report common barriers to outdoor learning and outdoor teaching, including low teacher confidence, limited quality training on curriculum integration, lack of incentives, and confinement to specific subjects rather than whole-school approaches. Further challenges included a lack of funding and time constraints in Scotland, and limited policy recognition of outdoor learning and tensions between educational and societal misalignment in values needed for an ecological transition in Switzerland.

Key facilitators of outdoor learning in Scotland are strong policy support, inclusive outdoor learning access for pupils with additional support needs and curriculum-integrated awards promoting ecological careers. Within Switzerland there is a focus on advancing outdoor learning research, professionalising the field, and fostering a societal shift toward ecological and socially just values through outdoor learning. Common opportunities for outdoor learning in both Scotland and Switzerland include the use of local natural spaces and access to high-quality training for pre- and in-service teachers.

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### About the author

Gary Reid is Head of Physical Education and Learning for Sustainability Coordinator at a Scottish secondary school near Edinburgh, where he is also actively involved in research.

His main interests lie in developing teaching practices that engage pupils in learning across the secondary curriculum through ecological restoration projects in their local landscapes and seascapes.



## A Multi-Stakeholder Model for Outdoor Education and Circular Entrepreneurship in the Adria-Balkan Region

Jure Rejec, FSC International (FSC Adria-Balkan), Germany

### Field: Policy Support & Local Community Collaboration

#### Poster Presentation

##### Abstract

In the face of global environmental challenges, outdoor education must transcend traditional nature walks to foster proactive ecological citizenship, cross-border European integration, and circular economic thinking. This presentation showcases a multi-layered educational framework developed in the Adria-Balkan region by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) in partnership with regional NGOs, public schools, and private enterprises. The framework builds a cohesive pipeline from foundational environmental literacy to youth-led green entrepreneurship, supported by innovative public-private funding models.

The first component explores the "Forest Knowledge Boxes" initiative, an educational toolset developed by FSC Adria-Balkan and the Croatian association Modelna šuma Istra. Designed for primary and secondary students, these boxes translate complex scientific forestry concepts into five accessible, interactive modules (covering ecosystem diversity, forest benefits, and resource conservation). By piloting these modules across multiple classrooms, the project creates a replicable outdoor learning curriculum that aligns regional schooling with shared European conservation values.

The second component examines the "Green Incubator Project," a collaborative initiative with the Green Student Network at the Celje School Centre in Slovenia. This project takes outdoor and experiential learning a step further by engaging secondary students in circular economy principles. Through expert mentorship and pitch competitions, students develop viable business models—such as transforming discarded construction wood into high-quality consumer products—thereby linking sustainable forest management with green entrepreneurship.

Finally, the presentation addresses the socio-economic framework that sustains these initiatives: financial support from private companies investing in FSC-certified forests. By leveraging corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives and ecosystem services verification, private enterprises can support a variety of projects, including interactive educational pathways and open-air classrooms. This public-private synergy alleviates the financial burden on local municipalities, enhances physical and social mobility for young people, and demonstrates how corporate engagement can directly enrich community-based outdoor education.

By linking pedagogical toolkits (Forest Knowledge Boxes), practical vocational entrepreneurship (Green Incubator), and private-sector funding, this model offers a holistic blueprint for European educators. It demonstrates how outdoor education can act as a catalyst for social cohesion, regional collaboration, and sustainable economic futures.

**Keywords:** FSC; forests; education; certification; partnerships.

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##### About the author

Jure Rejec is the FSC National Representative for Slovenia, specializing in B2B/B2C engagement, green public procurement (GPP), and public-private partnerships across Slovenia and the wider Adria-Balkan region. Bridging the gap between scientific forestry and education, Jure represents FSC as a speaker and advocate, educating diverse audiences on sustainable forest management. He provides vital support to FSC-certified companies while uniting the private sector, NGOs, and youth.



## Breaking Barriers - Barrierfree Nature Experience as a Process of European Integration

Jochen Riehl, Mühlenkraft e.V., Germany

### Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning

#### Oral Presentation

##### Abstract

80 years - the "European Peace Union" enables all interested citizens to share their experiences, their curiosity, their questions and their ideas with people from very differently developed backgrounds from all over the Continent - and Ireland and UK.

From the beginnings of active youth policies in 1996, when eoe-network was founded and EU funding for international youth work was being invented, the ideas dealing with "Diversity and Inclusion" of youngsters with any learning difficulties, physical disabilities or whatever disadvantages were one of the prominent subjects at the conferences.

A shortcut history, a view into the "Metaphor: Disabled!" and a vision found in UK: "Adventure For All": These were milestones in 32 years of travelling as a Teacher in Special Education with pupils from a school for basically physical impaired children and youngsters.

Becoming a learner in UK and Portugal, practising "BB-OE" with other learners from Czech Republic, Romania, Poland, Greece, Slovakia, Hungary and Spain, taking part in eoe-conference in Marburg, Iceland and Ireland (among others): Sharing these experiences all over the "European Learners' Union" it got very obvious: Nature heals, and there is no big problem to include people with "all abilities" into access to nature.

Using little games I will invite all interested ones to share their experiences (past), to reflect their daily activities (present) and to develop next steps towards inclusion (future) using our diverse experiences on the diverse backgrounds on our diverse continent.

More: In the conference there should also take place a 90 minutes workshop to plan bilateral and multilateral youth meetings including cooperation of experts and leaders before and after - using EU Erasmus programmes as a tool and as empowering partner. Together with partners from Hungary and UK I plan to present an Erasmus project that is carrying on the ideas of the eoe-interest group "Breaking Barriers" by travelling to the "B-Free Destination" of Western Pannonia in the years 2027 and / or 2028. Possibly, this might be the kick off for a new Erasmus project over two years for research and development of uprising ideas.

##### Keywords:

- 'Nature heals' (Lynn Anderson, EOE Conference, Ireland, 2019).
- 'Europe is a very good idea'.
- "Opening Horizons" (Erasmus+ target)
- 'Leben gewinnen' (surviving, making a living and improving life: Werner Michl/Jochen Riehl).
- 'All Things Must Pass' (George Harrison).



### About the author

Joachim („Jochen“) Riehl

\*19.10.1959 in Nürnberg, DE

Childhood: 60/40% urban/rural: traffic sense + mushroom collector's senses

School: 1966 – 1978: from slate board, pencil and sponge to European Gymnasium, fostering language skills and sociocultural practice

10.78 – 2.79: General military service, Munich

3.79 – 1.80: Civil service, Wichernhaus Altdorf

10.80 – 7.85: Studies of Special Education, Würzburg

9.85 – today, Altdorf & Nürnberg: 40 years becoming expert as class teacher, traveller, author, lecturer, volunteer and EU wide consultant in practical application of experiential and nature education for all.

Member of: [www.eoe-network.eu/interest-groups/](http://www.eoe-network.eu/interest-groups/) Breaking Barriers

Co-founder of: [www.muehlenkraft.de](http://www.muehlenkraft.de)



## The CREA+BIRD Project: Initial Phases and Insights from Slovenia

Žan Rode, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, Slovenia

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

The CREA+BIRD project brings together partners from Slovenia, Italy, Finland, and Romania in a collaborative effort to design, implement, and evaluate innovative educational approaches that foster creativity, environmental awareness, and interdisciplinary learning. The consortium comprises schools, universities, and non-governmental organisations, creating a rich ecosystem for cross sectoral exchange and co-creation of pedagogical practices. This presentation focuses on the initial stages of the project, highlighting key activities, emerging insights, and lessons learned during the development and early implementation phases.

In the first phase of the project, partners jointly developed a diverse set of educational materials, using birds as messengers to foster place-based outdoor education and to support teachers and learners across different age groups and educational contexts. These materials emphasise transformative learning, creativity, and active engagement with environmental themes, particularly those related to biodiversity and sustainable development in alignment with the GreenComp framework for sustainability competences. The co-design process involved iterative collaboration among educators, researchers, and practitioners, ensuring that the outputs are both pedagogically sound and practically applicable.

Pilot implementations have taken place in participating countries, involving teachers and students in testing the developed materials in real classroom and non-formal learning settings. Although full evaluation results are not yet available, as data collection and analysis are ongoing, initial feedback from participants has provided valuable insights into the usability, adaptability, and relevance of the resources. These early observations highlight the importance of flexibility in educational design and the need to account for diverse institutional and cultural contexts.

The presentation will reflect on the challenges and approaches encountered during the project's initial stages, including coordination across international teams, alignment of educational frameworks, and balancing innovation with curricular constraints. At the same time, it will highlight successful strategies, such as participatory design, continuous feedback loops, and strong communication among partners.

While comprehensive evaluation results will be available in summer 2026, this contribution aims to offer timely reflections that may benefit other educators, researchers, and project teams engaged in similar collaborative initiatives. By sharing both achievements and challenges, the CREA+BIRD project seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on innovative, cooperative approaches to education in a rapidly changing world.

**Keywords:** Greencomp; CREA+BIRD project; bird-mediated learning; creativity; sustainability competences.

#### About the authors

Authors: Žan Rode, Nina Jovčič, Luka Praprotnik, Denis Rupnik, Rok Gabrovšek, Gregor Torkar.

Žan Rode is a teaching assistant of Biological Education at the Faculty of Education, University of Ljubljana. His main research interest is the application of information and communication technologies in science education and plant awareness disparity, and he also writes popular science articles for the journal *Naravoslovna Solnica*, for which he has also produced a series of illustrations. In 2020, he completed a master's degree in chemistry and biology for Teaching and is currently also in the process of obtaining a PhD, studying at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education, under the mentorship of prof. dr. Gregor Torkar.



## Freshman Field Trips in Leisure Studies: Using Field Trips and Natural Spaces as a Key to Successful Integration of New Students into University

Vanda Sigurgeirsdóttir, University of Iceland, Iceland

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Belonging is a fundamental human need, influencing mental health, engagement, social development, wellbeing and overall life satisfaction. Fostering belonging should be a priority on all stages of life, including university and higher education.

The integration of new students into the university community affects their academic performance, well-being and continuation of studies. Social bonding, friendship and a strong support network increases engagement, reduces dropout rates, anxiety and promotes a greater commitment to studies. Research shows that the first few weeks of university study are a critical time for the risk of dropout, so it is important to implement measures that promote connections and bonding right from the start.

In this presentation we will discuss 25 years of experience of teachers and students with first year's field trips in Leisure Studies at the University of Iceland, where new students and teachers spend two days together on a trip at the beginning of the autumn semester. The program takes place both indoors and outdoors, where natural spaces are an integral part. Research suggests that engagement with natural environments can accelerate social connection where shared experiences in nature can rapidly build trust and group identity. This aligns with the experience of students, who talk about the importance of the first year's trips and the unusually strong cohesion within their groups. The findings clearly indicate that the trips play a crucial role in the integration of new students into university life and contributes to stronger relationships with both fellow students and teachers. The presentation will describe the organisation and structure of the trips, the use of outdoor spaces, the voices of students and how the trips could be implemented in other university degree programmes.

**Keywords:** belonging; social connection; nature; field trips; university.

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#### About the author

Vanda Sigurgeirsdóttir, a Lector / assistant professor at the University of Iceland, School of Education, department of Health, Sport and Leisure. Vanda has been teaching at the University of Iceland for 25 years. Her expertise lies within leadership, bullying prevention, leisure and outdoor education.

A fun fact: Vanda is the first female in Europe to become a president of a football association (inside UEFA).



## Exploring Outdoor Education Practices in Schools: An Ethnographic Study of Teachers Implementing PhenoBL

Ilona Tandzegolskiene-Bielaglove, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania

### Field: Practices in Natural Spaces

### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Across diverse school contexts, teachers are increasingly experimenting with outdoor learning as a way to connect curriculum, place, and student experience. Rather than focusing on definitions, this study examines how Outdoor Education is enacted in everyday school life and how it is shaped by the realities of teaching. The presentation explores how teachers implement outdoor learning through Phenomenon-Based Learning (PhenoBL), an interdisciplinary approach that organises learning around real-world phenomena, with particular attention to the cultural, relational, and contextual dimensions shaping their work. It also seeks to understand how teachers interpret and negotiate the meaning of Outdoor Education within formal curriculum structures.

The study is grounded in educational ethnography, drawing on Clifford Geertz and the notion of “thick description” to understand how meaning is constructed in practice. Outdoor Education is approached as a socially situated practice embedded in school culture, relationships, and local environments. This perspective allows for a nuanced understanding of how teaching practices are shaped by both individual agency and institutional contexts.

The research is based on qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with primary and secondary school teachers who actively implement outdoor learning through PhenoBL. An ethnographic lens guided the analysis, focusing on patterns of practice, shared meanings, and contextual influences shaping Outdoor Education in schools. Particular attention was given to how teachers describe their pedagogical choices, interdisciplinary connections, and interactions with students and colleagues.

The findings show that Outdoor Education is not implemented as a fixed method but emerges as a flexible, context-dependent practice. Teachers use phenomenon-based approaches to connect curriculum content with real-world contexts, often drawing on local environments as learning resources. Collaboration with colleagues and engagement with local communities play a central role in sustaining these practices. At the same time, teachers navigate tensions related to curriculum demands, time constraints, assessment expectations, and institutional support, revealing the complexity of integrating outdoor and interdisciplinary learning within formal education systems.

This study contributes to educational research providing insight on how Outdoor Education and Phenomenon-Based Learning intersect in practice. It highlights the importance of collaboration, context-sensitive approaches, and shared professional learning in strengthening Outdoor Education across European contexts. By providing teachers' perspectives, the study supports dialogue between research and practice and offers insights for teacher education and policy development.

**Keywords:** outdoor education; phenomenon-based learning; ethnography; teacher practice; interdisciplinary learning.

#### About the author

Vice-Chancellor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ilona Tandzegolskienė-Bielaglovė at Vytautas Magnus University



## Under the Open Sky: Building a National Outdoor Studies Program on the Foundation of International Friendship

Jakob F. Thorsteinsson, University of Iceland, Iceland

Mark Leather, Plymouth Marjon University, United Kingdom

### Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

Facing modern challenges, including shifting societal relationships with nature, sedentary lifestyles, and the need for more reflective educational practices, outdoor education serves as a vital tool for social and cultural integration. Our presentation explores the evolution of outdoor education in Iceland, specifically focusing on how international friendship and academic collaboration serve as the catalyst for innovative pedagogical programs. The narrative of outdoor education at the University of Iceland has evolved since the first Leisure Studies curriculum in 2000. While outdoor activities remain essential, they have evolved from fieldtrips into a cultured, interdisciplinary pedagogical thread that weaves through undergraduate and graduate programs. This development is highly influenced by collaboration and friendship between two academic-practitioners who met at the EOE-network in 2013. This partnership demonstrates how professional academic goals can be strengthened by personal connection. Initially, an experiential summer course, a pedagogy of place, in Iceland was developed. This initiative developed into a robust international partnership between two universities impacting a diverse range of educators in Iceland, UK and other countries.

Today, this journey has culminated in the creation of a new program in the School of Education: Under the Open Sky: Outdoor Studies and Practical Outdoor Education. This is specifically designed for professionals across education, leisure, and tourism. It advocates for a "slow pedagogy" a reflective, purposeful approach to learning that prioritises the relationship between humans and the natural world (Leather & Thorsteinsson, 2021). Using an interdisciplinary lens, the program prepares practitioners to educate effectively "under the open sky".

By sharing this "EOE success story," we demonstrate how cross-border dialogue and personal-professional friendships can lead to the institutionalisation of outdoor education. It offers a model for how European integration can be achieved through shared educational values and the collaborative development of curricula that reconnect people with their local and global environments.

**Keywords:** pedagogy of place; international collaboration; higher education innovation; Iceland; professional development.

#### About the authors

Jakob F. Thorsteinsson, PhD, and Mark Leather, PhD, are scholars known for their collaborative work in outdoor education, experiential learning, and place-based pedagogy. Dr. Thorsteinsson is an Assistant Professor at the University of Iceland (School of Education). He specialises in a leisure perspective on outdoor studies with a broad focus involving friluftsliv, wild pedagogies and pedagogical approaches to nature. Dr. Leather is Professor Emeritus of Education at Plymouth Marjon University in the UK. His research critiques modern education systems while advocating for the transformative power of authentic, place-based experiences. Together, they bridge the gap between theory and practice, advocating for a sustainable, nature-connected future.



## Promoting Physical Activity and Social Inclusion in Mountain-Region Universities: The Erasmus+ Project Climb United – Ascend Together

Domen Tominec, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport, Slovenia

### Field: Physical and Social Mobility Through Outdoor Learning

#### Poster Presentation

##### Abstract

Despite the widely recognized benefits of regular physical activity for both physical and mental health (WHO, 2010), students and university staff face significant barriers to engaging in active lifestyles (Ndupu et al., 2023). These challenges highlight the need for innovative and context-specific approaches to promoting movement within higher education environments.

In this context, the development and adaptation of sports activities in natural mountain environments, alongside their integration into university systems, represent a promising strategy to enhance physical activity levels, improve overall health, and foster social inclusion among students, academic staff, and administrative personnel (Shanahan et al., 2016). Universities located in mountain regions across Europe are uniquely positioned to leverage their geographical context to create accessible and engaging opportunities for outdoor physical activity.

To address these challenges, five European universities have collaborated to establish the Erasmus+ project Climb United – Ascend Together. The project aims to empower students and staff by equipping them with the knowledge, competencies, and opportunities necessary for safe, regular, and accessible participation in sports activities within mountain environments. In its initial phase, the project focuses on identifying key barriers to physical inactivity through a comprehensive survey, followed by the implementation of targeted experimental interventions. Based on these findings, the project will develop a set of best practices for sports participation in natural mountain settings.

Furthermore, the project seeks to strengthen cross-border collaboration among participating universities and promote well-being within the higher education sector. By embedding outdoor physical activities into institutional development strategies for both students and staff, Climb United – Ascend Together contributes to the creation of more inclusive, health-oriented academic communities. Importantly, the project also offers a transferable model that can be adopted by universities across Europe, thereby extending its impact beyond mountain regions and supporting broader public health and inclusion objectives.

**Keywords:** physical activity; mountain environments; higher education; nature; inclusive activities.

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##### About the authors

Authors: Domen Tominec (Faculty of Sport, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia) & Tadej Debevec (Department of Automatics, Biocybernetics and Robotics, Jožef Stefan Institute, Ljubljana, Slovenia).

Domen Tominec earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Kinesiology at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport. His master's thesis focused on modern altitude training models, "Live Low – Train High," under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Tadej Debevec. Since 2022, he has been a researcher on the Flemish-Slovenian Weave project, studying intermittent exogenous ketosis and hypoxic adaptation. He also serves as an assistant in Mountaineering, Skiing, and Sports Recreation, teaching courses on extreme environments and outdoor activities at the Faculty of Sport. Domen is currently pursuing a PhD in Kinesiology.



## Connecting Local Practices and European Futures: Adult Education for Social Ecological Transformation

Diana Vogetseder, OSEANA, Austria

### Field: Policy Support & Local Community Collaboration

#### Poster Presentation

#### Abstract

In the face of ongoing socio-ecological crises across Europe, ecopedagogy calls for forms of Bildung and learning possibilities that reconnect social, ecological and cultural dimensions and move beyond solely cognitive and formal approaches to sustainability (Gadotti, 2008). In adult educational traditions, leisure-based and community-rooted learning and educational initiatives often address sustainability within the context of the interwoven dimensions of human existence and challenge hierarchical dualisms such as nature & culture, knowledge & body, theory & practice, feelings & thoughts (Walters & Von Kotze, 2023, p. 27).

It understands learning for social ecological change as relational, affective and rooted in everyday life.

This poster shows a local initiative in soft flat expanses and rolling forestry hills in Upper Austria where, based on an ecopedagogical concept, through shared activities such as working with local materials, repairing, crafting, storytelling evenings and being outdoors together we try to create “another world possible” (Gaidotti, 2008, S. 25). These practices are grounded in the lifeworlds of adults and emerge from concrete interests, experiences and needs.

Through transnational formats such as Erasmus+ mobility and cooperation projects, these locally rooted practices are once more brought into dialogue with other contexts across Europe. This raises key questions for outdoor and adult education: How can we share situated, informal learning practices without standardising them? Whose knowledge becomes visible when we bring local practices into European educational spaces and whose remains unseen? How can we co-create learning spaces that connect local practices while nurturing a shared, yet diverse, socio-ecological responsibility?

The poster invites to engage with these questions, to reflect and share on common practices/initiatives that foster european cohesion within educational places across countries. It aims to connect local, grassroots practices with transnational exchange and to explore partnerships for future Erasmus+ projects that strengthen ecopedagogical, relational approaches to adult and outdoor education.

**Keywords:** critical adult education; education for sustainable development; social ecological learning; beyond sustainability; Erasmus+.

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#### About the author

Diana Vogetseder is adult educational scientist and practitioner in fields of education for sustainable development and political adult education. Working locally in Upper Austria and within Erasmus+ projects interested in transnational exchange and further developing a good life for all.



## A Map in Unknown Territory: Designing Outdoor Learning Through The Scale of Cooperation

Floor Vullings, Agnieszka Leśny, Scale of Cooperation V.O.F., Netherlands

### Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education

#### Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

##### Abstract

Outdoor education is widely associated with support cooperation, shared challenges, and group-based learning. Yet in practice, cooperation is often treated as an implicit outcome rather than an intentionally designed element of the learning process. This creates a gap between the goals of outdoor programs and the actual experiences of participants.

This workshop introduces The Scale of Cooperation as a conceptual and practical framework for designing outdoor education programs that intentionally develop cooperation.

This "roadmap" was originally shaped at the Dutch YMCA 20 years ago, and has been developed over the past dozen years, including within the informal, international "Outdoors as a Tool" network. It forms one of the foundations of our development and training programs for youths and outdoor trainers.

Instead of assuming that collaboration will emerge naturally, the Scale allows educators to recognize different levels of cooperative engagement: which can sometimes be a game of resistance, sometimes (seemingly) passive observation and other times crazy synergy. This "map" can help understand what individuals or groups face and to design activities that support progression between these levels.

The session focuses on the organizational dimension of outdoor education: how program structure, task design, and facilitation strategies influence the quality of cooperation.

We will explain the basic concept of The Scale of Cooperation, invite participants to experience and try it out in practice and then share examples from our work over several years. These experiences will be followed by guided reflection, using the Scale as an tool to interpret group processes and individual behaviors. Through this process, participants will develop the ability to both reflect a bit about cooperation and discuss the future possibilities. Participants will explore how seemingly small design choices like the framing of a task or goal, level of trust or focus can significantly impact group dynamics and learning outcomes.

Drawing on practice from non-formal education and work with diverse groups of young people, including those at risk of social exclusion, the workshop presents concrete examples of how the Scale of Cooperation can be applied in different program contexts. These include short outdoor activities, longer learning sequences like train-the-trainers in outdoor education or youth camps.

By the end of the workshop, participants will gain a transferable framework that supports the design, facilitation, and evaluation of cooperation in outdoor education. The Scale of Cooperation can be applied across diverse cultural and organizational contexts, making it a valuable tool for educators seeking to strengthen collaboration, social cohesion, and shared responsibility in their programs.

**Keywords:** the scale of cooperation; outdoor education design; outdoors as a tool; group dynamics; facilitation strategies.

##### About the authors

Vullings Floor after completing his degree at the Arnhem and Nijmegen University of Applied Sciences, he earned a Master's in Human Movement Sciences from the University of Amsterdam. He works across government, corporate, educational, and non-formal settings, supporting teams in improving collaboration and working more effectively toward shared goals. His approach focuses on challenge, experiential learning, dialogue, and



identifying the next step in team development. Floor was a founder of youth, outdoor Buitendoor Foundation, which supports young people through experiential & outdoor learning. Together with Pieter Schoe, he co-developed The Scale of Cooperation, a practical tool that helps teams understand their current dynamics and take targeted steps to strengthen collaboration.

Aga Lešny, PhD is an educator, trainer, and game-based learning designer specializing in experiential and outdoor education. She develops innovative tools that help young people and professionals explore competencies, collaboration, and self-awareness in practical ways. Her work bridges research and practice, with a strong focus on inclusive learning environments, including youth in care and individuals with diverse needs. She has designed and facilitated workshops, training programs, and simulation games across Europe, often integrating The Scale of Cooperation into her approach. Her interests include competence development, feedback processes, and applied learning design. She currently works at the Copernicus Science Centre in Warsaw, supporting teachers.



## Learning from Each Other's Places: Bringing Global Diversity to Place-Responsive Outdoor Education

Brian Wright, University of Edinburgh, United Kingdom

Field: Organizational Approaches to Outdoor Education

Outdoor Practitioner Workshop

### Abstract

This participatory workshop invites you to engage with questions and insights that have emerged from educator conversation across the United World College (UWC) network. UWC is a group of international schools that endeavor to make education a force to unite people, nations and cultures for peace and a sustainable future. In 18 locations across the globe, including 7 in Europe, UWCs bring together students from over 150 nations, largely on scholarship, for 2 years of residential education. Since its founding by Kurth Hahn, outdoor education has played an important role within UWC. At the same time, each UWC school operates independently within its specific place and national context. As the network has grown and changed over 60+ years, the nature of outdoor education has evolved and varied between different UWC schools (Clark, et al., 2022).

The contributors to this session work in profoundly different contexts, not only in terms of place—ranging from the Norwegian fjords to the Bristol channel of Wales to the Karst region—but also in terms of institutional, financial, regulatory and cultural environments (Parry & Allison, 2019). Nonetheless, we share a common view, following Nicol & Higgins (2024), that outdoor experiences can create powerful and purposeful rites of passage within larger academic programs. We also share a common challenge of working with the affordances and constraints of our places to create meaningful, values-based outdoor education for extraordinarily diverse student populations.

Our activity invites participants into a conversation across contexts. We will share threads of unexpected connection between places, as well as how we respond to divergent cultural and legal contexts. In doing so, we will critically consider what local, national, European and global perspectives offer for outdoor education that seeks to promote social and environmental good. Through a mixture of storytelling, critical analysis, and brainstorming we blur the practitioner/academic boundary to share how we have been inspired and challenged by each other's approaches and invite participants to respond and contribute with their own places, stories and approaches.

**Keywords:** place-responsive education; international education; peace; sustainability.

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### About the authors

Brian Wright is a PhD candidate in Outdoor Environmental Education at the University of Edinburgh and a former Outdoor Education Coordinator at UWC Maastricht in the Netherlands.

Enea Zaramella is the Outdoor Activities Coordinator at UWC Adriatic in Duino, Italy.

Jake Van Der Veen is the Head of Outdoor Education at Atlantic College UWC in Wales, UK.

Gergely Lovász is the Experiential Learning Leader at UWC Red Cross Nordic in Norway, a former outdoor educator and training manager in various Outward Bound schools across Europe and Asia.



## Governing Outdoor Education in Teacher Education: The Institutionalisation of a Transversal Field

Ismael Zosso, Haute Ecole Pédagogique Vaud, Switzerland

### Field: Preparing Teachers for Outdoor Teaching

#### Oral Presentation

#### Abstract

##### *Background*

In Switzerland, outdoor education has long remained marginal within teacher education, appearing mainly through disciplinary didactics such as geography, physical education, or science education. In 2020, the University of Teacher Education Vaud (HEP Vaud) created a specific unit dedicated to outdoor education, granting the field a more visible and autonomous position within institutional structures.

##### *Problem*

The institutionalisation of outdoor education raises specific epistemological and governance challenges. The field is characterised by conceptual plurality, diverse pedagogical traditions, and strong connections with territories and community actors. These features place outdoor education at the intersection of teacher education, continuing professional development, and partnership-based initiatives. As a transversal field, it cannot easily be integrated within existing disciplinary or organisational boundaries.

A central issue concerns the nature of the centre's function as an institutional interface between teacher education and local communities. Beyond developing training activities, the CCOE aims to integrate local actors, territorial knowledge, and community resources into teacher education pathways. However, teacher education institutions and local actors traditionally operate within relatively separate spheres. Bringing these worlds into dialogue requires forms of mediation and coordination that challenge established institutional routines. Internally, the involvement of external actors in teacher education raises questions about institutional norms and organisational boundaries. Externally, many community partners are not accustomed to interacting with higher education institutions or contributing to professional training processes. In this context, the CCOE acts as a boundary organisation, seeking to connect these environments and enable the circulation of knowledge, practices, and resources between them.

##### *Aim*

This presentation examines the institutional trajectory of the Outdoor Education Competence Center (CCOE) at HEP Vaud. It aims to analyse the conditions under which an emerging educational field gains institutional recognition and organisational space within teacher education institutions, and to problematise the governance issues associated with this process.

##### *Approach*

The presentation proceeds in three steps. First, it analyses the current institutional configuration of the CCOE within the broader landscape of teacher education. Second, it problematises the tensions associated with the institutionalisation of a transversal educational field operating across organisational boundaries. Third, it discusses a strategic institutional framework developed to clarify the mission, governance, epistemological issues, and development strategy of the centre. This framework conceptualises the CCOE as a systemic interface structured around four interrelated functions: teacher education (with a strong focus on continuing education), external mandates and services, institutional and territorial partnerships, and internal coordination across departments and programmes.

Building on this analysis, the presentation discusses a possible model of institutional positioning for outdoor education within teacher education. It highlights the importance of hybrid governance arrangements capable of



articulating academic structures, lifelong learning dynamics, and territorial partnerships. Such configurations may strengthen legitimacy, institutional visibility, and the long-term sustainability of outdoor education as a field of practice, research, and professional learning.

More broadly, the presentation contributes to discussions on the institutionalisation of emerging educational fields and the role of interface organisations connecting academic institutions and territorial communities.

**Keywords:** teacher education governance; institutional change; lifelong learning; university–community partnerships.

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#### About the author

Ismaël Zosso is head and founder of the Outdoor Education Competence Center (CCOE) at the University of Teacher Education Vaud (HEP Vaud), where he works as a lecturer and teacher educator. His research and institutional work focus on outdoor education, place-based pedagogies, and education for sustainability in teacher education. He develops educational frameworks and partnerships that connect schools, universities, and territorial actors, exploring how outdoor and territorial learning can support educational responses to contemporary socio-ecological challenges.



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| ZGAGA          | Pavel            | University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education                                           | Slovenia          | Keynote<br>presentation   | 8    |
| TORKAR         | Gregor           | University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education                                           | Slovenia          | Round table<br>discussion | 9    |
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| AVILES         | Camilla<br>Maria | Università di Modena e Reggio Emilia                                                    | Italy             | Oral Presentation         | 10   |
| AYLWARD        | Tomás            | Munster Technological University                                                        | Ireland           | Oral Presentation         | 11   |
| BANKO          | Klemen           | Zavod sv. Stanislava                                                                    | Slovenia          | Oral Presentation         | 12   |
| BARFOD SEIERØE | Karen            | VIA University College                                                                  | Denmark           | Oral Presentation         | 13   |
| BETZ           | Mareile          | Munster Technological University                                                        | Ireland           | Oral Presentation         | 15   |
| BITEŽNIK       | Suzana           | OŠ Podčetrtek                                                                           | Slovenia          | Oral Presentation         | 16   |
| BORELLI        | Chiara           | University of Bologna                                                                   | Italy             | Oral Presentation         | 17   |
| BORREMANS      | Erwin            | Live                                                                                    | Finland           | Oral Presentation         | 11   |
| CHAKVETADZE    | Tamara           | Bunbare - Caucasus Outdoor Education<br>Institute                                       | Georgia           | Oral Presentation         | 18   |
| CONS-FERREIRO  | Miguel           | University of Santiago de Compostela                                                    | Spain             | Oral Presentation         | 20   |
| CORAZZA        | Irene            | /                                                                                       | Italy             | Oral Presentation         | 58   |
| ČEPOVÁ         | Natálie          | Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta                                             | Czech<br>Republic | Oral Presentation         | 24   |
| ČULADIENĖ      | Martyna          | Vytautas Magnus University                                                              | Lithuania         | Oral Presentation         | 25   |
| DEBEVEC        | Tadej            | University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport                                               | Slovenia          | Oral Presentation         | 26   |
| DIANA          | Elena            | Università di Pisa                                                                      | Italy             | Oral Presentation         | 27   |
| DOMENICHELLA   | Francesca        | /                                                                                       | Italy             | Oral Presentation         | 58   |
| FRANJIC        | Robert           | Center šolskih in obšolskih dejavnosti                                                  | Slovenia          | Oral Presentation         | 29   |
| FRATROVIĆ      | Kristina         | OŠ Dubovac                                                                              | Croatia           | Oral Presentation         | 30   |
| FRENCH         | Graham           | Bangor University                                                                       | United<br>Kingdom | Oral Presentation         | 32   |
| FRÝZOVÁ        | Iva              | Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta                                             | Czech<br>Republic | Oral Presentation         | 33   |
| GLETTLER       | Christiana       | Private Pädagogische Hochschule<br>Augustinum                                           | Austria           | Oral Presentation         | 34   |
| GÓMEZ REQUEJO  | Breogán          | JFK International School                                                                | Switzerland       | Oral Presentation         | 21   |
| GORČIKOVÁ      | Kateřina         | Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta                                             | Czech<br>Republic | Oral Presentation         | 33   |
| GRÖGER         | Martin           | University of Siegen                                                                    | Germany           | Oral Presentation         | 39   |
| HARRIS         | Frances          | University of Hertfordshire                                                             | United<br>Kingdom | Oral Presentation         | 41   |
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| KARPÍŠKOVÁ     | Barbora          | Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální<br>vzdělávání Brno, příspěvková organizace | Czech<br>Republic | Oral Presentation         | 45   |
| KEJŽAR         | Barbara          | Center šolskih in obšolskih dejavnosti                                                  | Slovenia          | Oral Presentation         | 47   |
| KOS            | Marjanca         | University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education                                           | Slovenia          | Oral Presentation         | 48   |
| KRIŽNAR        | Tina             | Biotehniški center Naklo                                                                | Slovenia          | Oral Presentation         | 49   |



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| LEATHER                    | Mark         | Plymouth Marjon University                                                           | United Kingdom | Oral Presentation | 77 |
| LISJAK BANKO               | Veronika     | CIRIUS Kamnik                                                                        | Slovenia       | Oral Presentation | 53 |
| LOMBO DE LEÓN              | Francisco    | Porta Natura                                                                         | Spain          | Oral Presentation | 54 |
| MARCASSA                   | Marco        | /                                                                                    | Italy          | Oral Presentation | 58 |
| MARKOVIĆ-ZORAJA            | Snježana     | OŠ Dubovac                                                                           | Croatia        | Oral Presentation | 30 |
| NEGRO                      | Selima       | /                                                                                    | Italy          | Oral Presentation | 58 |
| NEJEZCHLEBOVÁ              | Petra        | Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální vzdělávání Brno, příspěvková organizace | Czech Republic | Oral Presentation | 45 |
| OTERO URTAZA               | Eugenio      | University of Santiago de Compostela. Facultad de Formación del Profesorado          | Spain          | Oral Presentation | 59 |
| PEČAVAR                    | Živa         | Center šolskih in obšolskih dejavnosti                                               | Slovenia       | Oral Presentation | 63 |
| POGAČNIK                   | Matija       | Center šolskih in obšolskih dejavnosti                                               | Slovenia       | Oral Presentation | 47 |
| PRINCE                     | Heather      | University of Cumbria                                                                | United Kingdom | Oral Presentation | 66 |
| REID                       | Gary         | Scotland - Loretto School                                                            | United Kingdom | Oral Presentation | 69 |
| RIEHL                      | Jochen       | Mühlenkraft e.V.                                                                     | Germany        | Oral Presentation | 72 |
| RODE                       | Žan          | University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education                                        | Slovenia       | Oral Presentation | 74 |
| SIGURGEIRSDÓTTIR           | Vanda        | University of Iceland                                                                | Iceland        | Oral Presentation | 75 |
| SILVANINI                  | Annalisa     | /                                                                                    | Italy          | Oral Presentation | 58 |
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| THORSTEINSSON              | Jakob F.     | University of Iceland                                                                | Iceland        | Oral Presentation | 77 |
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| BOCHNIARZ                  | Joanna       | Centrum Innowacyjnej Edukacji                                                        | Poland         | Outdoor Workshop  | 62 |
| CHAPMAN                    | Lawrence     | UK East Anglian Inclusion Partners                                                   | United Kingdom | Outdoor Workshop  | 19 |
| GROCUTT                    | Sarah        | Fitness Excel Training & Education                                                   | United Kingdom | Outdoor Workshop  | 36 |
| KAMUNEN                    | Olli         | Suomen Humanistinen Ammattikorkeakoulu Oy                                            | Finland        | Outdoor Workshop  | 44 |
| KAZDOVÁ                    | Eva          | Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální vzdělávání Brno, příspěvková organizace | Czech Republic | Outdoor Workshop  | 46 |
| LEŚNY                      | Agnieszka    | Scale of Cooperation V.O.F.                                                          | Netherlands    | Outdoor Workshop  | 80 |
| MICHALCOVÁ                 | Barbora      | Masarykova univerzita - Pedagogická fakulta                                          | Czech Republic | Outdoor Workshop  | 57 |
| NEJEZCHLEBOVÁ              | Petra        | Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální vzdělávání Brno, příspěvková organizace | Czech Republic | Outdoor Workshop  | 46 |
| PAWŁOWSKI                  | Jorge Gimeno | Center for Innovative Education                                                      | Poland         | Outdoor Workshop  | 62 |
| POLACKOVA                  | Ivana        | CEEV Živica                                                                          | Slovakia       | Outdoor Workshop  | 64 |
| RAUCH                      | Franz        | Institute of Instructional and School Development, University Klagenfurt             | Austria        | Outdoor Workshop  | 68 |
| ŠIMKOVÁ                    | Lenka        | Lipka – školské zařízení pro environmentální vzdělávání Brno, příspěvková organizace | Czech Republic | Outdoor Workshop  | 46 |
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| WRIGHT                     | Brian        | University of Edinburgh                                                              | United Kingdom | Outdoor Workshop  | 82 |
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| CONS-FERREIRO | Miguel     | University of Santiago de Compostela          | Spain          | Poster Presentation | 21 |
| CZAJKOWSKA    | Diana      | Niespokojne Nogí Diana Czajkowska             | Poland         | Poster Presentation | 23 |
| FISCHEROVÁ    | Anna       | TEREZA, Educational Centre                    | Czech Republic | Poster Presentation | 28 |
| GÓMEZ REQUEJO | Breogán    | JFK International School                      | Switzerland    | Poster Presentation | 35 |
| GRÖGER        | Martin     | University of Siegen                          | Germany        | Poster Presentation | 38 |
| HARRIS        | Frances    | University of Hertfordshire                   | United Kingdom | Poster Presentation | 40 |
| KOČVAROVÁ     | Dáša       | DAPHNE - Institute of Applied Ecology         | Slovakia       | Poster Presentation | 52 |
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| KUJALA        | Jari-Pekka | Independent researcher                        | Finland        | Poster Presentation | 51 |
| LÉNYIOVÁ      | Pavla      | Daphne - Inštitút aplikovanej ekológie        | Slovakia       | Poster Presentation | 52 |
| MENKYNOVÁ     | Jana       | DAPHNE - Institute of Applied Ecology         | Slovakia       | Poster Presentation | 56 |
| NAMIOTKO      | Urszula    | University of Białystok                       | Poland         | Poster Presentation | 50 |
| PATRO         | Paulina    | Patro-Sfera, CEO Nature Coaching Institute    | Poland         | Poster Presentation | 60 |
| PRAPROTNİK    | Luka       | University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Education | Slovenia       | Poster Presentation | 65 |
| REJEC         | Jure       | FSC International (FSC Adria-Balkan)          | Germany        | Poster Presentation | 71 |
| TOMINEC       | Domen      | University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Sport     | Slovenia       | Poster Presentation | 78 |
| VOGETSEDER    | Diana      | OSEANA                                        | Austria        | Poster Presentation | 79 |



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