



Water, Biodiversity and Climate Change Studies in International Schools Network of the Park Škocjan Caves, Slovenia

Vanja Debevec Gerjevic

Park Škocjanske jame, Slovenia, Department for Research and Development, Divaca, Slovenia (vanja.debevec@psj.gov.si)

As UNESCO World Heritage Site, Ramsar Site and Biosphere Reserve the Park Škocjan Caves strongly believes in development of quality educational programme in order to fulfill the guidelines of international conventions and also provide for awareness and development in the future.

Ten years ago we started with water analysis projects and performed several projects related to natural, cultural and social aspect of water protection. We developed a special model of training the teachers and educating the children. Together we have accomplished two international projects, two national project and several research projects dealing with The Reka river and karst phenomena.

In 2003 we officially established the schools network, where we join in research education programmes five elementary schools from Slovenia and two from Italy. They are all located beside the surface and underground flow of the Reka River. Fifteen teachers and more than hundred children are involved in educational programme every year.

Our work in the schools network enables us to bring science to society in a comprehensive way including the scientists and their work in preparation and implementation of projects.

With teachers help we promote science studies but also encourage children to do social projects in order to keep intergeneration connections and gain knowledge of past experience and life from our grandparents.

The paper will present the role of protected area in public awareness and education with special emphasis on natural phenomena of water in the Karst region as a toll for joint work in the field for scientists and school children. Chemical and biological analysis of the Reka River and other water bodies will be presented and accompanied with the biodiversity survey and climate change research projects. New approach of performing the research studies and presentation of results for schoolchildren will be explained.