

GeoCamp Iceland - Annual Report 2023



GeoSchool - GeoCamp Iceland is an educational institution and tour operator, established in 2006, with the objective to increase knowledge and understanding in Earth sciences through practical and active learning.

We develop educational content, student and teacher guides, organize and receive international study groups of high-school, secondary school and college students, as well as teacher groups focusing on STEM education, geology, geography, natural science, climate change and renewable energy. We are a founding partner of Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark and an authorized tour operator and travel agency holding license pursuant to the Icelandic Tourism Administration Act.

General Overview of 2023

For close to twenty years, GeoCamp Iceland has offered customized study tours for educational institutions, where the participants benefit from our personal network, background in education, contacts with Icelandic educational and research institutions within the field, and experience in receiving international study groups.

The location of GeoCamp Iceland on the Reykjanes peninsula offers easy access to geological sites of interest, geothermal pools, vast lava fields and unspoiled cave formations. The area is also close to accessible glacial valleys, rivers and spectacular waterfalls, as well as vast uninhabited nature, all within a couple of hours drive from the airport.



In 2023 a total of more than two-hundred high-school, college and university students, as well as close to fifty teachers and professors, attended GeoCamp Iceland study tours in Iceland. This included participants from four colleges, three universities and two high-schools as well as national and international organizations. The main travel periods were from May to August, along with a couple of groups arriving in October, with a combined 95 days of activities.

A key part in our development is to actively participate in educational projects dedicated to increasing knowledge and understanding in natural sciences with practical and active learning. Along with receiving international study groups of secondary school, college and university students, as well as teacher groups - we develop educational content, student and teacher guides and curricula, focusing on

STEM education, promotion of natural sciences, awareness of climate change and use of renewable energy.

Through these activities GeoCamp Iceland participates in regional, national and international educational projects, research development and training opportunities, with primary focus on developing teacher and student curricula as well as producing training material for outdoor science education and STEM related training activities.



GeoCamp Iceland is lead partner in two international projects (*Green Advisor* and *HEDA*) as well as participants in seven other transnational projects.

- *Erasmus+ Green Advisor*
- *Erasmus+ UpCycling*
- *Erasmus+ Project: Bridges - European Recovery Strategies for Education after Covid-19*
- *Erasmus+ HEDA Project*
- *Erasmus+ KA3: ACADIMIA - Teacher Training Academy*
- *EEA Project: GEOCAMP - supporting geology teaching towards active citizenship (CZ)*
- *EEA Project: Geothermal activity in Lipik (HR)*
- *EEA Project: EOG - Technologies of the future in today's school (PL)*
- *EEA Project: STEM in Croatian schools (HR)*

Four international projects were completed in 2023. GeoCamp was a project partner in several applications in the year, with one new project starting in the year - the three-year Erasmus+ KA3 Project *ACADIMIA*. GeoCamp Iceland is a founding member of Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark and sits on the board of the organization. We are members of both Reykjanes and Hafnarfjörður Marketing Offices.

Staff

The staff of GeoCamp Iceland included one full-time and one half-time employee, as well as two contractors. In addition, the company had close to twenty short term contractors both in connection with international project work and tour operations in Iceland.

- **Arnbjörn Ólafsson** (Managing Director)

Arnbjorn has extensive experience in managing and cooperating in transnational projects. He has a background in international cooperation with institutions, networks and projects, especially within North America, the EU and Nordic countries. Arnbjorn is a board member of Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark and has been involved in various international committees and groups, e.g. the Nordic Council of Ministers, European Union educational activities, representative for Iceland at CEDEFOP – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training 2003 - 2007.

- **Sigrún Svafa Ólafsdóttir** (Project Coordinator)

Sigrún Svafa is the project coordinator. She is a teacher on adult and secondary school level and one of the frontrunners of introducing flipped learning in Iceland. She also serves as a mentor for new teachers in Keilir Academy, guiding them how to start flipping for the first time, as well as working on developing innovative teaching methods.

- **Magdalena Maria Poslednik** (Project Manager)

Magdalena is a contracted staff member of GeoCamp Iceland with focus on logistics and marketing, as well as project management of the Green Advisor Project. Magdalena focuses on educational development and tourism. She has previously been responsible for international cooperation and developing educational services within Icelandic education, with an emphasis on less privileged groups of people, including immigrants.

- **Ólafur Jón Arnbjörnsson** (Director)

Ólafur specializes in education, teaching methods and curriculum design. Besides teaching on all levels of education for twenty years, he has been study counselor and assistant principal at Saudarkrókur Comprehensive College, principal at Egilstaðir College and principal at Sudunes Comprehensive College from 1994-2010. Founder and chairman of the board of the first center for lifelong learning in Iceland (MSS), founder and principal of the Icelandic College of Fisheries. Founder of the Nordic Network of Fisheries Colleges, board member and chairman of the Association of Secondary School Principals, Association of Vocational Schools, and the VET schools textbook publishing Company. On the board of the Association of Schools, Industry and Unions.

Educational groups in Iceland

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GeoCamp Iceland study tours in 2023

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- *North-Western Michigan College for eight days in May (18 participants)*
- *Northwood College for seven days in May (12 participants)*
- *Marist College for two weeks in late May and early June (19 participants)*
- *University of Nebraska - Lincoln in June (15 participants)*
- *University of Southern Maine in late May and early June (16 participants)*
- *NCGE - National Council for Geography Education in late June and early July (21 participants)*
- *Westchester University in July (12 participants)*
- *Dickinson College in August (13 participants)*
- *NCGE - Alumni in October (12 participants)*
- *SIT - Study Abroad, two groups in four sessions, June and July for six days (48 participants)*
- *Thisted Gymnasium from Denmark in October for five days (29 participants)*

International Projects

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- *Erasmus+ Green Advisor*

- Erasmus+ UpCycling
- Erasmus+ Project: Bridges - European Recovery Strategies for Education after Covid-19
- Erasmus+ HEDA Project
- Erasmus+ KA3: ACADIMIA - Teacher Training Academy
- EEA Project: GEOCAMP - supporting geology teaching towards active citizenship (CZ)
- EEA Project: Geothermal activity in Lipik (HR)
- EEA Project: EOG - Technologies of the future in today's school (PL)
- EEA Project: STEM in Croatian schools (HR)

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STEM Projects in Croatia

A big part of GeoSchool's activities is concentrated on incorporating digital skills and readiness in STEM related learning activities on all educational levels - from primary school to adult and continuing education. GeoSchool centers around STEM development in Iceland with primary focus on developing educational material as well as participation in international development projects.



Projects - Funds & Grants

GeoCamp Iceland received funding from four EEA supported projects and four Erasmus+ supported projects in 2023. Additionally we received grants allocated by other organizations and institutions in Iceland.

Tourbit

GeoCamp was one of 62 tourism SMEs in several European countries that received European project grant to support digital transformation process. In February 2023, the Tourbit project launched a call for proposals for tourism SMEs aiming to finance innovative digitisation projects for tourism SMEs located in Belgium, Catalonia (Spain), France, Iceland, Lapland (Finland), Portugal and Slovenia. The call raised a lot of interest from the tourism sector as it received more than 230 applications. After a thorough evaluation process undergone with internal and external evaluators, the Tourbit partnership announced the name of the 62 tourism SMEs that will benefit during 10-months from the Tourbit Digital Acceleration Programme, including GeoCamp Iceland.

- <https://tourbit.eu/find-out-the-awarded-tourism-smes-of-the-tourbit-digital-acceleration-programme/>
- <https://www.lapinamk.fi/news/A-European-project-supports-digitalisation-of-62-tourism-SMEs-in-several-European-countries/29358/e99c7b65-340a-4762-822a-0d62867256f2>

CE4RT

In November GeoCamp Iceland was one of 80 European SMEs which were awarded an EUR 8,000 grant through the CE4RT programme for implementing sustainability strategies within the company. The main objective of CE4RT is to directly support SMEs in transitioning to a circular and regenerative tourism business model thus enabling the future resilience of this sector. This is a collaborative project supporting a network of tourism SMEs across five partner European countries in the areas of Sustainable Practice, the Circular Economy and Regenerative Tourism. <https://ce4rt.eu/project.site/>

GeoLab

GeoLab was supported by Sudurnes Municipalities Development Fund (Uppbyggingarsjóður SSS), and focused on development of educational material, guidelines and projects in outdoor education, as well as preparation for mobile research labs to use when receiving and teaching student groups in the field. With the grant, we were able to purchase a large number of microscopes and research equipment for students. This will be used for future student groups.

Conferences, Meetings, Marketing & Outreach

We took part in a number of conferences and meetings during the year, as well as attending marketing and public events.

- **14 - 15 April: Presentation at Conference on Natural Science Education**

Two day conference on natural science education in Iceland, where we presented our ideas of regional science camps, as well as STEM education within the Reykjanes Peninsula (<http://malthing.natturutorg.is/agrip-erinda>).

- **5 - 10 September (Morocco)**

Four representatives from GeoCamp Iceland attended the bi-annual GGN - Global Geopark Network Conference, in Marrakech.

- **23 - 24 October (Norway)**

Arnbjörn Ólafsson attended an EU supported COVE training seminar in Bergen as part of preparation of applying for centralized actions in May and June 2024. The participation was supported by the Icelandic National Agency.

- **26 - 29 October (United States)**

We attended the annual conference of NCGE - National Council for Geography Education in South Carolina, as well as scheduling meetings with the president of the council, the managing director of NCGE and representatives of the Virginia Alliance, regarding NCGE - GeoCamp Iceland group in the Summer 2024.

- **11 - 14 December (United States)**

We participated with an information booth at AGU - American Geophysical Union Annual Conference in San Francisco, attended by close to thirty-thousand guests.

Other transnational meetings

In addition GeoCamp Iceland representatives had meetings with the mayor's office of Lipovljani, Lipik Municipality and EIHP Energy Institution in Croatia, with marketing representatives in Italy, project preparation meetings in Belgium, Bulgaria, Italy, Denmark and the United States.

In the news

- **12 January 2023: Geothermal Project in Lipovljani**
<https://izvori-lipika.hr/en/2023/01/initial-conference-of-the-project-preparation-of-technical-documentation-for-the-lipik-research-area/>
- **17 February 2023: EEA Project in Poland**
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lnzKefgobRw>
- **25 May 2023: STEM Project in Lipovljani**
<https://rsminfo.hr/2023/05/razvoj-znanja-i-vestina-ucitelja-i-ucenika-kroz-modernizaciju-skolskog-prostora/>
- **26 May 2023: STEM Project in Lipovljani**
<https://www.radionovska.hr/zbivanja/istrazujuci-rastemo/>
- **10 July 2023: Geocamp in Ralsko Geopark**
<https://www.visitralsko.com/l/geocamp-kurz-terenni-vyuky-pro-pedagogy/>
- **14 July 2023: Geocamp in Ralsko Geopark**
<https://www.geoparkceskyraj.cz/cs/aktuality/geopark-unesco-cesky-raj-se-zucastnil-geocampu-v-narodnim-geoparku-ralsko.html>
- **27 July 2023: Geocamp in Ralsko Geopark**
<https://www.mitel-tv.cz/tiskove-zpravy/letni-skolu-geocamp-uspesne-zakoncilo-20-pedagogu-10420cs.html?ftresult=%C5%A0KOLA>
- **5 November 2023: STEM Project in Đakovo**
http://os-vnazor-dj.skole.hr/stemovci_u_borbi_za_spas_planeta_zemlje?news_hk=5909&news_id=2862&mshow=1761#mod_news
- **7 November 2023: Official visit to the mayor of Lipovljani**
<https://lipovljani.hr/vijesti/nacelnik-opcine-nikola-horvat-priredio-prijem-za-goste-s-islanda>
- **8 November 2023: STEM Project in Lipovljani**
https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&feature=youtu.be&si=ZKGSb7NTprdVwj_J&v=7jctZ_4qBXU&fbclid=IwAR3tdC-nOaK_JX13_L_YualaDHpyZi9D3W0NYf_htYVVA-dWYHKCB4aKba8&start=906
- **29 November 2023: EEA Project in Poland**
<https://technikum.infotech.edu.pl/2023/11/29/konferencja-edukacja-jutra/>

International Project Meetings

23 - 24 January (Finland)

Erasmus+ Green Advisor kick-off meeting in Turku. The meeting included two participants from GeoCamp Iceland. The "Green Advisor - Enhancing environmental sustainability of EU funded projects" is a three-years Erasmus+ Cooperation Partnership in the field of Adult Education that is coordinated by GeoCamp Iceland and involves partners from Spain, Italy, Turkey and Finland. The partnership will work together addressing the need to lower the environmental CO2 footprint that Erasmus+ projects generate. <https://www.geocamp.is/news/green-advisor-kick-off-meeting>



KICKOFF MEETING IN TURKU,
FINLAND
23RD AND 24TH OF JANUARY 2023



Co-funded by
the European Union



27 - 29 January (Greece)

Erasmus+ HEDA Project - Training of Trainers Workshop in Athens. The meeting included three participants on behalf of GeoCamp Iceland: Arnbjörn Ólafsson as Project Manager, as well as Álfhildur Leifsdóttir from Árskóli Elementary School and Siggeir Ævarsson from Grindavík Primary School.

<https://www.geocamp.is/news/heda-training-seminar>

16 - 17 February (Poland)

This was the fourth meeting in the EEA - EOG Project project which concluded with an open conference on the future technologies in education (<https://eog.infotech.edu.pl/home>). Four participants on behalf of GeoCamp Iceland attended the meeting: Arnbjörn Ólafsson, Magdalena Maria Poslednik, as well as Tryggvi Thayer from the University of Iceland and Bjarndís Fjóra Jónsdóttir from Mixtúra - STEM Centre in Reykjavík. <https://www.geocamp.is/news/eog-meeting-and-conference-in-poland>

20 - 21 March (Italy)

Fourth TPM of the Erasmus+ funded project *Bridges* took place in Bergamo in March 2023. During the meeting and accompanying conference, the Italian project partner presented their previous projects aimed at activating and inclusion of young people into educational processes. Additionally we took part in workshops on the topic of integration of disabled students, inclusion and social exclusion.

Participants on behalf of GeoCamp Iceland were Arnbjörn Ólafsson, Sigrún Svafa Ólafsdóttir, Magdalena Maria Poslednik and Skúli Freyr Brynjólfsson.

<https://www.geocamp.is/news/erasmus-bridges-meeting-in-italy>



19 - 21 April (Croatia)

As part of the EEA funded project on implementing STEM education in Croatian schools, a seven person delegation on behalf of GeoCamp Iceland took part in a three day meeting in the SMART-BICC Project (<https://smart-bizz.eu/en/>) in Budinščina, Croatia. During the meeting we had the opportunity to attend open day and workshops presented by students in April 2023. Attending the visit from GeoCamp Iceland were Arnbjörn Ólafsson, Ólafur Jón Arnbjörnsson, Sigrún Svafa Ólafsdóttir, Álfhildur Leifsdóttir (Árskóli Primary School), Nada Borosak (Álftanesskóli Primary School), Gauti Eiríksson (Álftanesskóli

Primary School) and Huld Haflíðadóttir (Husavík STEM Center).

<https://www.geocamp.is/news/bicc-stem-project-in-croatia>

24 - 25 April (Netherlands)

The third transnational partner meeting in the Erasmus+ funded project Upcycling, took place in Rotterdam in April 2023. The project is led by Reykjanes UNESCO Global Geopark and aims to create educational material on how to generate less waste and create value-added products in a creative way. Arnbjörn Ólafsson and Magdalena Maria Poslednik took part in the meeting on behalf of GeoCamp Iceland. <https://www.geocamp.is/news/third-tpm-in-the-upcycling-project>

26 - 28 April (Poland)

A five person delegation from GeoCamp Iceland participated in a training course in Białystok, Poland, as part of the EEA - EOG Project on [future technologies in education](#). The course focused on 'Modern methods and tools for effective distance learning' and took place on 26 - 28 April 2023, with 24 participants. The training course aimed to familiarize participants with the latest trends, technologies and good practices in the field of distance education. The aim is not only to impart knowledge, but also to inspire the implementation of modern solutions in everyday pedagogical work. During the three-day training, participants had the opportunity to participate in workshops, lectures and discussions with experienced practitioners and experts in the field of remote education. Participants on behalf of GeoCamp Iceland were Arnbjörn Ólafsson, Sigrún Svafa Ólafsdóttir, Magdalena Maria Poslednik, Skúli Freyr Brynjólfsson (Keilir Academy) and Tryggvi Thayer (University of Iceland).

<https://www.geocamp.is/news/eog-training-course-in-poland>



11 - 14 July (Czech Republic)

The final conference and teacher training activity in the EEA supported project "GEOCAMP - supporting geology teaching towards active citizenship" took place in the beautiful Ralsko Geopark in Czech

Republic in July 2023. The project introduced new and innovative teaching programmes and methods in the field of the sciences and geology to prepare teachers for the challenges of the future and act in the interests of environmental protection. The project was partnered by Ralsko Geopark and the Technical University of Liberec in the Czech Republic. Participants from GeoCamp Iceland were Arnbjörn Ólafsson, Margrét Soffía Björnsdóttir, Þuríður H. Aradóttir Braun (Visit Reykjanes) and Daníel Hjálmtýsson (Sudurnes Science and Learning Center).

<https://www.geocamp.is/news/eea-geocamp-project>

14 - 15 September (Italy)

The third HEDA transnational meeting took place in Rome, Italy on 14 - 15 September 2023. The meeting included all project partners and was arranged by Galileo. Main focus for the meeting was on teacher training activities, impact assessment and e-learning courses, as well as on general project management and dissemination activities. The HEDA Project proposes the introduction of art for the improvement of citizenship education in Europe, which will allow on the one hand to enhance the acquisition of social and civic competences, to foster knowledge, understanding and ownership of values and fundamental rights and on the other hand to enhance critical thinking among students and teachers. Participating partners from GeoCamp Iceland were Arnbjörn Ólafsson and Ólafur Jón Arnbjörnsson. <https://www.geocamp.is/news/third-transnational-heda-meeting>



12 - 14 October (Croatia)

In October we attended a three day meeting and introduction to the implementation of STEM activities in Sibinj Primary School in Croatia under the EEA supported project [Tesla's Room](#) - Working together for a green, competitive and inclusive Europe. The meeting and activities were attended by seven representatives from GeoCamp Iceland: Arnbjörn Ólafsson, Sigrún Svafa Ólafsdóttir, Drífa Hjördís

Thorstensen (Háaleitisskóli Primary School in Reykjanesbær), Hildur Sigfúsdóttir (Heiðarskóli Primary School in Reykjanesbær), Brynja Stefánsdóttir (Stapaskóli Primary School in Reykjanesbær, Sinéad McCarron (Landakotsskóli Primary School in Reykjavík and Daníel G. Hjálmtýsson (Sudurnes Science & Learning Center). <https://www.geocamp.is/news/stem-project-in-sibini>

16 - 21 October (Greece)

We are happy to partner the ACADIMIA (European Academy of Creative and Inclusive Learning) project, focusing on the development of a teacher training academy in eight European countries with 10 creative and inclusive methods, including Montessori, theater, creative technologies, talent-based learning, game-based learning, strength-based learning, STEM). Partners include Action Synergy, University of Girona, University of Florence, Λαυκού Θεάτρου Centre of Higher Education in Theater Studies, University College of Leuven, Waterpark Montessori International, University of Iceland and more. We attended the kick-off meeting in Athens in October, with Arnbjörn Ólafsson, Sigrún Svafa Ólafsdóttir and Ólafur Jón Arnbjörnsson taking part in the project on behalf of GeoCamp Iceland. <https://www.geocamp.is/news/acadimia-kick-off-meeting>



2 - 4 November (Croatia)

In November 2023 the staff of GeoCamp Iceland attended a successful Open Day at [Vladimir Nazor Primary School](#) in the town of Đakovo. The goal of the event was to introduce the activities achieved through the project. Teachers and students, involved in the project, organized workshops as part of twelve extracurricular activities where they displayed the application and use of innovative STEM teaching methods in their school. <https://www.geocamp.is/news/stem-open-day-in-akovo>

6 - 8 November (Croatia)

In November 2023 the staff of GeoCamp Iceland - along with a group of teachers from primary schools and research centers in the Reykjanes region - attended a couple of open days in our partner schools in Croatia, including a very successful event at OŠ Josipa Kozarca in the town of Lipovljani. The project is named [Explore and Grow with STEM](#) and aims to improve the STEM skills of teachers and administration, as well as close to one-hundred students (including 63 students with special needs) at the school, by modernizing the school space and acquiring STEM equipment, as well as attend workshops and training seminars on behalf of GeoCamp Iceland. Participating partners from GeoCamp Iceland were Arnbjörn Ólafsson, Sigrún Svafa Ólafsdóttir, Ólafur Jón Arnbjörnsson, Daníel Hjálmtýsson (Sudurnes Science & Learning Center), Siggeir F. Ævarsson (Grindavík Primary School), Freydís Kneif Kolbeinsdóttir (Gerðaskóli Primary School) and Jóna Særún Sigurbjörnsdóttir (Akurskóli Primary School) <https://www.geocamp.is/news/stem-open-day-in-lipovljani>

16 - 17 November (Italy)

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GeoCamp Iceland
www.geocamp.is

