ALONG THE PATHS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
DISCOVERING THE REGION

CHILD AND YOUTH EDUCATIONAL TOURISM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADRIATIC-IONIAN REGION: SITUATION AND BEST PRACTICES IN SERBIA, CROATIA, SLOVENIA AND ITALY
The Sustainable Children and Youth Tourism in Function of the Rural Development of the Region initiative is an important step forward in building regional relations, exchanging experiences and establishing a basis for long-term cooperation between the key entities with an interest in the development of child and youth tourism in the shared area of the countries participating in the project – Italy, Slovenia, Serbia and Croatia. The initiative is actually about the promotion of a proactive approach in defining what the area offers tourists for an extremely important and growing market segment, which simultaneously provides a sound basis for the diversification of the economic activities in rural areas and the possibility of additional earnings for service providers as well as the improvement of children and young people’s life knowledge and skills.

In order to better understand the project, as well as the concept of child and, in particular, youth tourism, it is necessary that the broader context should be understood in relation to the current situation in that domain in the countries which the project is being carried out in. For that reason, it is extremely important that the current situation and tendencies in the mentioned segment should be perceived at a global level. In that sense, we will use the definition provided by the World Tourism Organization, which recognizes the market segment as young tourists.

Who, in fact, are young tourists? Young tourists are important visitors who, while travelling, do not only significantly economically contribute to the destinations they are visiting, but, at the same, they develop their personal skills on their journeys, establish social and cultural connections and acquire very important experiences. Speaking in a broader sense, they are young people of up to 30 years of age, travelling mainly independently of their families, either individually, in informal groups, or in an organized way, as part of the institutions to which they belong. Their travels are not work-motivated; primarily, their goal is to learn about certain places, acquire new experiences and visit their friends and certain locations, where they stay for one night at least.

In the new concept of the value network in tourism, the value is created by interconnecting the players inside the tourism sector (a tourist agency, a transport provider, a hotel, a restaurant) as well as outside the sector; so, in that way, solutions adapted to every consumer individually (or a group) are created, by means of which new possibilities and new adventures are designed. Young people are pioneers of such a way of thinking and changes because, in their opinion, the use of technology is not a matter of one’s lifestyle and following trends, but a true representation of their way of life. In that context, comprehending contemporary information and communication technologies, mobile media, and social networks in search for possible destinations and experiences represents the key factor of success of each development and marketing concept.
In many parts of the world, rising living standards have also lead to an increase in the number of young people who travel, especially those coming from developing countries, who are travelling for the first time. It is estimated that young people’s travels currently account for one hundred and ninety million international arrivals annually, as well as that the segment has been growing faster than is the case with the increase in the total number of international arrivals. Youth tourism is important because, through servicing the wishes and needs of young people, destinations actually shape a future market. In that sense, youth tourism is a huge chance for tourism to develop, while at the same time, effective development and marketing can significantly augment the potential of that market segment.

Why do young people travel?

Young people travel because they wish to learn about unexplored areas (83%), gain exciting experiences (74%) and improve their knowledge, i.e. learn (69%). Their wish to rest and relax is much more weakly ranked as a motivating factor. So, young people perceive travelling as a form of learning; it is also a good way for them to get to know new people and establish contacts with other cultures and customs. Travelling is a means of developing and perfecting one's personality and it strongly marks the formation of the identity of the young – they identify themselves with the features and values of the destinations they visit.

What does child and youth tourism bring to the destinations themselves?

- Young tourists’ journeys bring appropriate economic and cultural values to the destinations they visit – although in principle they cannot spend much money, their budgets are significant, if not even impressive, in a collecting sense. Young people accept traditional types of accommodation, so there is no need for big investments in the infrastructure and resorts, which makes a great starting basis for defining the contents and concepts in a rural environment. They are glad to establish communication and friendly relationships with their hosts and participate in their activities.
- Young tourists travel and stay in the areas they are visiting for a longer period of time.
- Child and youth tourism has its distribution channels (specialized tourist agencies, service providers, different organizational units or organizers of a journey, such as schools, universities, churches, etc.) and an accommodation service providers network (hostels, youth camps, resorts, family houses, etc.).
- Children and youth tourism is flexible and open to the realization of new concepts and non-programme activities, differently from the traditional forms of tourism.
- Young tourists respect the values of their hosts (the language, customs, rituals), and events – their motive for travel is their frequent participation in traditional activities (festivals, reaps, archaeological sites).

The youth tourism market niche is estimated to be of exceptional value: the assessments made by the World Tourism Organization indicate that in 2010 the market segment generated a total foreign exchange inflow of some one hundred and sixty five billion dollars globally. Even though there are the recent economic crisis, epidemics, political unrests, etc. as a strong external influence, the scope of young people travelling has not decreased. One interpretation is that the young are stimulated to travel in the time of a crisis because there are fewer jobs available and thus many young people decide to travel. Because they are going on a journey for a longer period of time, the young thus most often spend more money in a destination. They often travel in order to gain new knowledge/study – they learn in the places they are visiting and very often they seek jobs as well. Students are considered to be a significant driving force of economic development because they are mobile and flexible. They contribute to the creation of an ambiance and a good atmosphere in a destination by attracting other visitors and creating conditions for the development of different businesses. Child and youth tourism in the context of the Sustainable Children and Youth Tourism in Function of the Rural Development of the Region project can be understood as tourism responsive to the needs of the user group between 3 and 30 years of age. Having in view the specific focus the project has, as well the space where it is being realized, the component of educational tourism as a form of travelling should be added, one of the goals of which is to acquire concrete knowledge through conceptualized educational programmes, no matter if it be school (intended for children and young people) or leisure tourism (intended for children, young people and their families).
CHILD AND YOUTH EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

In Serbia, the category of child and youth tourism is not clearly profiled as a special tourism subgroup, so the age groups differ from one national and international institution to another. Yet, child and youth tourism can be defined as tourism corresponding to the needs of heterogeneous groups of 3-to-30-year-olds. Children and young people of that age are precious visitors, who acquire and broaden their knowledge and experiences within the framework of the tourist offer, developing their personal skills, in particular social and cultural ones, establishing contacts with their peers and giving a substantial economic contribution to the places and destinations they visit.

According to customary perceptions, the category of children consists of individuals of up to 15 years of age, and child tourism is mainly connected with the needs arising from preschool and school programmes and is regulated by educational normative documents. As a result, the forms of child tourism are closely related to the contents of preschool and school programmes and they are directly organized by preschool institutions and schools, and realized by various tourism service providers. According to the practice applied so far, they are most frequently organized forms of recreation, teaching in nature and other forms of child tourism, which are closely connected with the realization of the contents of educational and teaching programmes in preschool institutions and primary schools.

As far as the category of the young in Serbia is concerned, the National Youth Strategy highlights the subgroups of the young from 15 to 19, from 20 to 24 and from 25 to 30 years of age. It is not so easy to determine and define the needs of such a heterogeneous population of young people in terms of tourism and, of course, they cannot be responded to in a simple way either. One part of those needs appear within the framework of the educational system as the formal segment of pedagogical-educational work and are realized in an organized way within the education system. A much larger scope of needs, however, appears within the so-called free time of young people, where their personal interests, wishes and motivations are more expressed.

According to the classification of children and youth tourism as the tourism which is responsive to the needs of the heterogeneous group of those 3 to 30 years of age, there are two basic structural units according to the users’ age:

- child tourism, intended for children of 3 to 15 years of age,
- youth tourism, encompassing young people from 15 to 30 years of age and having three age subcategories (young people from 15 to 19 years of age, young people from 20 to 24 years of age, and young people from 25 to 30 years of age).

[According to another classification, schoolchildren/school tourism concerns those from 7 to 19 years of age.]

In Serbia, national dedication to the development of child and youth tourism and the creation of the documentation basis has been defined. Within the MDG-F programme, the Master Plan of the Sustainable Development of the Rural Tourism of Serbia and the models for the development of child and youth educational tourism which can be developed within as well as outside the formal education system (the educational farm, the centre of discoveries, thematic educational centres, etc.) have been created. The development of the Master Plan for National Rural Tourism represents one of the key components of the UN Joint Programmes (JP): Sustainable Tourism in Function of the Development of Rural Areas, which is oriented towards the diversification of the Serbian rural economy. For more information, please refer to the following web address: www.ruralniturizamsrbija.com

Given the fact that the significance of child and youth tourism had been recognized, the Tourism Department of the Ministry of Finance and Economy initiated the forming of the Workgroup for the Preparation of the Action Plan for the Development of Youth Tourism towards the end of 2012. Apart from the relevant ministry, the Workgroup also consisted of the representatives of the Tourism Organization of Serbia, the Serbia for Youth (Serbia4Youth) non-governmental organizations, the Youth Hostels Association of Serbia, the EXIT festival and other interested parties from the private and the public sectors. Their efforts resulted in a comprehensive document which, for the first time, and from different aspects, looked at the perspective of the development of youth tourism in Serbia.

The key elements of that document are as follows:

- the first phase report on the proposal for the strategy of the development of Serbian youth tourism for the 2013-2018 period,
- a proposal for the action plan of the development of Serbian youth tourism,
• the document which presents a list of existing and a proposal for new products of Serbian youth tourism.

Today, numerous different types and forms responding to the needs of young tourists are being developed, and youth tourism in Serbia has been developed rapidly in the past years. This is seen in the large number of young people coming to visit Serbia, a significant number of newly-opened facilities for accommodation adapted to that particular tourism segment, an emergence of tourism agencies specially profiled for youth tourism and an emergence of organizations dealing with the promotion and development of the type of tourism.

Young people in Serbia are open, empathic and cordial, which – together with the broad use of new technologies and their presence on social networks, via which they have been constantly interacting with their peers from all over the world – strongly influences an increase in the number of visits made by young tourists. Belgrade, being one of the most attractive cities in Eastern Europe, has increasingly been recognized as a destination of youth tourism, globally speaking. City breaks are very interesting for young people, and besides Belgrade, there is potential for other cities/towns to develop this type of tourism, namely: Novi Sad, Niš, Kragujevac, etc. Serbia’s mountains (Kopaonik, Žlatibor, Tara, Golija, etc.), numerous lakes (Silver Lake (Srebrno jezero), Uvac Lake (Uvačko jezero), Perućac Lake, Palić Lake (Palićko jezero), etc.), rafting and white water rafting down Serbian rivers (the Drina, the Ibar, the Lim, the Danube, the Morava) and gastro and wine tours (Western Serbia, Župa, Fruška gora mountain, Pešter, Eastern Serbia) – including all related activities, can to a great extent enable young tourists from all around the world to gain an experience they may have an interest in. A rich choice of different events in Serbia – such as Exit, Guća Trumpet Festival, Beerfest, the Drina Regatta, the Veseli Spust regatta, Arsenal Fest, grape picking (in Župa, Karlovac, Vršac), Belgrade4Youth, the Nušićijada cultural festival, the Carnival of Vrnjci, Love Fest, the Royal Carnival and many others – is no less attractive, either.

There are also numerous potentials for regional and international cooperation through exchange, language schools, and thematic and similar camps, where children and young people with special interests (such as painting, sculpture-making, photography, music, etc.) meet. By having those forms of tourism developed, a space is certainly opened for cooperation between national educational and other institutions, on the one hand, and non-governmental organizations (citizens’ associations, other association, etc.) and the private sector, service providers, on the other, so that all forms of association and partnership are possible and welcome.

The significance of public-private partnerships is reflected in a large number of beneficial aspects, of which we should primarily highlight the quality education of children and youth, the acquisition of functional knowledge and free time spent in a designed manner – return to nature, better socialization, cherishing friendships and true values... All the effects resulting from this process have a direct impact on the reduction of adverse tendencies amongst children and young people.

As far as child tourism is concerned, there are different forms of educational tourism:
• excursions,
• programmes of rest, recreation, revitalisation of good health and strength and teaching in nature.

Child and youth tourism-related activities can be organized throughout the year. The examples of good practice – the environments where alternative educational and tourist programmes for children and young people, which enrich Serbia’s tourist offer as well, are developed are as follows:
• Čarobno selo (The Magical Village) in Banja Vrujci spa,
• Čudesno blago Đerdapa (The Miraculous Treasure of the Djerdap Gorge) in Tekija village,
• Kamp vrednih ruku (The Camp of Diligent Hands) in Paležnica village,
• Obrazovna avantura (The Educational Adventure) in Knjaževac and Stara Planina mountain,
• Otvorena seoska škola (The Open-Air Village School) in Pranjani village,
• Šarenilo banata (The Varieties of Banat) in Vršac and Gudurica village.

In those destinations, different models are combined: educational farms, entertainment and education centres, discovery centres and thematic centres, so child and youth tourism can be in place in those environments for quite a long time after the completion of the project cycle.
EDUCATIONAL TOURISM CLUSTER OF SERBIA

The Educational Tourism of Serbia Cluster is an association established to improve the quality of tourism for children and youth. Its founders and members are diverse institutions that were lead partners in the process of setting up the destinations for the development of educational tourism, conducted within the United Nations Joint Programme Sustainable Tourism for Rural Development and its component managed by UNICEF. Any institution or individual that meet the standards set by the Cluster acts, that primarily concern the quality of tourism and educational programmes, can join the association.

More information can be found at www.obrazovnicturizam.rs, while basic information about educational tourism can be found below in the text, before the destinations are presented.

What is educational tourism?
Tourism that has acquiring of certain knowledge through the designed programmes as one of its aims may be called educational tourism.

Why is it important?
Educational tourism is important because it helps children and youth in gaining functional knowledge, developing creativity and making contacts.

Crucial statistical data
The PISA testing in 2006 showed that educational system in Serbia achieves less positive outcomes than the international median. According to the data provided by the Institute for the Assessment of Quality of Education and Instruction and related to the achievements of the third-graders in 2006, the pupils in rural schools lag behind urban school pupils up to one year.

Through which models could it be developed?
We have developed models through which one can learn in accordance with the curriculum, but also gain various knowledge and experiences that are not related to the school curriculum.

Educational farm
This is the place where children learn about rural life through the everyday farm activities (feeding animals, cultivating plants, making dairy products, observing the bread making process, observing bees, gathering honey, etc.).

While staying on this farm, children are fed on domestic products.

Edutainment
In these centres, children learn through games and practical work (they apply their nature knowledge in cultivating gardens, growing fruit and vegetables, their mathematics and physics knowledge they utilize in building a mini-cottage; their linguistic knowledge is perfected by exploring local dialects and toponyms of the area in which the centre is located; they develop their visual and art culture by learning how to weave or making ceramic objects; musical culture is developed through the studying of traditional instruments, etc).

Rural thematic centres
In which activities can be organized related to different topics; archaeology, ecology, recycling, sport, adventure, etc. One of the potential models is

Art centre
In which the love for art and talents that children and youth possess are cultivated, together with the strong bond to nature. In these centres, children and youth could paint, sculpt, make useful objects and perfect their skills.

Discovery centre
With the technical and technological equipment needed for realization of the designated activities, these centres can organize conservation activities, nature exploration, historical and cultural research, scientific explorations and experiments, etc.

Educational tourism in Serbia is developed within the roof programme of the United Nations called “Sustainable Tourism in the Context of Rural Development”.

The joint programme of the United Nations called “Sustainable Tourism in the Context of Rural Development” is implemented in Southern Banat, eastern Serbia, Central Serbia and Lower Podunavlje. The programme is implemented by the five UN agencies in Serbia (UNWTO, FAO, UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF) in cooperation with the Serbian Government, i.e. the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development, Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Forestry and Water Management and the Tourist Organization of Serbia. For more information on the programme, visit http://rs.one.un.org/strd
BANAT VARIETY

Where is the Banatsko šarenilo?
Vršac, Vršac Hill and Gudurica settlement, municipality of Vršac, Banat County

Who is it for?
Intended for preschool and school children up to 15 years old, as well as for their families.

What you can do and learn here?
In Banat Variety you will get to know the variety of nature, culture and people, and learn how precious that is. You will get to know the town of Vršac following the steps of Paja Jovanović, the famous Serbian painter, and Jovan Sterija Popović, the famous dramatist, but you will also see the vineyards in the vicinity of Gudurica. On the Vršac Mountains, you will go mountain climbing and learn to orientate yourself in nature. You will play with horses and learn their language, construct birdhouses and bird feeders and get to know domestic animals on a nearby educational farm. You will learn traditional games and crafts, but also engage in the modern sporting activities. You will make your own environmental corner, to serve as a reminder that the variety around us needs to be preserved! All the activities can be related to the school curriculum.

Where do activities take place?
In Gudurica, in the Red Cross premises on the Vršac Hill, on the Vršac Mountains and in the town of Vršac.

How many days you can spend here?
• The programmes can vary from daily to weekly, including weekend programmes. The programme is available throughout the year.

Where can you stay?
In the Red Cross premises on the Vršac Hill.

How many guests can Banatsko šarenilo accommodate?
The Red Cross premises are equipped with 100 beds and are adapted for school groups.

Address: Topovski put bb, Vršac,
Phone: +381 13 838 657, +381 13 838 655 and Fax: +381 13 838 656,
domcrvenogkrsta@hemo.net
www.domcrvenogkrsta.co.rs
THE MIRACULOUS TREASURE OF ĐERDAP

Where is the Čudesno blago Đerdapa?
The village of Tekija, municipality of Kladovo, Bor County

Who is it for?
For the pupils of senior classes of primary school, high school and university students.

What you can do and learn here?
You will get to know flora and fauna, but also the historical and cultural heritage within the Đerdap National Park, and learn to make:
• Clay objects in the Ancient Roman tradition
• Handicrafts made of wood
• Here you will hang out with captains and fishermen, and with their help:
  • Learn to sail a single-oar fishing boat
  • Learn to navigate the boat through the narrows of the Danube and
  • To tie different sailor’s knots, as well as to Catch a catfish.
• You will get to know the ancient traditions of the locals and learn basic steps of the Vlach dances.
• You will get the chance to visit a unique museum of old computers and IT equipment which is situated in the primary school premises in Tekija!

Where do activities take place?
• In the primary school “Svetozar Radić” in Tekija, on the Tekija strand, in the old school and ethno-house of Mika Novaković in Golo Brdo, near the remains of the Trajan’s Bridge in the vicinity of Kladovo, in the Museum of Đerdap and the Kladovo Community centre.

How many days you can spend here?
The Miraculous Treasure of Đerdap offers daily, weekend and weekly programmes.

When can you visit Čudesno blago Đerdapa?
From April to October.

Where can you stay?
Privately owned boarding houses in Tekija, the Tekija Motel, in the school premises during the summer break and in “Đerdap” hotel in Kladovo.

How many guests can Čudesno blago Đerdapa accommodate?
A full bus of students can be
THE CAMP OF WORKING HANDS

Where is the Kamp vrednih ruku?
In the village of Paležnica, municipality of Ljig, Kolubara County

Who is it for?
For primary school pupils.

What you can do and learn here?
Most of the workshops are related to the school curriculum (obligatory subjects: Serbian language, history, biology, world around us, as well as to the optional subjects: nature watch, everyday life in the past, national tradition)
By using a number of traditional techniques, the old crafts can be learned
In the workshop named “From Grain to bread”, organized in a river mill, the children can learn how to make bread. The menu is compiled and breakfast and dinner are prepared together with the women from the “Golden Hands” association.
You can learn penmanship in the calligraphy workshop “Noted by Prota’s Quill”. In the poetry and language workshop named “In Desanka’s footsteps” the children will learn about the life and work of Desanka Maksimović, the famous poet. Compost is made in the ecology workshops, and the knowledge on the importance of nature protection is passed on.
In the Camp of Working Hands a lot can be learned on the medicinal herbs, which shall be picked, dried and used. You shall also help the birds and build them houses. A part of the extracurricular activities, outside official education system. You will learn to orientate yourself while walking the trails together with the mountaineers.

Where do activities take place?
In the village school in Paležnica, allocated class of the primary school “Sava Kerković“ from Ljig, in the primary school „Prota Mateja Nenadović“ in Brankovina, in the village of Paležnica, in the village water mill on the river of Marica, on the meadows and tracks leading to the Vrujci Spa.

How many days you can spend here?
Here you can spend 5 full days rich in activities, including 1 or 2 days’ stay in the cultural and historical complex of Brankovina. In June, July, August and September.

Where can you stay?
In the village school in Paležnica, which was adapted and equipped to accommodate children.

How many guests can Kamp accommodate?
25 pupils + 3 teachers

How to reach Kamp vrednih ruku?
The camp is situated in the village of Paležnica, near Ljig.

Contact
All information is provided on the web address www.skola.ljig.net or asked for by sending an e-mail on skolaljig@gmail.com
contact phone: +381 14 34 45 172

How to reach Čudesno blaga Đerdapa?
You can come to Tekija by an organized transportation provided by a tourist agency, or by a direct bus line, Belgrade-Kladovo (via Požarevac) at 06.00, 09.00, 13.00, 17.00 i 19.30 from Belgrade and Belgrade-Kladovo (via Zaječar) at 15.30 from Belgrade, as well as from Niš (via Knjaževac, Negotin and Kladovo).

Contact persons
Sideris Mihajlo, Add: I.L.Ribara 23 Tekija, e mail: sideris@kladovonet.com +381 63 80 04 352, school principal
Bačić Zorica, primary school ”Svetozar Radić “Tekija, Add: Koče Anđelkovića 65. E-mail: ostekija@ptt.rs, +381 64 84 61 187, school secretary
Caranović Danijela, Tourist association of Tekija, +381 63 86 18 017, president of Tekija Tourism Association

accommodated in Tekija, 30 people can stay in the school, while the capacities of the hotel are much larger.
EDUCATION ADVENTURE

Where is the Obrazovna avantura?
- Education Adventure of the Knjaževac Heritage Museum – Along the Timok Valley below the Stara (Old) Mountain
- Ravna, Balta Berilovac, Knjaževac, the Timok County, Eastern Serbia

Who is it for?
Children 8-12 years old, youth, families with children.

What you can do and learn here?
Archaeology and ecology probe (extracurricular activity) will give you the opportunity to explore the site as true archaeologists and undertake an adventure of searching objects from the past. You will find out what sorts of things can be found in the soil, what is the benefit and what are the consequences to the environment.

Pottery workshop (related to folk tradition) represents an encounter with an old handicraft technique that made Knjaževac and the vicinity famous, due to the skill of the master potters. In the specific environment of the reconstructed village community, you will learn how to use leg operated pottery wheel and to make your own clay souvenir, alone, or helped by your friends;

Conservation workshop (extracurricular activity) will enable you to mend the unmendable. You will combine the parts of ceramic dishes, found on the nearby ancient ages site, into beautiful antique bowls and learn the secrets of conservation through play;

Knjaževac A to Z,
(extracurricular activity) a brief alphabetical overview of the Knjaževac area's attractions and values, given in a form of a game and quiz, takes you on a journey of knowledge;

From trail to treasure, (extracurricular activity) with the help of an illustrated map, solving puzzles and tasks. By moving around, you learn the skill of orienteering and get to know the landmarks of Knjaževac;

Getting around nature – orientation, camping, nutrition, erecting bivouacs (related to Nature Watch and World around Us, National Tradition) in the beautiful environment, at the foot of the Stara Mountain, aided by an experienced guide, you will learn the skills of orienteering in nature, how to nurture yourself and survive in nature, how to erect a tent and find an appropriate location for bivouac;

- From sheering to the loom – training in the old techniques of weaving, knitting and embroidery (related to Nature Watch and World around Us, National Tradition), instructed by the skilful embroiderers, knitters and weavers, you will pass the journey from the sheered fleece and stranded thread to a lovely scarf, belt or shirt ornament;

- Old shepherd's games (related to Nature Watch and World around Us, National Tradition), how did children on the Stara Mountain entertain themselves while they guarded their herds on the mountain pastures? Learn it through games aided by the experienced shepherds from the Stara mountain, together with your friends;

- Saved by the bell and other school related stories, (related to Nature Watch and World around Us, National Tradition) shall be told in a classroom of the old village school, featuring the use of old teaching resources, as well as strict and morose village teacher;

- Knots (extracurricular activity) Nikola shall explain which one is harder, to tie or to untie the knot, be that a sailor’s, ambulance, hunter’s or some other type. There is only one way to find out, to learn to do it properly.

Where do activities take place?
In Archaeology and ecology park in Ravna, in the nearby school, in the Local Heritage Museum in Knjaževac, in the town of Knjaževac, in the schoolyard of the village school in Balta Berilovac, by the nearby river, on Babin Zub and on the Stara Mountain;

How many days you can spend here?
Education Adventure offers daily, weekend, 5 and 7 days programmes, including the accommodation in the Stara Mountain Mountaineering Club;

When can you visit Obrazovna avantura?
Education Adventure is organized from May to October.
MAGICAL VILLAGE

Where is the Čarobno selo?
The Vrujci Spa, Mionica, county of Kolubara

Who is it for?
Magical Village is intended for children 5-12 years old

What you can do and learn here?
- In the Magical Village you will meet the fairies Đurđica, Sunčica, Bosiljčica and Božica, who will help you learn about:
  - the characteristics of seasons,
  - flora and fauna of the Western Serbia and
  - natural beauties of the Vrujci Spa.

The fairies will be your hosts in their colourful cottages equipped to suit children with all the accompanying materials for playing and learning. The fairies will teach you about the farming tasks and farm organization, such as:
- the way a farm is run
- the way a farmhouse yard is kept
- how to make magical bread
- how to weave and embroider magical shepherd's bag
- how to make the toys from older days
- how to play forgotten games

You will have an opportunity to become:
- magical hosts
- magical cooks
- magical gardeners
- magical apothecaries
- magical craftsmen
- magical meteorologists
- magical scouts

You will leave our Magical Village with a diploma of a nature guarding wizards who can value farm work, make bread, weave on a loom, orientate in space and read signs in nature.

Where do activities take place?
In the Magical Village, its houses, meadows, orchards, fields, farms and river.

How many days you can spend here?
The Magical Village offers daily trips, weekend arrangements, weekly recreational classes, 10 days’ summer schools and multi-day camping trips.

When can you visit Čarobno selo?
From April to October

Where can you stay?
In the “Vrujci” hotel, “Kondir” motel, Villa “Mica” and Villa “Iva”.

How many guests can Čarobno selo accommodate?
Magical Village can take in 20-100 preschool and school children

Contact
Banja Vrujci bb, 14243 Gornja Toplica
Phone: 063 394 251
E-Mail: carobnoselo@gmail.com, ukgreativa@gmail.com

These, as well as many other activities offered by the Open Village School, may be organized as extracurricular and curricular activities (related to Serbian language, music and art, history, physical education, biology, world that surrounds us, geography, computer science and technology, etc, horizontally connected by the activities).

Where do activities take place?
Classrooms and school yards, meadows, farms, forests, river and spring banks.

How many days you can spend here?
Programme lasts 1 day to 1 week.

When can you visit Otvorena seoska škola?
The Open Village School offers programmes throughout the year.

Where can you stay?
Ethno-farm ”Jevtović” in Leušići, sports and recreation centre ”Momčilo Čeković” in Koštunići, ethno-farm ”Vesković” in Koštunići, ethno-complex ”Andelija Mišić” in Koštunići.

Contact
The Open Village School can accommodate 250 children, and is suitable for organized school visits.
Primary school “Ivo Andrić”, 32308 Pranjani,
E-mail: os.pranjani@open.telekom.rs
web: www.skola-pranjani.com;
Tel/fax: +381 32 841 521, +381 32 844 500,
+381 64 214 618 9

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You will leave our Magical Village with a diploma of a nature guarding wizards who can value farm work, make bread, weave on a loom, orientate in space and read signs in nature.

Where do activities take place?
In the Magical Village, its houses, meadows, orchards, fields, farms and river.

How many days you can spend here?
The Magical Village offers daily trips, weekend arrangements, weekly recreational classes, 10 days’ summer schools and multi-day camping trips.

When can you visit Čarobno selo?
From April to October

Where can you stay?
In the “Vrujci” hotel, “Kondir” motel, Villa “Mica” and Villa “Iva”.

How many guests can Čarobno selo accommodate?
Magical Village can take in 20-100 preschool and school children

Contact
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Phone: 063 394 251
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KATAI FARM, MALI IDJOŠ

Location
The settlement of Mali idjoš (Kishegyes) occupies the territory in the heart of Bačka, along both banks of Krivaja River, half-way between Subotica and Novi Sad. Katai Farm is a small oasis near the village. Its work began in 1995 with thirty talented children and with the organization of the first visual arts camp. The farm has been developing over the years; its programmes have diversified, and so it has become a tourist and catering compound with several locations in the village. Today, in addition to the main facilities of the farm (a compound with 70 beds, the sod houses, two dining rooms, an amphitheatre, a bamboo covered terrace), visitors can also enjoy the hospitality of hosts in the village itself or the exhibitions at the Bakery Museum and the Old Crafts House. Guests can abandon themselves to the tastes of traditional meals and drinks, but they can also learn about the village tradition and style of life.

Target group
• preschoolers,
• 1st to 4th grade primary school pupils,
• 5th to 8th grade primary school pupils, youth groups,
• citizens’ associations,
• families with children,
• individual visitors and tourists.

Tourist-educational programmes
Its main activity is the organization of schools in nature, one-day and several-day excursions for first to fourth grade primary school pupils and summer camps for primary school pupils, as well as seminars, conferences and events, and it is a favourable destination for hunters during the hunting season.

Accommodation capacities:
The farm can accommodate 70 guests. There are twin-, four-, five- or eight-bed rooms. 180 guests can be served in two spacious dining rooms. On the farm, there is also an amphitheatre (suitable for convening conferences), with a capacity to seat 200 people. There are also several well-equipped and safe playgrounds and the village yard with domestic animals for those visitors who want to entertain themselves. There are several more possibilities for visitors to accommodate themselves in the village: the Guest House (25 beds), the House on the Bank of the Lake (11 beds) and the Katai Suite (14 beds). Visits are by prior agreement.

It is possible to organize various activities with the hosts: getting to know domestic animals, horse and donkey riding, riding on a horse-pulled carriage, partaking in various handicrafts, interesting quizzes and so forth. Depending on the season of the year, walking tours are organized as well as the collection of medicinal plants or skating and sleighing. During the spring and the autumn, it offers a programme for one-day outings as well as for schools in nature for first to fourth grade pupils whereas in the summer, it organizes camps for primary school pupils (the English Camp, the Visual Arts Camp, the Eco-Camp, the Old Crafts Camp). Katai Farm’s doors are open throughout the year for various events, conferences and seminars.

In the village, there is the Bakery Museum, where guests can see for themselves how good they are at making a local sweet speciality known as kürtőskalács (chimney cake). It is possible to organize outings on the lake which is suitable for swimming and fishing. The offer also includes the Old Crafts House, where a part of the tradition of this area is presented.
CULTURAL CORN FLOWER, SUBOTICA

Location
The ethno farm where all the programmes are realized is located at Makova sedmica in Subotica. It is a space of 2,800 square metres, where there is also an artificial 600-m² lake, a playground for children with wooden equipment, a space for work accommodating 100 participants and a volleyball court and small football pitch. The "Kulturni Različak" Association for Artistic Expression was established in 2001 for the purpose of achieving goals in the field of culture and the art of old crafts; a large number of colonies and seminars for children and the young have been organized to date. The target group are children and the young from four to 30 years of age.

Tourist-educational programmes
The programme consists of workshops where children and young people work with natural materials (wool – pressing and weaving, clay, switches for making wicker baskets, corn stalks, wood, small beads etc.), recreational activities and traditional children's games. The main mission is to educate and teach children and young people how to do handiworks, how to use natural materials, how to cherish tradition and develop their ecological awareness of the preservation of nature. The workshops are conducted by professional individuals who have many years' experience of working with children and young people in terms of cherishing old crafts.

Accommodation capacities
There is the possibility of organizing one-day and several-day tourist-educational camps. On the farm, there are tent camps, while teachers and adults have two two-bed and one four-bed rooms with a toilet facility at their disposal. Besides this, there is good cooperation with the hotels and the High School Pupil Dorm, which can be asked to provide accommodation for children and adults during the school holidays.
Viminacium

Location
Viminacium Archaeological Site is located near Stari Kostolac, in the vicinity of the confluence of the Mlava and the Danube rivers. It is 12 km from the town of Požarevac, 95 km from Belgrade (by the E-75 highway, exit for Požarevac, then a further 35 km by the local road) and 3.5 km from the Danube (there is the possibility of arriving by boat). Viminacium was the most significant town and military camp in the Roman province of Upper Moesia (the territory of today’s Serbia) in the period from the 1st to the 6th century. During the rule of Emperor Hadrian, it gained the status of a municipium, and in the 3rd century – the status of a colony of Roman citizens with the right to mint its own money. Its military camp was a significant military foothold and the key point in the defence of the Moesia Danube River Basin. Viminacium was a developed metallurgical, handicraft and trading centre thanks to, amongst other things, its good geographical position. Crises in the Roman Empire influenced Viminacium’s fall from glory and the town was ultimately destroyed in a Huns attack in the 5th century. Viminacium Archaeological Site provides visitors with the opportunity not only to see the remains of Roman thermae, mausoleums, the northern gate of the Roman camp, the Roman aqueduct, the tombs, the three so-called memorias, the foundations of a basilica and a cemetery church, as well as the skeleton of the oldest discovered mammoth in Europe, but also to partly feel the way of living in Ancient Rome through the contents offered there.

Target group
• families with children;
• primary school and high school pupils and students (individually or in groups);
• individual visitors and tourists (domestic and foreign);
• groups of visitors cruising on the Danube;
• seniors (individually or in groups);
• cyclists travelling down the Danube Bicycle Route (Euro Velo 6).

Tourist amenities
Professional-guided sightseeing tours are organized every hour and are included in the price of the ticket. Visitors hear explanations in both Serbian and English; depending on the tour, it is also possible to have the tour in another language, upon previous agreement. Besides this, it is possible to organize special educational visits for children. The Domus Scientiarum scientific research centre in Viminacium has been designed as a multi-purpose facility: apart from the fact that scientists from Serbia and the world will be using its cabinets, libraries and atriums for carrying out their research (working with students and pupils, summer schools and organizing congresses and thematic gatherings), it will also serve as a facility for accommodating tourists, who have been showing increasing interest in staying in Viminacium. The Domus Scientiarum represents the peak feature of the offer in archaeological tourism, with the unique atmosphere of Ancient Rome. In it, the visitor can be whatever he or she wants to – an archaeologist, a legionary, or an emperor. Dressed in Roman toga costumes, children and young people visiting the location can prepare a Roman lunch, experience a ride in harrows, make Roman ceramics and so forth. During the summer months, Domus hosts organized scientific camps for children between 8 and 14 years of age. In the camp, children are offered a series of adapted and interesting activities and workshops, where they work in smaller groups. In Viminacium, special educational visits and programmes for children are organized, so it is possible to visit the town of Požarevac and its Orthodox Cathedral Church, Milena Pavlović Barili’s Gallery, National Museum and ethnopark, several monasteries (Rukumija, Zaova, Bradača, Nimnik, Vitovnica, Gornjak, Tumane, Trška Crkva church, Pokajnica (Repentance Monastery)), Ljubičevo Horse Stables, Fortress of Ram, Silver Lake, etc.

Contact
Viminacium Archaeological Park
12 208 Stari Kostolac

Tourist Service telephone numbers:
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+381-(0)62-232-209
E-mail: vimkost@gmail.com
www.viminacium.org.rs
LATKOVAC ETHNO VILLAGE

Location
In the north-west of the municipality of Aleksandrovac, there is the ethno village of Latkovac. Located 220 km from Belgrade, the village lies at the foot of the Kopaonik, Goč and Željin mountains, at 430 metres above sea level.

The ethno village of Latkovac consists of four houses, a stable and a barn. The oldest house painted in red (around 200 years old) had been a courtroom until the beginning of the 20th century before becoming a private property. The other houses were built at the beginning of the last century. All the houses are made of mud, straw and timber beams. The hamlet survived both world wars and there is an interesting historical story about the small village. The Kavrić family inhabited that part of the village, and the villagers were very respected and known wine growers, agriculturalists, craftsmen and artists. Within the compound, there is also a restaurant, a library and a shop. Apart from its rich history, the village is also unique for extraordinary beauty and untouched nature. The clear mountain water, curative field and forest plants, the fresh mountain air, domestic healthy food and the charms of householder-made drink will ensure this unique place is deeply carved into the memory of each visitor.

Target group
- preschoolers,
- pupils from the 1st to the 4th grade of primary school,
- pupils from the 5th to the 8th grade of primary school,
- youth groups,
- citizens’ associations,
- private companies,
- families with children,
- individual visitors and tourists.

Tourist-educational programmes
Guests to the ethno village of Latkovac can take part in workshops on old crafts (knitting, crocheting, embroidery, etc.) as well as earthenware, ecological and artistic workshops (painting, music). All interested young tourists can also join in with the agricultural works that are currently being done that season of the year. Throughout the year, visitors have opportunities to attend a large number of concerts, theatre performances and literary nights, organized by hosts on their estates. Some of the major festivals during the year are: the EthnoVision children festival of traditional Serbian music, the KozArt international festival of classical music, which is taken part in by people whose names are spoken with respect in the world of classical music, namely: Katarina Jovanović, Edin Karamazov, Bojan Zulfikarpašić, Isidora Žebeljan, Vesna Stanković, Gordan Nikolić and many others, then there is the Zvuci sećanja (Sounds of Memories) event, dedicated to one of our best clarinettists, Miodrag Knežević Knez.

Visitors can arrange with their hosts to have a culinary workshop be organized during their stay, as well as workshops on making sweets, jams and food provisions for the winter. In the village, there are a large number of strolling paths that range from one to 15 kilometres long.

In the vicinity of the village, there are several monasteries, the 14th-century old town, the best wine cellars of Župa, the museum of Wine and Wine Growing, the Homeland museum of Župa and the nearby mountains (Kopaonik, Goč, Jastrebac and Željin) which visitors can pay a visit to.

Accommodation capacities
There are 25 beds in five houses in the ethno village of Latkovac. In the hamlet, there is also a library with over 3,000 books which the guests of the ethno village of Latkovac can read, which is especially important for young visitors. In Latkovac, there is also a souvenir shop with souvenirs made by the protégés of the Society for Assisting Persons with Intellectual Difficulties of Aleksandrovac and women from rural areas, plus there is a stable, a summer stage and a restaurant.

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Ethno village of Latkovac, Aleksandrovac
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EthnoVillageSlatkovac
Today, exposed to stress, living a poor quality life and being less active, people have the desire to escape to serenity and seek a clean environment, where interacting with other people they enjoy healthy food, an easy pace and structured activities. This phenomenon is certainly enjoying an upward trend.

Rural tourism in Croatia has been gaining increasing importance, which, first of all, is reflected in the significant interdependence of agricultural production, the production of traditional products, the presentation of traditional gastronomy and tourist services based on using existing resources.

There is now a large number of different types of tourism: from sport and recreational and cultural through health, gastronomy and hunting, to eco-tourism, adventure, rural, child and youth tourism. However, there are problems in terms of the development of child, youth and other special forms of tourism, so it is necessary that a minimum of data on at least the key tourist attractions located in an area should be ensured.

Some data on potential and realistic tourist attractions can be found not only in county but also in both municipal and town spatial and urban plans. However, those plans only include the protected cultural and natural heritage. So this only means two of the 16 types that may be found in our area. The data of the remaining 14 types of tourist attractions should be collected from experts and other knowledge-holders from the territory of each local self-government unit according to the above-mentioned model of the detailed functional division of tourist attractions into 16 types.

Child educational tourism is not being given sufficient attention. However, the tourism is an integral element of certain developmental documents and projects. Some tourist agencies’ programmes include child and youth tourism, and the major Croatian tour operator for child and youth tourism is the Split-based Eklata. At the beginning of July this year that agency opened an international summer camp of the same name in Zaostrog, on the Makarska Riviera, where foreign languages were taught and other activities for children and young people were carried out. Together with this programme, there are several more similar programmes on the Croatian Adriatic Sea.

In Croatia’s rural areas, some agencies and schools organize eco-camps and schools in nature, especially during the late season and the early season, as well as educative programmes and similar activities, and the tourist farms are of particular interest. The company HF Eko Etno Grupa d.o.o., which also includes the Eko Etno Travel specialist tourist agency, raises educational awareness by means of different educational programmes and promotions and by creating a rural-tourist product intended for children and young people.

In order to develop the awareness of the need to preserve the environment, as well as of the importance and significance of natural, cultural and other potentials for the development of tourism, the Main Office of the Croatian National Tourist Board, in cooperation with the tourism communities of the counties and the Zagreb Tourist Board, supported by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport, invites applications for the best child and pupils’ artworks and literary works on the theme BEAUTIES OF MY HOMELAND in all kindergartens and primary schools in the Republic of Croatia.

Now is the key time to make additional efforts in order for the Republic of Croatia to become more strongly involved, via educational and other institutions, in the profiling of the market segment of youth and child tourism, as well as hosteling, following on from Croatia’s membership of the European Union which has also opened up possibilities of using its funds. Around the end of April 2013, the Committee for Tourism of the Croatian Parliament, in cooperation with the Croatian Youth Hostel Association (CYHA), held a thematic session on child and youth tourism, at which the problems of the future of that branch of tourism were made topical in the presence of more than 50 participants from different state and professional institutions.

Croatia should certainly do more to position itself in the world market of youth and child tourism, which accounts for around one-fourth of the international travel market.
It is through that being more strongly supported by the state (financially, with respect to law and any other respect) and by institutions, especially educational and tourism ones, and more closely networked, hostels might be able to become centres for young people from which young people, the local community and the state will derive greater benefit.

Special forms of rural tourism, as well as child and youth tourism, are a great developmental potential of Croatia and the whole region. New tourism trends encourage regional cooperation, i.e. border and cross-border projects. In order for child and youth tourism to develop, besides the sector of tourism, the sectors of education, culture, sport, regional development, European integration and other sectors are also important. In view of this, it was proposed that a regional, interstate advisory body should be established, which would meet four times a year, and that interdepartmental councils for that form of tourism should be established in individual states. Besides the representatives of the state administration and local self-governments, there should also be experts appointed to those bodies, who will direct development and promotion in a quality way, as well as potential investors, who will contribute to the completeness of the buildings, the contents and safety.
THE CROATIAN YOUTH HOSTEL ASSOCIATION

The Croatian Youth Hostel Association is a non-profit, non-governmental organization and an independent association of youth hostels engaged in the development of youth tourism, i.e. of all forms and contents of the organized and individual holidays and recreation of young people in the territory of the Republic of Croatia. The Committee for Tourism of the Croatian Parliament and the Ministry of Tourism are responsible for the legislative and developmental basis, whereas the association Members’ Club Village (Klub članova Selo), engaged in rural tourism, is a partner which treats child and youth tourism as one of the special forms of rural tourism.

The CYHA achieves its goals through different activities, some of which are as follows: the stimulation of upbringing and educating young people through developing awareness, respect and care for the cultural, civilizational and natural values of Croatia and other countries; providing support for young people to meet each other, socialize and cooperate without divisions along political, racial, national, religious, cultural or gender lines; the creation of lasting habits of young people in terms of using tourist programmes; carrying out publishing and information-advertising activities, organizing cultural and entertainment programmes, the distribution of international youth and students’ tourist and hostel addresses and reference books, the animation of tourist guides and attendants for the needs of young people, and publishing international youth and students’ passes.

The target groups of the Eklata and Eko Etno Travel agencies are children and young people of different ages as well as parents who make decisions on their children’s journeys and stays.

The goal of the programme is to form as many rural tourist destinations as possible, which are suitable for child, youth and educational tourism, and to achieve a pedagogical standard in compliance with the legal frameworks, as well as to raise the level of educational programmes, which would encompass as large a number of users as possible.

Rural tourist destinations adapted to special forms of tourism exist throughout Croatia: on its islands, the sea, the hinterland and the continental part of the country. Certain destinations throughout Croatia are already prepared for child and youth tourism, and apart from hostels, they also recognize the capacities of rural space. On the basis of the existing programmes, of which some are quoted as examples, it is needed and possible, through cooperation between departments and scientific and professional institutions and associations, to also recognize Croatia as a desirable destination for that form of tourism. The words education, meaningful destination and safety are the common words for that form of tourism.

The directions of further development are: the development of an action plan for child and youth tourism, support for the development of the accommodation and educational network, the networking of tourist, educational and other institutions, the creation of an interdepartmental body for that form of tourism and the creation of a specialized offer of rural tourism for children and youth.

Hostels might turn into centres for young people from which the young, the local community and the state will better benefit, and castles, abandoned former military facilities and other state-owned unused buildings throughout Croatia could be turned into hostels, for which there are examples of good practice in Germany and neighbouring Slovenia. Besides hostels, certain tourist farms, rural tourism catering facilities and ecological and ethno villages should be specialized.

In addition to the existing programmes, the company HF Eko Etno Grupa d.o.o., i.e. Eko Etno Travel, is also working on several additional tourist programmes for children and young people, as well as on special forms of promotion via web pages, online booking, social networks, mobile applications and so forth.

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VELIKI TABOR CASTLE – THE MUSEUMS OF CROATIAN ZAGORJE

**Location**
The castle is located in Zagorje, in Krapina-Zagorje County, and is one of the best preserved late medieval fortified towns in continental Croatia.

**Target groups**
children and young people

**Tourist-educational programmes**
In addition to the permanent exhibition, it is possible to enjoy the beauty of the architecture of the castle, feel the life of bygone times, hear interesting stories and legends and take part in organized thematic workshops. Children and young people go through the mystical middle ages, with thematic leadership, puppet shows and workshops:
- the medieval weapons and equipment workshop,
- heraldry – making one's own coat of arms,
- puppet shows for children: Veronika and Fridrik, Dragon's Treasure, The black Queen – a medieval travelling puppet theatre,
- legends and stories of the castles of Zagorje /thematic leadership.

**Tabor Film Festival**
has been held for 10 years and gathers young people from all over Europe and the world, and as part of the festival rock and pop concerts are organized.

**Accommodation capacities**
The other service providers with whom Veliki Tabor Castle cooperates to form a coherent tourist offer through organized arrangements:
- The Museum of Peasants’ Rebellions in Oršić Castle, Stubičke Toplice
- The Old Village Musem, Kumrovec
- Antuna Augustinčić's Gallery, Klanjec
- Krapina Neanderthal Museum, Krapina
(all the above mentioned subjects operate through MUSEUMS OF CROATIAN ZAGORJE)
- Terme Tuhelj
- other rural households in the vicinity
- restaurants
- board and lodgings.

The Tuheljske Toplice Hotel has 264 twin-bed rooms, and it is possible to organize camping, weekend and several-day arrangements. The Grešna Gorica Restaurant, a rural estate, offers visitors a rich gastronomic menu from Zagorje. Unfortunately, there are no other accommodation capacities in the vicinity worth mentioning.

**Contact**
www.terme-tuhelj.hr
www.gresna-gorica.com

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GOLDEN TIMBER ECO-CENTRE

Location
The Zlatna Greda Eco-Centre was established in 2003. It is housed in the former administration building in the wilderness on the rim of the Nature Park (NP) of Kopački Rit which has been adapted into a centre for educational and eco-tourist activities. The compound of the Eco-Centre stretches across an area of about one hectare in Osjek-Baranja County.

The Zlatna Greda d.o.o. tourist agency was established in 2006. The Zeleni Osjek (Green Osjek) Nature and Environment Protection Association is the founder and owner of the agency. The agency operates as a model of social entrepreneurship and ensures the sustainability of the entire programme of the Zlatna Greda Eco-Centre. For the most part, the centre is funded from project funds (EU funds, ministries) and from the collection of eco-tourist programmes for children and young people. The Eco-Centre organizes different programmes and at the same time has a offers catering.

Target groups
children and young people.

Every year, the Eco-Centre is visited by around 3,000 users, and children attending the School in Nature programme account for the majority of them.

Tourist-educational programmes
Within the programme intended for the young, there are many entertaining and educational activities, such as:
- workshops on rivers,
- workshops on flood forests,
- water analysis,
- education in energy,
- biodiversity monitoring,
- the life of bees,
- eco-activism.

The other activities are
- team games,
- boat and canoe rowing,
- biking,
- horse riding,
- photo-safari,
- bird spotting.

As a receptive agency, Zlatna greda d.o.o. includes in its offer other subjects in the region as well:
- restaurants,
- family farms,
- accommodation buildings,
- agricultural producers,
- cultural institutions.

Accommodation capacities
There are one main and two side-buildings covering around 500 m2, then there is an arbour – a small pavilion like those we may find in parks or in private gardens where people sit on benches, drink tea and do similar things, or where people in love meet – accommodating around 50 persons. A children’s playground and two halls for presentations and educating children have been built, and the Treasure of the Marsh instructive and adventure path is arranged and marked so that pupils can learn about the natural values of Baranja and Kopački rit.

There is no accommodation at this location, so accommodation needs to be organized in Osijek and the surrounding area (Baranja) and arrangements can last for one day, for a weekend or for several days.

Contact
www.zlatna-greda.org
ČIGOĆ – THE FIRST EUROPEAN VILLAGE OF THE STORK

Location
In 1994, the small village of Čigoć, lying in the heart of Lonjsko polje (the Lonja Field), located in Sisak-Moslavina County, was declared by the Euronatur Foundation to be the first European village of storks. The Lonja Field is a unique nature park in Southeastern Europe and the largest protected flood area not only in Croatia but in the whole of the Danube River basin.

Due to its exceptionally suitable natural conditions, the white stork builds its nests on almost every single house or stable, so there are more storks than people in the village. There are more than 200 storks in 45 nests, whereas only around 120 people living in around 70 houses, which bears eloquent testimony to the harmonious relationship between man and nature.

Target groups
are preschool, school and high school children and students. The village is most frequently visited by organized groups of pupils, who – at the Nature Park’s Educational Centre – become familiar with the natural and cultural values of the Lonja Field, including high school pupils from the states of the region of the Sava River basin (Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia).

Tourist-educational programmes:
The wooden house at No. 26 is the Lonja Field Nature Park’s information and educational centre, and the traditional carpenter’s workshop has been restored in it. Children are received by a guide-educator who gives them information about Čigoć and the Lonja Field. In the village, visitors can take a tour of the ethno-exhibition of traditional tools and objects related to the village household in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century.

The “White stork in Čigoć” educational programme
is conducted under the roof of a garage for a horse-drawn carriage in the yard, and includes:
• a short lecture about storks,
• watching storks with binoculars,
• sightseeing in the village and counting the nests.

Attracted by the bear’s charisma and fascinated with the simplicity of living healthily in compliance with the vegetation cycle, the large community of Kuterevo volunteers use their work, knowledge and traditional skills to contribute and also to spread the story in their living environments about the coexistence of people and bears – civilization and wilderness, which has also proven to be an economically sustainable project.

It is possible for those who come to visit Kuterevo to partake in the following activities:
• visit the carpenters producing the tamburitza – a folk instrument for daydreamers, named KUTEREVKAs after the village;
• earn about the developments in and gain fundamental knowledge of biology and mythology related to bears, which is a recommendation for activism in favour of the ecologically important and globally significant population of the Dinaric brown bear;
• obtain information about the need to preserve the wilderness of mountainous Croatia.

Accommodation capacities
In the village, there is the Butina Family Farm, a resort serving local cuisine with space to accommodate larger groups, while private accommodation in several family houses and suits is also an option. A new mountaineer home, a resort for campers in the forest and a resort-camp will soon be finished.

Contact
www.kuterevo-medvjedi.org

KUTEREVO – THE VELEBIT SHELTER FOR YOUNG BEARS

Location
The shelter was formed in Kuterevo, a village in Lika-Senj County, in 2002, as a joint project of the Croatian Centre for Knowledge and Environment and the Kuterevo Velebit Association, supported by experts in big beasts and by Kuterevo. Currently, there are nine bears in the shelter, the youngest one being one year old and the oldest being 10 years old. In the past 11 years, the project has been supported by visitors and individual donors: the relevant competent ministries, Zagrebačka Bank, local self-governments, certain businessmen and so forth.

The target group are preschool, school and high school children, scouts and volunteers, who want to volunteer in order to help preserve this shelter for bears.

Tourist-educational programmes
So far, the Kuterevo Project has been run and maintained by around 2,000 volunteers from all over the world. The main coordinators, regularly supported by the European Volunteer Service (EVS), are the Croatian-Serbian-French team and several families from the village itself. Year after year, young people from all around the world have increasingly been showing interest in helping through volunteering. Last year, the shelter accommodated 24 groups of volunteers, amongst whom there were scouts from Belgium, Italy and France.
Strug Eco-Ethno Village has an accommodation capacity of 20 beds, and the other two villages, five minutes away from there, also offer a 26-bed accommodation, which in total is 46 beds. Arrangements are made on a daily, weekend and several-day basis.

Contact
www.ekoetno-selo-strug.hr

**OGULIN – THE HOMELAND OF THE FAIRY TALE**

The Ogulin – The Homeland of the Fairy Tale developmental project of cultural tourism started in 2006, and the project bearer is the Tourism Board of the Town of Ogulin in Karlovac County. The strongest basis for the development of cultural tourism is the fact that female writer Ivana Brlić Mažuranić, who wrote in her autobiography that the Ogulin area had been her inspiration for her Tales of Long Ago, was born in Ogulin, together with the fairy-tale natural heritage and the castle in the centre of the town.

The achievement of the mission of the Ogulin – The Homeland of the Fairy Tale brand is based on the development of two specific cultural and tourist products:

- The Ivana’s Home of the Fairy Tale visitor centre, opened in September 2013.

It is a multimedia cultural centre where Ivana and the characters of her Tales of Long Ago play host to all fairy tales and fairy tales writers of the world;

- The Ogulin Fairy Tale Festival (OGFB), which will take place for the eighth time in 2013. The number of visitors ranges from 15,000 to 17,000 people per annum. The target groups are prevalently primary school pupils and families with children.

**Tourist-educational programmes**

THE REGOČ TOURS – OGULIN LOCAL TOURIST AGENCY organizes interesting thematic programmes for children through field classes/school in nature, which is recommended by the Ministry of Science, Education and Sport:

- The In Legen Town workshop: guides, costumed fairy-tale characters, take children along the fairy tale route through Ogulin;
- The At Košjenka’s Home workshop: animation and entertainment including taking an exam for “driver’s licences” for flying on a broom, and simultaneously children game based on the modernized and adapted wording.

In addition to the capacities of the town and Frankopan Castle, the Dobra River canyon and the vicinity of the town together with different catering facilities are also involved in the realization of the programmes.

**Accommodation capacities**

The Frankopan Hotel – one of the bearers of the tourist offer of the town, located next to Frankopan Castle, with a capacity of around 50 beds. www.hotel-frankopan.hr

Accommodation capacities in the vicinity of Ogulin are also offered in the form of private accommodation. The organizers issue Festival Passports to visitors, which provides them with discounts in the accommodation and catering facilities!

Contact:
Tourist Board of Ogulin
www.tz-grada-ogulina.hr
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ITALIA

CHILD AND YOUTH EDUCATIONAL TOURISM

TOURISM AND EDUCATIONAL FARM: AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONFIRM IDENTITY AND SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL AREAS

Tourism is one of the most profitable activities in Italy. However, over time, however, from the sixties until today, Italy has moved from the second to the fifth position in the world ranking in terms of both visitors and overnights. The reasons for this decrease on the global market are found in the rise of new tourist destinations and low-cost air transport policies in the international market, which have virtually erased distances between destinations that once seemed remote from one another, thereby increasing global competition.

In 2011, Italy was the fifth most visited country in the world with 46.1 million international tourists, a greater number compared to the previous two years (respectively 43.6 million in 2009 and 43.2 million in 2010). According to the estimates of the World Travel and Tourism Council, the tourism industry as a whole would have accounted for 9.4% of the Italian GDP, with about 147 billion euros, employing about 2.5 million people, equal to 10.9% of national employment.

The 13th “Rapporto sul Turismo Italiano” confirmed cultural tourism in the major cities of historic and artistic interest, beach tourism, mountain tourism, lakeside and finally thermal tourism as traditional and mature macro-markets that continue to be the basic background in terms of arrivals and overnights.

However, the two traditional products, beach tourism and thermal tourism, continued to demonstrate a downward trend in the last few years. This should make us reflect on the organization of these two markets and the reasons for their loss of competitiveness, proposing new forms of exploitation and connection with the “hinterland” offer. In the context of growing competition, in fact, the products and services of different territorial entities cannot be based on a standard ideal, but, on the contrary, each offer must try to enhance its local specificities.

In this field we found the presence of an emerging tourism with promising growth opportunities: rural tourism. The rural tourist offer is proving to be able to react to some of the recent trends in tourism demand, which tend to reward forms of less mass exploitation of the product “territory”, and to pay more attention to the values of nature, culture, food and wine and the countryside in general.

The backbone of countryside tourism is represented in Italy and Veneto by farm holidays. In Italy, the main activities carried out by farms are accommodation (83.6%) and catering (48.1%). 36.9% of Venetian farms are authorized to conduct more than the three traditionally proposed activities: they can offer activities as diverse as horse riding, hiking, trekking, nature observation, biking, sports, outdoor games, etc. This share, however, is lower than the national average, which is at 54.8%.

Another important component of the rural tourism offer is represented by educational farms. In Italy, the project of a permanent group of educational farms was born with “Alimos”, a non-profit organization whose mission is to foster innovation processes in the fruit and vegetable sector and to support environmental awareness. In 1997, Alimos and several farmers in the province of Forlì (Cesena) formed the “Rete delle Fattorie Didattiche Romagnole”. The following year, the region of Emilia Romagna and its nine provinces started the project “Fattorie Didattiche Aperte” that included the signing of a Quality Paper and the introduction of specialized training courses for staff.

From the last census, carried out by Alimos during the year 2012, it appears that in Italy there are 2,363 accredited educational farms at the regional and / or provincial level, mainly concentrated in Emilia Romagna (330), Campania (308), Piedmont (274) and Veneto (233). In 12 years, overall growth has reached 891%; from 251 educational farms in 2000 to 2,363 in 2012, a trend confirmed in Veneto that records, compared to 2000, a growth rate of 803%.

Looking at these numbers, we can assume that the educational farms are experiencing a period of rapid growth both in the quantity but also in the quality of the services offered. There are several reasons for this: educational farms create links between urban and rural areas and implement projects of continuous and innovative education, intertwining the customs of the new generations and the traditions of peasant culture.
It is interesting to study how the tourism demand is distributed among Italian youth tourism, in order to understand how the offer of rural tourism can emerge. This specific segment is divided into two levels: youngsters under 18 years of age who go on holiday with friends, or those who go on holiday with adults. In 2012, 7,300,000 children (under 18) went on at least in one holiday. Of these, 6,000,000 went with their parents, while 1,300,000 children went on holiday without them.

Families who choose a farmhouse as accommodation for their holidays (especially in the summer) account for 1% of cases. Children (under 18) who go on holiday without their parents take advantage of organized trips (24% study trips and 46% thematic field trips). Having this trend in mind, it is clear that the educational farms and farms could better target their services at organizing emotional holidays in which children or teenagers are able to stay in a natural and unpolluted environment, gain a unique experience and get to know the history and the traditions that distinguish the region.

Moreover, in order to carry out activities that complement school curricula, it is important that educational farms work in synergy with schools and public institutions.
In 2003, a work team promoted and coordinated by a specific department and with the partnership of professional, agricultural and tourism associations – which are the fundamental actors needed to build the necessary farms network – allowed the “quality paper for educational farms” to be drawn up. This document defines the targets and the requirements for an educational regional farm to enjoy the benefits that are connected to its official recognition in the region of Veneto.

Only farms that meet the requirements and subscribe to achieve the targets listed in the Quality Paper will be able to be listed in the “Regional List of Educational Farms” and to take advantage of the logo “Fattorie didattiche della Regione Veneto” designed specifically and approved by the region. The Regional List is updated annually.

An educational farm is defined as being a farm or a holiday-farm that can host visitors and conduct educational activities, giving primary importance to every kind of school and, broadly speaking, to consumers, in order to:

• Re-discover the “cultural” value of the agricultural and rural world, through the enhancement of the educational role of the farmer;
• Create a relationship network between the producer and the young consumer, with the aim of becoming acquainted with agricultural production and a healthy lifestyle;
• Consolidate the ties of the youth with their own territory.

The main elements of the quality papers are:
• Safety and hygienic-sanitary aspects
• Logistics
• Reception and teaching
• Training and updating
• Communication and information
• Monitoring and control

The trend is constantly growing: from 62 educational farms in the 2003 regional list, there are now 238 educational farms, spread out over every district in Veneto.

There are many diverse activities, both theoretical and practical, including the teaching of activities: from the nutritional aspects (“learning while doing” activities related to agricultural production and the transformation of rural products, the characteristics of quality products, specific recipes from each territory, etc.) to naturalistic and environmental aspects which provide an opportunity to learn about protected areas and the diversity of the ecosystems through walking, direct experience and games. There is also the possibility to develop knowledge of the cultural and traditional aspects of a specific territory by visiting the “countrymen civilization and ethnographic museums, specific parks and Venetian villas”. Besides this, there are some “active holiday” projects that give youngsters and adults the possibility to go hiking in nature with horses or donkeys, to grapple canoeing, rafting, cycling and climbing. All these activities are carried out in safe and cosy surroundings, with the collaboration of great guides – the farmers, who are increasingly young men and women who dedicate all their time and passion to agriculture, paying a great deal of attention to the environment around them. Therefore, they look very carefully to the past but, most of all, towards innovation and experimentation.

These “open air” classes during the school year are increasingly becoming tourist destinations for the whole family, on weekends or during holidays, mixing culture, education and fun.

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To be informed and updated about the regional educational farms list, please visit the website of the region:
www.regione.veneto.it
www.veneto.to
on Facebook search for:
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EDUCATIONAL FARM IL FILO D’ERBA ALTAURA E MONTE CEVA

Location
Altaura e Monte Ceva farm has two locations:
• Battaglia Terme, via Cataio 68, Cà Vecchia, PADUA, ITALY.
The Agritourisme Complex Ca’Vecchia is located within the Regional Park of the Euganean Hills (Colli Euganei); it consists of about 50 hectares of forest with a wide expanse of natural reserve territory on Monte Ceva.
• Casale di Scodosia, via Correr 1291, Altaura, PADUA ITALY
An ancient farmland of 26 hectares that has been cultivated according to the method of organic farming and offering the possibility to discover the life of a traditional farmer, including the fields and the animals of the farm. The creeks and hedges create a healthy and luxurious vegetative zone and an oasis for wildlife. A mixed forest of ash, oak, walnut, hazelnut, and Paulownia trees covers half of the farms acreage. An entire hectare is cultivated solely to support wild animals.

Target group
Adults, families, seniors, religious group, family groups of the Armed Forces, fire-fighters and Special Corps of the State visiting the farms and the Catajo Castle.

Programmes and activities
Opened in 2000, the activities at Altaura and Monte Ceva Organic Farms have been envisioned starting from the belief that NATURE is the only teacher and with the intention of spreading the collective knowledge offered by the natural environment. Visitors can experience and enjoy the values of NATURE, providing a real chance to see all of the things that could be lost if nature’s values disappear. The hope is that both young people and adults, after having directly experienced NATURE through the farm activities, will actively promote the conservation and protection of environment as a personal belief.

The following are some examples of farm activities used to shorten the gap between our guests and NATURE:

• Bee lab
So guests can visit the many beehives on the farm, well-protected houses made of mosquito nets (insect screens) have been developed; here, guests have a unique opportunity to safely observe how honey is made, the dance of the bees, the queen laying eggs, the female bees feeding the younger bees, and so on. Another very important part of being able to visit the bees is to taste the honey directly from the honeycomb. Guests also learn how to make candles with pure wax
• Biodiversity plan lab
Children enter a room containing a simulation of two food markets, represented by two baskets of apples, each of which is placed on opposite sides of the room. They are shown the various characteristics of these apples: colour, shape, size, consistency, taste, smell, and other aspects that are not immediately perceivable.
The biodiversity lab also includes a walk around the countryside, where the children are shown the variety of plants growing spontaneously on the land, emphasizing their edible, cosmetic, and/or medicinal uses.

Accommodation capacities
• Agritourism Monte Ceva u Cà Vecchia
AGRITOURISM MONTE CEVA in Cà VECCHIA (comprised of large tracts of natural reserve) is surrounded by 50 hectares of forest, and is part of the Regional Park of the Euganean Hills.
The historic and beautiful Catajo Castle, formerly part of the park is only one kilometre away. The ‘casa colonica’ comprises two apartments on the second floor. These two are known as ‘NOCCILO’ and ‘QUERCIA’. Both of them are equipped with screened windows, a fireplace, air-conditioning, a TV, as well as a VHS/DVD player. Both have lovely kitchens. Nocciolo has been designed as a studio and Quercia as a one bedroom apartment with a comfortable kitchen/dining area. On the main floor there is the dining room, a professional kitchen and the main fireplace. The Herbarium of Monte Ceva is the name given to the first-floor meeting room located in the former barn. The ground floor is available for workshops and experiments. The turret serves as an ideal observatory for watching animals. The restoration was driven by the principles of green architecture. This includes: airy roofs and eco-friendly natural lime plaster.
There are two options for accommodation at the Agritourism in Casale di Scodosia:

- **Accommodation in the Double Room** (for couples or small families)
  The rooms are located in the former tobacco's buildings of the recently restored seventeenth-century farm complex. Each room has a private bathroom, heating and air conditioning, screened windows, and television.
  Guests are free to participate in everyday life on the farm as well as the activities associated with our educational programmes and themed days.

- **Accommodation in Mansard Roof** (for groups or large families)
  There are two Mansard Roofs that are part of what was once the tobacco's buildings. These buildings date back to the seventeenth century and have been recently restored to accommodate guests. Each Mansard Roof room has screened windows, air conditioning/ heating and a private bathroom.

Both agritourism facilities also have a restaurant: authentic dishes are prepared with fresh, local, and organic products from the farms. The herbs, fruits, and vegetables harvested from the fields follow the rhythm of the seasons in which they grow. The recipes are inspired by the ancient traditions of our territory, and they are rich in nutrition, history, and even fun fables and anecdotes. The restaurant also offers gluten-free, vegetarian and vegan menus. The agritourism facilities offer cuisine for non-conventional gatherings of diverse cultures and religions.

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The Cooperative also manages three “Museums of Colli Euganei”, displaying the main natural features of the region: from geology (Geo-paleontological museum of Cava Bomba), wildlife (Naturalistic Museum of Villa Beatrice) and archaeology (Bacchiglione Museum in S. Martino Castle) to the Adventure Park, which is an adventure and entertainment park with acrobatic routes high up in the trees.

**Accommodation capacities**
Terra di Mezzo provides many services in the fields of nature stewardship and education, such as:

- “Casa Marina” which is the Visitor Centre of the Regional Park of Colli Euganei, serves as a hostel (24 beds) and as a laboratory for environmental education. Summer camps have been organized since 2004;
- “Colli Euganei” hostel (54 beds) is the second Visitor Centre of the Park, mainly dedicated to hospitality and organizing summer camps since 2008;
- “Venetian hostel” (94 beds) is another hostel in the territory of the Regional Park of Colli Euganei, located in Monselice, a small, typical and old town at the foot of the hills, dedicated to tourists and foreign scholar groups;
- “Zeleghe” is a centre for environmental education and a hostel (80 beds) in the Alps, close to Asiago (Vicenza);

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EDUCATIONAL FARM LA COSTIGLIOLA

Location
Rialto Street, 62 - 35030 Rovolon (PADUA) ITALY

Costigliola is an organic farm as well as a didactic farm on the Euganean Hills, and it spreads out over 25 hectares in Rovolon, Padua. It is not simply an agriturism facility, but a sustainable development centre of the Banca Etica. Costigliola is a place for whoever considers topics such as sustainable development, green economy and environmental preservation to be of utmost importance.

Target group
The farm organizes summer camps for children and educational workshops throughout the year, as well as the Feast of the Harvest and other seasonal festivals.

Programmes and activities
La Costigliola is an agricultural and organic farm (ICEA certified) covering 25 hectares of varied land (4 vineyards, 11 arable fields, 10 woods) and it is the sustainable development centre of Banca Popolare Etica. The building that is home to the farm is very ancient (founded in ca. 1000 A.D.), and is divided into two areas: an area reserved for accommodation and vacations and an area dedicated to the conference centre, designed specifically for sustainability-related events. Costigliola is a format created by Banca Etica and is growing into a “creative common”, an “artwork” born to be shared and collaborated with.

LCCC: “La Costigliola Creative Common” – tells the story about the events and the people who recognize themselves in values such as Nature, conviviality and spirituality – that are typical of the agricultural tradition, and responsible economy, which contributes to developing and valuing the territory.

As an educational farm, Costigliola takes part in projects such as:
- “The Five Senses” project for children aged 3 to 10: educational activities that aim to stimulate the five senses by walking in the woods, within the Nature.
- “A Recipe for Each Season” project for people aged 16 to 20: educational activities about ethical consumerism, consumer power, environmental sustainability, and the Earth’s resources.
- “I Refuse” project for children and adults: educational activities about materials using the three Rs principle: Reuse, Recycle, Re-create.

The organic farm La Costigliola is located in a mansion that offers a wide variety of facilities and events organized by the management team: organic cooking lessons, evening readings, excursions along 65 kilometres of walking trails and cycling paths in the park of Colli Euganei. It also organizes typical countryside parties.

Accommodation capacities
The manor reserved for guests has a panoramic terrace through which they can access the 10 rooms, with a total of 20 beds divided into: 5 twin-bed rooms, 3 single-bed rooms, a triple-bed room and a quadruple-bed room. Each room has its own bathroom with Jacuzzi shower, a wardrobe, a writing desk and Internet connection. Breakfast consists of organic products. Costigliola offers restorative services with seasonal organic menus as well as vegetarian dishes; fair-trade products come from the local vegetable garden.

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EDUCATIONAL FARM IL BOSCHETTO

Location
Via Ca’Megliadino, 146-35044 Montagnana (PD)

Target group
Primary and secondary School children, adults

Programmes and activities
Since 2005, the production activities of this farm (about 12 hectares) are organic, monitored by ICEA. The cultivations, usually alternating corn, wheat, spelt, barley, oat, sunflowers, etc., provide the all the cereal for the animals’ complete diet and to be processed in order to produce bread, pasta and sweets. Fields for haymaking, grazing lands and the high number of forest areas are part of regular program for this organic farm. The educational farm not only has the not-to-be-missed “Discovering the Farm’s Animals” path, but also other well-planned paths with rest stops and descriptive posters. Some of them are along walking paths, while others are more adventurous, or even technical and meditative: all of aim to teach through the Nature.

They are divided into:
• “Biodiversity paths”
• “Observing flora and fauna paths”,
• “Herbs, flowery fields and fruit trees paths”,
• “Woody paths”,
• “Country activities paths”,
• “Bees special path”.

• Educational laboratory sessions can take place in dedicated rooms or “out in the field”. They actively engage every participant, through organizational managing and collaboration of assistants. The most common are:
  • “Bread: from wheat to flour, preparing the mixture and cooking”,
  • “Cornmeal mush: from sweet corn to flour, preparing the mixture and cooking”,
  • “Today, I cook: let’s prepare pasta together”,
  • “Let’s make a scarecrow together: what will he tell us?”,
  • “Seated above the great mulberry, let’s listen to…”,
  • “Playing like our ancestors: let’s make a toy together”,
  • “Grandpa’s garden: the organic system”,
  • “Fields and aromatic herbs: how to recognize and use them”,
  • “Let’s plant a tree”,
  • “The pond: freshwater fish and amphibians”,
  • “Let’s build a little nest house or a trough for birds”,
  • “Agriculture and farm animals with organic systems”,
  • “Observing and taking pictures of wild animals and bird watching”,
  • “Discover and recognize the habitats and who live in them”,
  • “Agricultural practices: let’s use old tools”,
  • “Diving into the past: touring the farmer museum”.

The farm is also enriched by a “Forest Playground” consisting of wooden buildings such as a fortress and a tree-house connected by a rope bridge built in a small forest. The purpose of the park is to guide young people on the path, make them appreciate a wild adventure and enjoy the forests. The farm is also an agricultural and bio-company.

Accommodation capacities
The educational farm can host about 100 children for educational activities. It has two well-finished and functional educational rooms, with a restoration service and a professional kitchen. Ever since it was built, the owners have tried to attain a scholastic atmosphere with pictures, posters, maps, and drawings hanging on the walls. Children can also write, colour, play with video games, and attend lessons given on a blackboard.

Agritourism “Il Boschetto” offers meals with its own organic products.

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Child and youth tourism in Slovenia makes a small but very significant part of its overall tourist offer. In the period from 2011 to 2012, exactly in the area of youth and child tourism, Slovenia achieved the highest level of growth, and in that period, the number of young tourists increased by as much as 22 percent. Slovenia has no ambitions to develop itself as a destination for mass youth tourism but rather as a destination offering quality and dissimilarity in a relatively restricted geographical space in the centre of Europe. Today, young travellers are much more independent, more critical and more open to sustainable tourism; they have quite an ear for local specificities, they want to socialize and, in their search for a destination, do not only rely on official sources. They exchange their own experiences with each other on social networks, which enables them a clearer search for their own interests, and they are pioneers in discovering new destinations, which they later gladly return to.

Schoolchildren in Slovenia (from both primary and high schools) have their excursions planned in advance and organized within the official educational programme. Students are independent and they want to discover the world on their own, i.e. travelling in smaller groups with their friends. Young tourists in primary schools travel across their homeland, high school children go to the neighbouring and closer foreign states, whereas students travel to faraway destinations, too. Children from primary schools and high schools have one-to-four-day-long excursions, while students mainly stay between two and four weeks, wishing to explore every single detail in a new environment on their journeys.

The primary school system of Slovenia anticipates on average ten days or so of outdoor activities for each class for the purpose of broadening their knowledge of the different subject matters taught at school. These are three one-day excursions related to culture (visiting museums, galleries, going to concerts, etc.), three are related to learning about nature (getting to know nature better, preserving the environment, geography) and three excursions are technical, all of them done throughout Slovenia. Apart from the mentioned one-day excursions, the so-called schools in nature also represent a significant form of educational child tourism. Each school is obliged to organize at least two schools in nature for each generation, and, once agreed upon between them and the parents who would finance excursions, even more.

Schools in nature are an organized form of education carried out for several days during the school year and outside school, typically in a natural environment. The concept of school in nature has been confirmed by the Expert Council for Education of the Ministry for School and Sport. According to the concept, the school alone is the one to organize the realization of the programme of school in nature after receiving the consent of the parents. It is important that such programmes interconnect several different contents and that they should be implemented differently from what is done in a classic school class: fieldwork, project assignments, sport activities, etc. So, it is about interconnecting several school subjects and integrating knowledge from different fields, as well as connecting with the environment where a school in nature is organized. In that way, the sustainability and quality of the adopted knowledge and one’s capability of observing natural and social environments are increased, social and communication skills and tolerance are encouraged, and creativity and critical opinion are developed. Children are trained in how to solve different problems, they develop a positive relationship with nature and the environment, learn about a healthy way of living, acquire responsibility for their own safety and health, develop their capabilities of interconnecting different areas and of solving daily practical tasks. Through such a complex yet creative concept, they tread their path for lifelong learning. A large part of the mentioned programmes are conducted at the centres for school and outdoor activities.

High school educational tourism is mainly organized in the neighbouring countries (Croatia, Austria, Italy, Hungary, as well as Germany, Czech Republic, etc.). Journeys are organized for all classes and last from one to four days. On their journeys, pupils take part in various activities, ranging from those related to getting to know nature to technical, cultural, historical ones and so forth. They are organized by schools themselves, and they are conducted by tourist agencies, offering professional support during the realization of the programme and providing tourist guides. Groups are usually accommodated at hostels for young people. According to the law, there is at least one professional attendant for every 15 pupils. Pedagogues mainly
perform evaluation through different questionnaires, which are filled out by pupils during and after their excursions.

It can be concluded that in Slovenia, child and youth tourism is very well-developed, with a powerful expert ground, prepared by the Expert Council for Education of the Ministry for School and Sport, and in many cases conducted by experts trained in pedagogical matters, who offer children new knowledge in a creative and interesting manner. According to studies, the knowledge acquired in that way lasts much longer than knowledge acquired from classic teaching.
In 1992, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia established the Centre for School and Outdoor Education (CŠOD), specializing in the implementation of the programme of school in nature and other programmes in nature. The basic mission of CŠOD is to help schools conduct school in nature, and the main goal – to educate children in nature by applying special methods through which the goals of the curricula are realized.

When the Republic of Slovenia declared its independence in 1991, CŠOD was given several military buildings in the vicinity of the state border and several village schools to use. Those buildings were later reconstructed so that they could be used as centres for school in nature, and the building of new facilities began. Currently, there are 14 daily centres and 23 homes for several-day stays. The capacity of the centres ranges from 55 to 65, with three centres equipped with more than 100 beds.

CŠOD obtains means for its activities from the Ministry of Education (salaries, a large part of their equipment, maintenance, and partially for infrastructural reconstructions as well). For that reason, one part of the price for the accommodation of pupils paid by their parents is very acceptable – currently, the costs of accommodation, food and programmes (for five days) charged to parents come to 58.80 euros per pupil.

In that way, all children in Slovenia attend school in nature – at least twice during their education.

CŠOD’s buildings are used by preschool, primary school and high school groups (around 45,000 pupils a year, which is, annually, 60 percent of the total number of pupils).

School in nature programme at CŠOD

School in nature lasts from Monday to Friday, in the period from 1st September to 25th June. For younger children, the school also organizes three-day programmes. The Centre for School and Outdoor Education does not only help schools organize school in nature but also helps them implement the content. The programme offered already includes teaching goals of certain school subjects and all-day-long organization: in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening.

The Centre develops an interdisciplinary programme in cooperation with experts of the National Education Institute of the Republic of Slovenia, the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Sport. Usually, it includes the topics which should be perceived from a natural, social and sport viewpoint.

The different interdisciplinary programmes a school can choose are as follows:

- Škola u prirodi sa akcentom na prirodnim naukama (upoznavanje prirode, tehnika, biologija, fizika, hemija i obrazovanje o životnoj sredini). Deo programa je namenjen sportskim aktivnostima.
- School in nature with an accent on natural sciences (learning about nature, technique, biology, physics, chemistry, and education on the living environment). One part of the programme is intended for sport activities.
- School in nature with an accent on social sciences (society, history, geography, ethnology). The programme also includes creative workshops and sport activities.
- School in nature with an accent on sport – skiing (alpine skiing, ski running and snow activities).
- School in nature with an accent on sport – swimming.
- Activity days. The daily centres organize different activity days: a day for teaching in nature, a day for culture, or a technical day (lasting from four to six hours).
- Apart from the technical personnel, in each of the centres there are two teachers of natural sciences and two sports instructors, who are in charge of the implementation of the programmes.
- The centres are equipped with teaching programmes and equipment for:
  - sport (climbing walls, swimming equipment, kayaks and canoes, raft, bicycles, alpine skis, skis for running, horses, GPS, etc.);
  - research and experimental work (chemical substances, thermometers, anemometers, microscopes, magnifying glasses, meters, etc.);
  - astronomy and geology (telescopes, geological hammers, etc.).

Geographically and culturally, Slovenia is a very heterogeneous state (the Alps, the Mediterranean Basin, the Pannonian Plain and the Dinaric Alps). Since the CŠOD’s homes are scattered throughout the state, the participants can get to know a completely different environment from the one they live in.
Other programmes and activities at CSOD's homes

In the summer, when there are no schoolchildren groups, summer programmes with thematic weeks are organized: language week, visual arts workshops, research camps, sports week, mountaineering week and survive-in-nature week. Individuals apply. The program is realized by CSOD's employed teachers together with external associates (e.g. language teachers).

In the period when there are no school groups, the CSOD homes turn into homes or hostels for groups of young people and other groups realizing their programme, or, upon agreement, homes can also organize part of the programmes for them.

International cooperation

The Centre for School and Outdoor Education is also involved in different European Union projects. Each year, a youth exchange is organized with Germany, Norway and France. Currently, together with five European countries, it is involved in the RWL (Real World Learning) Project, which deals with the development of green competencies and green jobs.

Furthermore, it is involved in the EOE (European Institute of Outdoor Education), a network of organizations dealing with open-air programmes (universities, centres like CSOD, private organizations). The majority of organizations in that network are from Western and Northern Europe. Their members socialize at annual conferences and shared projects, and exchange their ideas and examples of good practice.

Conclusion

The system of school in nature in Slovenia is amongst the most developed systems in Europe: it is completely integrated into the school system and is organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, and has educated and specialized teachers and instructors.

A need for a special study programme, i.e. a department or a faculty for the studies of teaching in nature, has been more and more expressed.

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SLOVENIA

INDIVIDUAL BEST PRACTICES

EDUCATION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL AND HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS AND STUDENTS IN VELENJE

Location
The town of Velenje is located in Šalek Valley, 81 kilometres north-east of the capital city of Ljubljana, and 25 km away from Celje, the centre of the Savinjska Region. Velenje is one of the Slovenian towns characterized by having undergone the most tumultuous development over the past 100 years. The was firstly due to mining, later followed by the construction of a large thermal power plant in nearby Šoštanj and, finally, the development of the Gorenje home appliances factory into an industrial giant.

The citizens living in Šalek Valley were faced with all forms of pollution and degradation of the area. Yet they have managed to substantially mitigate the negative impacts of the energy industry, industry and other human activities on the living environment.

The target group are primary school and high school pupils of different ages.

Tourist-educational programmes
The mine of Velenje has a 135-year-long tradition and is one of the most technologically developed ones in the world. The mine has been awarded a special European award for the sightseeing programme for children and adults. Within a special educational centre, additional programmes for child groups of different ages are carried out, in which children and young people are offered a sightseeing tour of the mine.

Children are given special equipment and helmets for the pithead, where they first discover the old part of the museum (the waxwork figures showing the life of miners and their work in the mines 100 years ago). In the lowest dining room in the world, they eat a miner's snack, and then proceed to the new part, where they are informed about work in mines today. In the end, they watch a film on the life of miners and their customs, and take a tour of an original miner's house; they can also take part in different workshops dedicated to the energy industry and ecology, as well as in the programmes connected to the living environment and the energy industry, where special attention is dedicated to energy savings and waste management.

They are also able to go on a tour of the Šoštanj Thermal Power Plant and the central facility for the purification of municipal waters. Children become familiar with the consequences of the exploitation of natural resources and energy and industrial pollution and the ways of mitigating them, and in the field, they can see the degradation of the area as well as examples of successful recoveries and improvements in the natural environment. As part of a special programme, they learn about waste management, collection centres, harmless waste dumps and so forth.

The organizer of the education is ERICO, an enterprise for the provision of services in the field of the living environment, which has successfully been designing solutions to problems connected to the living environment for its clients.

Accommodation capacities
The Velenje youth hotel is 500m from the centre of Velenje and the main bus station. Completely renovated and attractive, it is a 58-bed facility with twin-bed to six-bed rooms. In their free time, guests can visit the Centre for Young People, which is located in the same building. Guests can also arrange to have their meals in the nearby restaurant.

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KAJA AND GROM RANCH

Location
Vojnik, Styria (near Celje)
The ranch is located on an estate of 4.5 hectares, at 325 m above-sea level. It is a green oasis in the middle of the forest which some call a dome of peace – because it ensures emotional and spiritual peace, nature is treated with respect and old values are cherished. The target group are preschool and school children and adults.

For 24 years now, the Kaja and Grom Ranch has been thought of as a space where people and animals can establish contact with each other and spend time coexisting. The ranch offers one-day and several-day educational programmes related to the ethology of horses, understanding animals and working with them, nature and children. For that very reason, their guests are mainly children, but there are adult guests as well. It is a special enjoyment for all those who love animals, nature and mythical creatures that will reveal the secrets of the world of kind dwarfs to them.

Tourist-educational programmes
The ranch offers different programmes. The Equility programme (5 days) is intended for all those (of 8 years of age) who, while riding horses, want to experience the enjoyment of playing with a horse. It is grounded on regular work with a horse, forming a friendly connection with a horse and a horse’s correct care. Equility is the basis – playing with a horse (like Agility in the dogs’ world), a special and new discipline in Slovenia. Children get to know a horse (the ethology of horses): how horses “speak”, see, hear and think, what their habits are and how they should be communicated and worked with: how to safely approach a horse, petting a horse, learning to ride a horse, brushing, the cleaning and treatment of mane, the tail and hooves, taking daily care of horses and the stable...On the last day, children show their parents all they have been taught.

For preschool children, half-day outings are organized for socializing with domestic animals. Here children learn how to communicate with animals, feed them, pet them and so forth.

Since the autumn of 2013, the ranch has also been used as an advisory centre for educating adults who want to work with children through contact with animals and nature.

Accommodation capacities
Guests can be accommodated in warm wooden houses, capable of hosting no more than three families. For school groups or seminar participants, the ranch offers 20 wooden beds in 3- or 9-bed rooms as well as a room with 8 unusual beds made from beech branches.

Contact:
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SKANSEN PLETERJE OPEN-AIR MUSEUM

Location
The museum is a gem when it comes to the presentation of exhibits of human residential heritage in Lower Carniola, Slovenia. It is in the immediate vicinity of the only Carthusian monastery in Eastern Europe that is still active – the Monastery of Pleterje. It is a place where old customs are rekindled and the life in households in wooden buildings covered with straw, as they used to look like in 1833, is demonstrated. Domestic and foreign visitors are made familiar with the past of the Slovenian predecessors and they build their respect for Slovenian roots and cultural heritage.

The target groups are primary school and high school pupils.
The open-air museum is suitable for different groups of visitors from educational institutions, tourists and domestic and foreign business partners as well as for organizing different events, which are prearranged and comply with the rules applied at the monastery.

Tourist-educational programmes
The programme is designed so as to take the visitor into a completely different world of the past – the world of forgotten values and tradition, local food and modest living in difficult circumstances. Visitors are able to experience something they cannot experience in their everyday lives and they are offered an alternative in the sense of spending their free time in a more quality way as well as the possibility to learn the different handicrafts of our predecessors.
The open-air museum is suitable for different activities, and the buildings are available for various activities such as seminars, conferences, lectures, courses, workshops, learning about old crafts and works, performances and festivals in the open air.
The museum offers children an unforgettable experience in nature. There is a household in the forest itself: a wooden house with a field kitchen and accompanying facilities, a fruit-drying facility, a wooden well, the so-called “kozolec” (a facility for drying and storing hay), a pigsty, and an outdoor toilet. Various domestic animals are also a special attraction. Different workshops for children are organized: clay and straw workshops where they make clay vessels and learn how a straw roof is made, an old village games competition, a bread making workshop, where the elderly Sonja kneads dough and bakes bread in a traditional bakery while recounting to the children stories about how people used to live in the village 200 years ago.

The Pletarje Open-Air Museum Project increases the quality of life and the progress of the population, especially young people, whose national awareness is encouraged through different activities, and influences them to grow into responsible individuals who respect their own past.

Contact:
There is no possibility of spending a night there, so only one-day tours are organized.
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RINKA CENTRE, SOLČAVA

Location
Solčavsko also belongs to the charming regional specificities of the Alps. The Solčavsko region is surrounded by the mountains of the Kamnik-Savinja Alps, over 2,000 metres high. The three most famous Alpine valleys are: Logarska Valley, Robanov kot Valley and Matkov kot Valley. In the village of Solčava, RINKA CENTRE – a multipurpose centre for the sustainable development of Solčavsko – was opened in 2011. The Rinka Centre and the Institute for Tourism and Sustainable Development (DMO), in cooperation with partners and experts, carry out practical education in sustainable development and a sustainable way of living.

Target groups:
• preschool children,
• primary school children (up to the 5th grade),
• primary school children (from the 5th to the 9th grades),
• students,
• adults.

Tourist-educational programmes
Preschool and school children are offered diverse activities: the Fairy Tale Forest in Logarska Valley, thematic exhibitions, educational strolls in the park of nature and along the ethnographic path, didactic games in nature, the dramatization of local stories and fairy tales, mountain camps, ethno-animation, workshops and games in nature... Students have at their disposal workshops related to sustainable development, education and other interests.

Adults are offered experiential learning in the forest and on the estates, workshops in nature – meals in the wilderness, sustainable development in the municipality, wool pressing workshops and team building programmes related to local themes and sustainable development in practice of Sločavski among other activities.

Accommodation capacities
In tourist households, the hotel, boards and lodgings, inns or mountain homes, guests can find a peaceful and snug cranny for them to stay in and comfortably explore Solčavski and educate themselves in sustainable development. The hotel has 65 beds, the boards and lodgings and inns have 106 beds (in five buildings), there are 300 beds on the rural estates and private rooms, and 68 beds in the mountain houses (in three buildings).

Big groups are accommodated in two or three neighbouring buildings. The programmes are carried out in groups of 20 people each, and can be designed to last from one to five days, depending on the type of programme and the interests of the participants.

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Instead of the conclusions of the previous presentation, we consider it worthwhile to refer to the themes and recommendations highlighted during the final panel discussion of the participants of the workshop on child and youth educational tourism, organized in February 2013 as part of the project implementation.

The workshop participants pointed out the fact that, at that moment, Serbia is facing big challenges in developing child and youth educational tourism with respect to lacking certain things, i.e. due to the unfavourable regulatory framework. The gap between the factual state of the matter and the potential performances of child and youth and educational tourism as a product is, in the context of current regulations, unbridgeable at this moment. The enormous potential and the initiative existing as a result of individual and joint efforts (like the initiative to establish the “Educational Tourism of Serbia” cluster) can become a victim of the lack of a concept and a framework for development which must be defined at an adequate level – the competent ministries, i.e. the Government of the Republic of Serbia.

The development concept would have to define a clear principle and a manner of external evaluation (a sort of programme accreditation) as well as clear directions regarding the development of this type of tourist offer, given the sensitivity of the target groups.

The participants from Slovenia indicated that the systemic solution came during the implementation of the Project, which had been lasting for 5 years. In that way, the challenge of defining an adequate framework for the development of child and youth tourism was found a solution, with a special focus on the educational component. On the other side, there was the clusterization of interests and the articulation of the common interest. In that context, the cluster comprising service providers, faculties, the Agency for Education Improvement, and the Slovenian Ministry of Education, which was crucial for the success of the project, also actively supported the initiative for having child and youth educational tourism adequately regulated (by a Law). As a result, the concept of school in nature was defined in 2000, and the system and network of resorts was established, functioning as the Centre of School and Outdoor Education today.

The Italian experiences are indicative of the fact that innovativeness in the defining and offering child and youth educational tourism programmes is certainly ahead of the regulation, which is still “lagging” behind practice. In that sense, the concept of the so-called “educational farms”, which first offered appropriate programmes only to later apply for an appropriate accreditation / permission from the competent institutions, is indicative.

It is particularly highlighted that in Italy the interaction between the programmes offered in child and youth educational tourism in a rural environment and agricultural producers themselves, i.e. agricultural enterprises and homesteads, bears exceptional importance. In the further concept of the development of these programmes, this would have to become an indelible component because it has shown itself to be making extremely good results.

As far as the situation in Croatia, where youth tourism has been developing in an organized manner for one hundred years or so, it is concerned, it was concluded that in order for child and youth educational tourism to develop, the expansion of hosteling – which enables young people to have easy access to destinations and experiences – is also of exceptional significance in addition to the cooperation of educational institutions with service providers in tourism. In Croatia, tourist agencies specializing in child and young people’s travel, as well as their cooperation with an increasing number of destinations representing good practices in view of innovative tourist products, also play a significant role.

One of the clear recommendations is that the profiling and articulation of the initiative for children and youth tourism should be realized through the cluster of service providers and other interested subjects because that has provided us with good results in other areas. Apart from its basic activity dedicated to the defining and improvement of the regulatory framework, the cluster would also be a sort of destination inside the borders of individual countries. Additionally, membership in the European and world networks supportive of the development of children and youth educational tourism is also cited as an important step.

The clear defining of a public-private partnership model in the realization of a very specific product, as child and youth tourism is in question, is also an important dimension. This is particularly important having in view the fact that, when funding is concerned, the majority of programmes only have extremely limited financial support and mainly rely on their own strengths.

In terms of activities that are possible to conduct in the short-term, the following stand out in particular:

- Exchange of experiences between the countries engaged in the project is the key to success and a path to more efficiently overcoming existing challenges. In that context, one of the possibilities also includes the creation of a regional “supercluster” whose task would be to ensure the exchange of the knowledge and experiences between members, as well as to ensure support in finding solutions to barriers in the realization of the development concept. Having in view the existing situation, it is possible to initiate such cooperation in the domain of youth tourism by creating appropriate exchange programmes;

- In the period to come, a SWOT analysis should be carried out and needs for development programmes in the member countries should be clearly defined / by implementing experience exchange programmes;

- The programme of experience exchange (gaining) (capacity building) on educational farms should have such a concept that appropriate workshops with teachers are established first, then animators are included and then only in the end – the children as the programme users;

- People who have been trained become sort of ambassadors of the idea they are spreading further, thus widening the circle of those who approve of/are supportive of the idea; they actually become promoters of new policies and regulations.

In the medium-term, i.e. in the 2014-2020 programme period, attention should also be paid to the following aspects of the development of projects, taking into account the bottom-up approach which is, in any case, a critical factor for the success of initiatives in children and youth educational tourism:

- To clearly define the issue of project co-funding;

- To clearly elaborate the sustainability aspects of initiatives/projects;

- To recognize the possibility of cooperation within the existing EU programmes and instruments;

- To define the possibilities of developing a common product and joint marketing within the “supercluster”.

The experiences of the countries involved in the project are different and they are the result of substantially different developmental circumstances in the previous period. It is clear that the situation and perspectives in Italy, as a long-standing European Union member country, to a great extent differ from the other countries in the project. Although
essentially there is a similar starting basis, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia have been achieving this development in different directions and at a different pace, for which reason the current situation and possibilities are significantly different, too. Having in view the alleged differences, the project clearly recognizes that they do not represent an obstacle to future cooperation but they open the door to the possibility of intensifying the development of child and youth educational tourism in interested destinations in the territory where the project is being conducted, irrespective of the country.
ALONG THE PATHS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH
DISCOVERING THE REGION

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