

Sports Camps at the Secondary School of Civil Engineering, Land Surveying and Environmental Studies Ljubljana, Slovenia

It is well-known fact that it is important to do sports in all stages of life, but that is especially true in the early developmental stages. The issue is that the youth today seem to be spending more and more time on electronic devices and less of their free time engaging in physical activities. That is problematic as doing sports helps the youth develop their motoric abilities, strengthen the body and its vital organs, enhance the cardiovascular and immune system, acquire social skills, bring psychological relaxation, and many other benefits. Today's youngsters are missing out on all the advantages of sports!

At the Secondary School of Civil Engineering, Land Surveying, and Environmental Studies Ljubljana (SGGOŠ) we try hard to offer our first-year students additional sporting activities outside their school curriculum by organizing sports camps.

When doing sports at school, we are limited to the sports hall and stadium. Therefore there is a lot of sports we are not able to introduce to our students within the school's context. That is a shame, as there are many sports which would be interesting and engaging for our students, but they are not given a chance to practice them. The school is especially concerned with children from financially disadvantaged families. We want to make sure that they get a chance to get to know less accessible sports and travel to beautiful Slovenian nature. At our school, we have students from very diverse backgrounds, who do not know our country well.

Sports camps are a great opportunity to give students a chance to do sports in a great environment. We organize sports camps in nature to raise awareness about the importance of sustainability and nature conservation. We want to teach them about a healthy lifestyle, food diet, Internet addiction and provide them with an environment where students can interact with their schoolmates in a more relaxed atmosphere without electronic devices. The focus of camps is improving students' motor skills, stamina, coordination, physical strength, balance.

Our project SPORTS CAMPS has been carried out four times so far and has proven to bring great benefits to our students. My colleague and I, both physical education teachers, have successfully organized the camps with the help of the headmaster and made sure, that camps were affordable, interactive, and engaging.

2016 Fiesa

The first camp was organized in Fiesa in 2016. This two-day camp took place in ČŠOD Breženka (hostel for students), where they offer affordable half board accommodation and free use of sport equipment.

This location is close to the coast and therefore students had a chance to try out water sports. Surprisingly, many students have never been to the seaside before!

Sports activities:



Swimming

Upon the arrival, students took a swimming test. Those with enough skills were allowed to swim freely and independently.

Stand-up paddleboarding (SUP)

Students, who were confident swimmers, were able to try out SUP-ing across the bay. This activity helped them improve their balance and coordination.

In the afternoon on the first day the students were divided in two groups: one group went **canoeing** along the coast and the second group participated in an **orientation hike** – students hiked around the lake. In Fiesa, there is a freshwater lake, which is an important habitat for diverse range of animals and plants. The students first listened to a short lecture on the nature and life and the lake and then had to fill out a handout.



In the morning of the second day some students tried **archery**, while the other half played sports on the court – like **basketball** and **badminton**.



In the afternoon (day 2), students went on a **hike** along the coast. They observed a mussel (shellfish) farm and salt evaporating ponds in Strunjan, where they learnt about salt panning in the past and how the tradition is being preserved today.



Other activities

In the evening students attended a lecture on healthy diet and a workshop on cooking mussels. After dinner they went for a walk to the city centre.



2017 Kranjska gora

In 2017 our students attended a sports camp in Kranjska gora.

This Slovenian city is in the Alps and therefore we decided to organize a camp, focused on aerobic sports.

Our students attended the following activities:

- **Cycling**
- **Hiking**
- **Trim track**

In the morning (day 1) the students were divided in two groups.

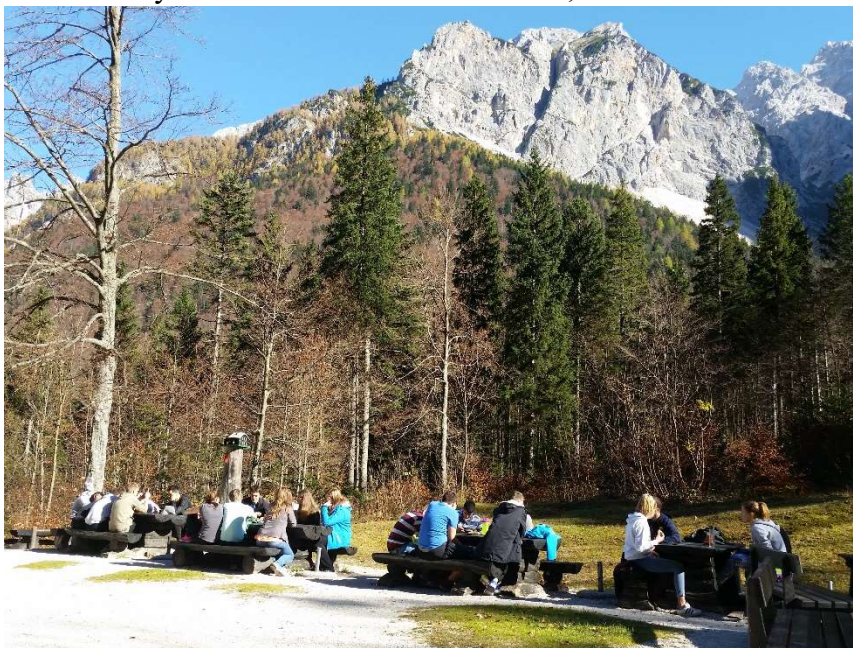
The first group trained on a trim track, where students attempted to complete the track with strength training exercises as fast as possible. They improved their stamina and strength.

The second group did a cycling trip (10km) in the direction of Planica. In the afternoon the groups switched.



In the evening the students socialized, sang and danced.

The next day students hiked towards Krnica, the most beautiful Alpine valley in Slovenia.



2018 Portorož

In 2018 our students attended a seaside sports camp in Portorož.

Our students attended the following activities:

- **Cycling**
- **Swimming**
- **Hiking**

On the first day students took the swimming test. This test is especially important to us because our students come from diverse financial and ethnic backgrounds and they have very different levels of knowledge. In Slovenian elementary schools swimming course is obligatory, but that is not necessarily true in foreign school systems. Beginner swimmers were identified and advised additional swimming courses.

Students were divided in two groups. The first group went swimming and the second group participated in a cycling trip along the coast and neighbouring hills.



On the second day students hiked from Portorož to Strunjan salt pans (3km). Students improved their stamina and got a breath of fresh sea air.



2019 Ankaran

In 2019 we have organized our last sports camp. Our students travelled to Ankaran where they attended the following water sports activities:

- **Kayaking**
- **SUP-ing**
- **Swimming**
- **Jumping into the water**
- **Hiking**
- **Football**

On the first day students swam, tried SUP-ing and learnt how to kayak. In the afternoon they played football and explored surrounding under guidance of a local.





In the evening students attended a lecture on addiction to electronic devices. After the lecture, students were asked to put their phone devices in a box and locked them all in teachers' closet. Some students demanded phones back before going to bed, while others persisted until the morning. We were raising awareness about how dangerous and how common phone addiction is.

After the lecture a social evening was organized. Students played board games (Monopoli, Activity ...) and attended a camp dance in a hall.

On the second day, the students hiked along the coast. They also visited nature reserve Škocjanski zatok, where they learnt about diverse regional flora and fauna and the importance of nature conservation.



GOALS ACCOMPLISHED

At the sports camps the following goals were accomplished:

- Students developed their motor abilities (strength, stamina, endurance, balance, coordination, precision, flexibility ...)
- Students strengthened their muscles, heart, cardiovascular system, breathing muscles, immune system ...
- Students increased their lungs' volume and joint firmness and flexibility.
- Through lectures and workshops, students learned about a healthy lifestyle, dangers of obesity, and potential social media addiction.
- By being active students improved their concentration and mental capacity, which resulted in better studying ability.
- Through sports activities, students built their self-confidence and positive self-image.
- At the sports camp students were able to relax, develop their social skills, and practiced being more tolerant of others.
- Students tried and practiced new sports.

We have received very positive feedback from our students – after the sports camp, they were very tired but incredibly satisfied.

In the year 2020, we were sadly not able to organize a sports camp due to a global pandemic, but we are confident that we will carry out successfully with this project as soon as the situation improves.

Author: Bojana Carli Arsović
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