

# Croatia

Ines Elezović  
Yukari Bosnić

Department for Quality Assurance in Education, NCEEE

## Introduction

### Overview of Education System

The education system in the Republic of Croatia is centralized in most areas, and power lies with the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Croatia (MoSE). However, the rights and duties of the founders of primary schools are performed by cities and for high schools by counties,<sup>a</sup> and both have an important role in allocating funds and cooperating with schools on staffing matters. At UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) level 0, there are nurseries for children under the age of 3, followed by Kindergartens and preschool programs. At age 6 and/or 7, children start attending primary education for a duration of eight years (ISCED levels 1 and 2). Only primary school education is compulsory in Croatia, and the student to teacher ratio in primary education was 9 to 1 at the end of the 2019–2020 academic year, accompanied by the declining number of students in general.<sup>1</sup> Secondary education has two main streams that represent ISCED level 3: general education gymnasiums (four-year programs) and vocational education (high schools with three- to five-year programs). After secondary education, all gymnasium students are obliged to pass the State Matura examinations. These examinations are required for vocational education and training (VET) students who want to enroll in higher education institutions and continue schooling; otherwise, they are optional. At the tertiary level (ISCED levels 5 to 8), Croatia, along with 48 European countries, implemented a set of changes known as the Bologna Process, which reformed higher education across Europe (with adjustments ending in 2010).

In summary, the education system in the Republic of Croatia comprises the following education cycles:

- Preschool education and childcare for children ages 6 months to 6 years, delivered through education, health, and social care programs
- Primary education (Grades 1 to 8), which is compulsory for all students ages 6 to 15

<sup>a</sup> Units of local government are municipalities (*općine*) and cities, and units of regional government are counties (*županije*). In total, there are 576 units of local and regional government: 428 municipalities, 127 cities, and 21 counties. (Note: Zagreb is both the capital city and county.)

- Secondary education (Grades 1 to 4 or 5) in the following types of schools: gymnasiums (general or specialized), vocational or trade schools, and art schools (music, dance, visual arts, etc.)
- Higher education composed of university and professional studies, which are offered at universities or polytechnics and schools of professional higher education

### Languages of Instruction in Primary Schools

The official language in educational institutions is Croatian. In certain areas of Croatia, where ethnic minorities comprise a majority of the population, the minority language is recognized as a second official language. In Croatia, the languages of instruction may be categorized into two groups: so-called territorial or minority languages, and nonterritorial languages (in accordance with the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*<sup>2</sup>). Members of the recognized national minorities are guaranteed the right to education and can exercise this constitutional right to education in their native language and letter<sup>3</sup> via three basic school models:

- Model A schools—All classes are conducted in the minority language, and study of the Croatian language is mandatory for the same number of hours as for the minority language.
- Model B schools—Classes are conducted in two languages, with science subjects taught only in Croatian and social science subjects taught in the minority language.
- Model C schools—All classes are conducted in Croatian, and an additional two to five hours are dedicated to fostering the language and culture of the national minority.

National minorities who exercise these rights and employ abovementioned school models are: the Czech, Hungarian, Italian, and Serbian national minority (usually for models A and B); and the Albanian, Austrian, Czech, Hungarian, Italian, Macedonian, Polish, Serbian, Russian, Rusyn, Slovak, Slovene, Ukrainian, and Jewish national minority (for model C). In the large majority of schools, nearly all instruction (97 percent) is conducted in Croatian, and only students attending schools/classes under models A and B have science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects in the minority language.

### Official Policies on Reading Literacy

Besides Croatian language lessons, there is a strong emphasis on reading literacy promoted through activities of school libraries. In particular, libraries and librarians in primary schools should “encourage the development of reading culture and enable students for intellectual processing of sources, attributing to the development of independent intellectual functioning. Contemporary libraries are focused on informational literacy and encourage reading. The goal of the librarian is to develop readers that will accept literature with enthusiasm and joy.”<sup>4</sup>

## Use and Impact of PIRLS

Croatia participated in PIRLS 2011 before the 2021 cycle. Croatian students' results in 2011 were quite good (in the top 10 scores); therefore, the reading literacy in lower grades of primary schools was deemed satisfactory and no direct interventions were needed or taken. At the same time, the national Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reading results indicated problems with even basic levels of comprehension among students age 15. Only a handful of scientific articles were written on this subject using PIRLS and/or PISA data sets from 2009 to 2020. Overall reading literacy in the general population was declining from the previous decade, as seen through the decrease of buying and/or borrowing books from libraries, and participation in every successive PISA cycle continues to show alarming results for reading literacy in Croatian 15-year-olds (indicated by a flat trend line statistically below the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] average). In reaction, several state ministries introduced programs to promote the reading culture, culminating in the National Strategy to Revive Book Reading 2017–2022.<sup>5</sup>

## The Language/Reading Curriculum in Primary Grades

In 2005, the MoSE began to implement the first major school reform project known as the Croatian National Education Standard (*Hrvatski nacionalni obrazovni standard*), after which the *Syllabus for Primary School (Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu)* was designed and implemented in 2006. This syllabus contains the education plan for all subjects from Grades 1 to 8 and was in effect at the time both PIRLS surveys were conducted in fourth grade in Croatia (2011 and 2021). The document is not a curriculum per se, but more of a catalog of education goals presented separately for each subject, grade, and teaching unit.

The *Croatian Language Syllabus (2006)* was used to foster students' ability to read; understand; and, after evaluating what was read, develop their way of thinking about the given information throughout primary school education. It emphasized that the fundamental goal of the study of Croatian language was to prepare students for effective communication that would enable them to acquire knowledge in all subjects and engage in lifelong learning. Therefore, the tasks of all domains focused on achieving this fundamental teaching goal. The *Croatian Language Syllabus* set particular themes (key terms and tasks) for its four correlating domains: Language, Language Expression, Literature, and Media Culture. The instruction time was 175 hours per school year or five 45-minute Croatian Language classes per week. However, for the fourth grade of primary school, the Language Expression domain included only the topic Expressive Reading with educational achievements focusing on speech values. Reading comprehension as a goal was stated under the expected educational achievements of the Literature domain, e.g., to notice and determine the topic; notice and distinguish parts of the plot (exposition, climax, resolution); form and express one's opinion about the characters according to their behavior (statements and

actions); follow the relationship between characters and discuss them; and notice and distinguish the role of different parts of a prose text.

Thus, reading literacy and reading, according to the 2006 syllabus, implied reading, understanding, and interpreting literary texts or passages. Students were introduced to other text types at the level of recognizing and noticing basic stylistic features. Various diagrams, schematic illustrations, tables, or maps were used mainly in the teaching of natural science and were not usually associated with reading literacy. The traditional notion of reading did not integrate emerging forms related to digital devices and digital texts.

The *National Curricular Framework* (2010)<sup>6</sup> presents a starting point for systemic changes in preschool, primary, and secondary education in Croatia. Comprehensive reform of the structure and content of the curriculum for primary and lower secondary education was initiated by adopting the *Strategy for Education, Science and Technology* in 2014.<sup>7</sup> In 2015, an expert working group, aided by a wide range of stakeholders, began work on general curricular reform drawing information from the results of international large-scale studies, among other sources. Reading instruction also was covered in the following national documents of the Ministry of Science and Education: *National Curricular Framework* (2010), *National Strategy to Revive Book Reading 2017–2022* (jointly with the Ministry of Culture and Media in 2017), and *Curriculum of the Interdisciplinary Topic: Information and Communication Technology Use for Primary and Secondary Schools* (2019)<sup>8</sup>.

After the first phase of comprehensive curricular reform in Croatia, 2019 saw the official approval of new national subject and interdisciplinary curricula in primary and secondary education to be implemented first experimentally in academic years 2018–2019 and 2019–2020 and then gradually nationwide. The new Croatian Language Curriculum for primary and general secondary schools in the Republic of Croatia was introduced as follows:

- Primary school Grades 1 and 5 and secondary school Grade 1 in academic year 2019–2020
- Primary school Grades 2, 3, 6, and 7 and secondary school Grades 2 and 3 in academic year 2020–2021
- Primary school Grades 4 and 8 and secondary school Grade 4 in academic year 2021–2022

## Professional Development Requirements and Programs

For teachers of fourth grade students, as well as for all practicing teachers, continuing professional development (CPD) is a right and obligation regulated by the Primary and Secondary School Education Act<sup>9</sup> and reflected in the individual teacher CPD plan of the particular school’s annual curriculum.

The CPD program as stated in the *National Pedagogical Standard of the Primary Education System*<sup>10</sup> includes formal and informal individual, intraschool, and external activities that most often take place outside of working hours. The MoSE approves the obligatory CPD content, and

external CPD activities at school, regional, and national levels are provided by the Education and Teacher Training Agency (ETTA) or other organizations such as educational institutions, subject associations, and publishing houses that have CPD programs approved by the Ministry.

Apart from the duty to participate regularly in within-school CPD at least three times a year at the regional level and at least once every two years at the state level, there is no set number of hours for CPD except in the context of career progression. In the five years prior to a promotion to mentor, counselor, or excelling counselor, teachers are required to attend a minimum of 100, 120, and 150 hours of in-service training, respectively.<sup>11</sup>

In the last decade, special efforts were made to improve the long-term development and quality of the CPD system.<sup>12</sup> Besides the already established transmissional model of professional development in language and reading, including conferences, seminars, and workshops, Croatia's comprehensive curricular reform contributed to the dissemination of more transitional and transformative models of teacher education, namely collaborative planning and microteaching.

In parallel with the implementation of major digitalization and digital literacy projects in education, e-learning teacher education programs were designed<sup>13</sup> and more virtual programs, classrooms, and online cooperation were enabled.<sup>b</sup> Good practices and teaching workshops have been among the most popular forms of CPD, while e-learning, webinars, online modules, and online teaching materials proved most valuable for CPD during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Monitoring Student Progress in Reading

Student achievement is monitored and evaluated throughout the school year. The MoSE prescribes a standardized framework of monitoring and evaluation to measure students' progress in all areas prescribed by the national curriculum (and by the *Syllabus for Primary School* in the prior period, 2006–2019). The Regulatory Act on the Methods, Procedures and Elements of Evaluation of Students in Primary and Secondary Schools<sup>14</sup> provides general guidelines on the use of unified grades and suggested evaluation criteria.

Achieving the targeted goals of teaching and learning is conducted in multiple ways. The frequency of written and oral tests, as well as the evaluation of homework, mostly depends upon the individual teacher. Teachers evaluate students by grading students' achievement numerically and by grading students' behavior descriptively. School grades comprise the numerical marks with accompanying descriptors on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being insufficient and 5 being excellent). The descriptive grades for student conduct are summarized in words: “exemplary,” “good,” or “bad.” In the first four years of primary school, grades are given numerically and are accompanied by clear written explanations.

<sup>b</sup> For example, see ETTA's decade-long program of virtual literary events as part of a learning project of innovative use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in education (<https://www.azoo.hr/pretraga/?pojam=Pisci+na+mre%C5%BEi> and <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLAB45E9BEA4E395A0>).

Besides direct summative evaluation in the form of school grades, some external processes are in place for the overall quality assurance of evaluation processes. Student knowledge competitions in specific subjects at the school, regional, and/or national level are an additional way to recognize students' accomplishments. Advisors from ETТА regularly visit school teaching staff, including class teachers (Grades 1 to 4), for consultations, to assess their work, to locate and assist in resolving any issues, and/or to compliment teachers who do exemplary work in their classrooms. Also, the Primary and Secondary School Education Act foresees self-evaluation processes in which schools monitor and improve the quality of their work (on their own), which includes evaluation and improvement in curriculum implementation.

## Special Reading Initiatives

Croatia's first-time participation in the 2011 PIRLS cycle revealed that on average, the country's 10-year-old students achieved reading results in the top 10 range despite constituting one of the largest percentages of fourth grade students with a negative attitude toward reading.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, the 15-year-old student population assessed in PISA's reading studies from 2006 to 2018 consistently demonstrated below average reading results.<sup>16</sup> In such a context, the last decade saw joint efforts and coordinated reading-related initiatives by multiple institutions. For example, the Ministry of Culture and Media and the Ministry of Science and Education launched a joint initiative titled Backpack (Full) of Culture in 2013,<sup>17</sup> which included bringing selected works of literature to children and youth who had limited access to cultural programming; in addition, various activities were organized between the National and University Library in Zagreb and other smaller libraries and different universities nationwide. Since 2018, an increasing number of Croatian primary schools have participated in an international competition originating in Slovenia titled *Naša mala knjižnica* (Our Little Library)<sup>c</sup>. A cross-sectoral board was also formed in charge of developing a previously nonexistent national strategy to revive book reading. The action plan for the implementation of the National Strategy to Revive Book Reading 2017–2022 consisted of three strategic goals:

1. Establish an effective social framework as a support for reading
2. Develop reading literacy and encourage readers to read actively and critically
3. Increase the availability of books and other reading materials

In 2021, PIRLS's main study coincided with Croatia's Year of Reading 2021,<sup>18,d</sup> which was marked by numerous activities that included national and international events, scientific conferences, etc.<sup>19,20,21</sup>

<sup>c</sup> See <https://nasamalaknjiznica.hr/> for details.

<sup>d</sup> The Year of Reading included regular book and reading events and projects such as *Mjesec hrvatske knjige* (Croatian Book Month, <https://www.mhk.hr/>), *Interliber* (International Book Fair, <https://www.zv.hr/sajmovi-7/interliber-2519/posjetitelji-2707/o-sajmu-2713/2713>), and *Čitaj mi* (Read to Me! campaign, <https://www.citajmi.info/campaign/>).

Following the competency-based approach of the *National Curricular Framework* in 2011, reading and reading-specific skills and strategies became one of the four main learning goals (beside listening, speaking, and writing) of the Language and Communication domain. Accompanied by scientific work in the field, the development and adoption of the new Croatian Language Curriculum (in 2019)<sup>22</sup> and the Croatian comprehensive curricular reform–related teacher education activities have been the major national initiatives for teaching reading.

### Reading Initiatives for Students

Every year, high-achieving students<sup>23</sup> have a chance to participate in extracurricular activities and competitions at the school, regional, or national level, such as the Read Aloud competition; the Croatian language competition; and LiDraNo, a competition program conceived as a festival of literary, dramatic, and journalistic creativity.

Students with identified reading difficulties<sup>24</sup> generally follow regular classes with appropriate, content-adjusted, and individualized education programs carried out by regular teachers. CPD for regular teachers, teaching assistants, and other experts involved in the inclusive education of struggling readers is organized by the Education and Teacher Training Agency. Preparation of easy-to-read coursebooks, learning materials, and children’s books includes editions designed and adapted by speech therapists and special education teachers.

## Response to COVID-19 Pandemic<sup>e</sup>

### Teaching and Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic<sup>f</sup>

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, officially declared for the whole Republic of Croatia on March 11, 2020, the country experienced a partial lockdown from March 16 to June 5, 2020. Istria, Croatia’s westernmost county closest to Italy (which was, at that time, the country with the greatest number of infected people in the world<sup>25</sup>), saw the introduction of epidemiological measures and restrictions on March 13, 2020. Early closure of Istria’s schools enabled the MoSE to test the online organizational plan for schools and introduce distance learning in that region as preparation for a later countrywide implementation. The only closure of primary schools for Grades 1 to 4 lasted eight weeks including the 10-day Easter holidays, i.e., from March 16 to May 8, 2020. For the rest of academic year 2019–2020, all schools reopened for a combination of alternating face-to-face instruction and distance learning. For most of academic year 2020–2021, primary Grades 1 to 4 continued to use face-to-face instruction at school.

<sup>e</sup> The Response to COVID-19 Pandemic section was written in cooperation with Snježana Bukvić.

<sup>f</sup> Most data in the Teaching and Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic and Policy and Practice Changes sections were gathered from Ministry of Science and Education. (2020). *Croatia – How we introduced distance learning?* Updated version retrieved from <https://skolazivot.hr/croatia-how-we-introduced-distance-learning/>

Many interconnected factors contributed to an overall swift launch of distance learning on March 16, 2020, after just two weeks of preparations. Since 2014, Croatia has been implementing major digitalization and digital literacy projects in education that involved:

- Putting in place ICT infrastructure and developing educational software for Croatia’s public primary and secondary schools to improve teaching, learning, and administration
- Ensuring teachers’ digital independence by providing them with their own laptop and equipping classrooms with projectors or interactive smartboards for various types of content and multimedia use
- Developing students’ digital competencies by equipping them with ICT devices (microcomputers and tablets) and introducing Information Technology as a mandatory subject as early as primary Grades 5 and 6 and as an optional subject from primary Grades 1 to 4
- Preparing teachers for Croatia’s comprehensive curricular reform via virtual classrooms enabling continual professional development and online cooperation for teachers

All of these processes were instrumental in the two-week preparation period before March 16, 2020, to create content that would enable teachers to shift to online teaching in all subjects and for each grade of primary and secondary school. However, as indicated by the Ministry,

“For lower primary students the Ministry decided to cooperate with the national television, because this age group is too young to use digital technology independently. The teachers needed to establish communication channels with the parents rather than the students, and for this they were encouraged to use social networks and chat groups for parents to access with their smartphones.”<sup>26</sup>

The lower primary school program titled *Škola na Trećem* (School on the Third Channel) was broadcast for each grade every day, live and in replay, on the national TV channel HRT3 and also was uploaded on YouTube for later viewing.

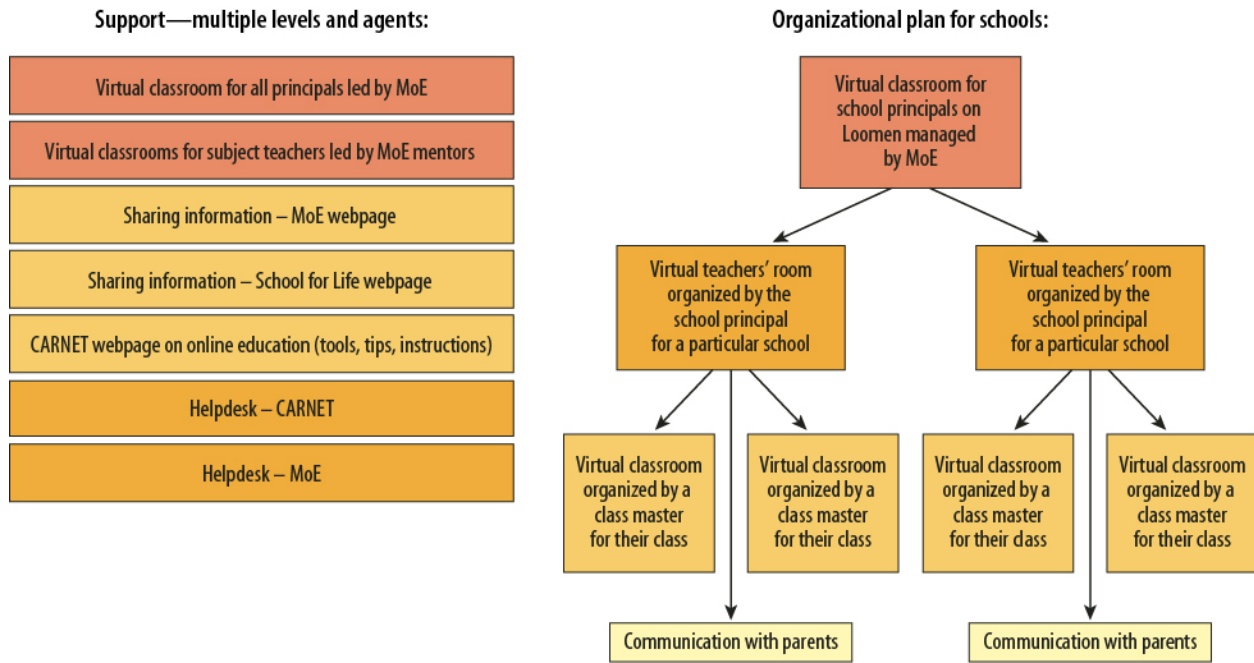
The *Škola za život* (School for Life) website, created for the experimental phase of the comprehensive curricular reform in academic years 2018–2019 and 2019–2020, expanded its purpose during the coronavirus pandemic and became both a communication platform for the MoSE and all stakeholders, and a source of digital teaching materials and short video lessons to support remote instruction. Technical support to primary and secondary schools was provided successfully by CARNET, the Croatian Academic Network. For a list of MoSE guidelines and tutorials in English, see the MoSE website.<sup>9</sup> Exhibit 1 shows adaptations of the distance teaching and learning diagrams published on the School for Life webpage<sup>h</sup> on March 13, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> See <https://mzo.gov.hr/news/coronavirus-organisation-of-distance-teaching-and-learning-in-croatia/3634> for more information.

<sup>h</sup> See <https://skolazazivot.hr/distance-teaching-and-learning-diagrammes/> for more information.



**Exhibit 1: Distance Teaching and Learning Diagrams<sup>27</sup>**



In academic year 2020–2021, besides a two-day extension of the autumn school break in November, schools were not closed nationwide. However, a selective process of self-isolation of independent classes, and later of just groups of students within one class, was introduced. With the occurrence of a new version of the COVID-19 virus (omicron) in winter 2021, spread of this more contagious version of the disease and consequently numbers of self-isolation among students rose. This led to another period of distance learning for larger groups of students in all grades of primary and secondary schools.

**Impact of the Pandemic on Student Learning**

Although not specific to learning reading for fourth grade students, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning in Croatia has been evaluated on a national level on two occasions so far. Two weeks into the initial school closure period, which was expected to be the total period of remote instruction, the MoSE prepared a short online questionnaire on distance teaching and learning addressed to teachers.<sup>28</sup> Lower primary school classroom teachers at Grades 1 to 4 (1,403) accounted for almost one-third of the total number of participants. While about 93 percent of the teachers thought that they managed better than expected before the beginning of distance teaching and 90 percent thought that their students coped well or mostly well with distance teaching and learning, opinions were divided about whether students in distance learning were more active than they were in school classrooms.

By the end of academic year 2020–2021, the MoSE commissioned the Center for Research and Development of Education of the Institute for Social Research in Zagreb to evaluate the impact of

the COVID-19 pandemic on the Croatian education system.<sup>29</sup> Principals, assistants, classroom teachers, subject teachers, and students from 161 participating primary and secondary schools completed questionnaires about respective problem areas, including:

- How did the COVID-19 pandemic affect the lives of students in Croatia?
- Which aspects of the lives of children and youth have been especially affected by the pandemic?
- How do students and teachers assess the impact of epidemiological measures in schools on teaching?
- How have changes in teaching and school organization affected learning?
- How do students compare classroom and distance teaching?
- Are education workers satisfied with government support?
- Did work at school become more demanding during the pandemic?
- Are schools ready for a new wave?

The results of this scientific research project were presented to the general public shortly before the start of academic year 2021–2022. Despite the fact that primary fourth grade students were listed among the sampled groups (along with primary Grades 6 and 8 and students in the second and final grades of secondary school), figures and findings related to that cohort were not included in the final presentation, probably because lower primary students mainly received classroom instruction throughout the year and were the least affected group by distance teaching at that point in time.

### Policy and Practice Changes

The 2020 MoSE concept of online classes and distance learning was based on the following two principles:

- Access for every student
- Backups for every proposed solution

The backup principle consisted of multiple channel use for publishing and sharing information: three TV channels (HRT3 for lower primary, SPTV for upper primary, and RTL2 for secondary school students), several websites (MoSE, School for Life, and education-related agencies), YouTube channels, emails, messaging apps, and social networks.

All students and teachers in primary and secondary schools used the nationwide science and higher education authentication infrastructure (AAI@EduHr) provided by SRCE (University Computing Center in Zagreb), which gave access to a set of different platforms—Moodle, Microsoft Teams, Yammer, Google Classroom, and Edmodo—thus distributing the educational content load. Publishers and owners of education apps provided free access to learning resources.

In previous years, through comprehensive curricular reform activities, all primary schools received four to five tablets per class to use with their lower primary students for group work activities under teacher supervision. Each upper primary student was equipped with a tablet by December 2020 (or a microcomputer from the 2017 CARNET project), and secondary school students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds received personal equipment with granted internet access. In an effort to ensure internet access at home for all students, all telecommunication companies provided free broadband and SIM cards to all primary and secondary school students from lower-income families.

Drawing from the first three months of experience with online school organization, virtual classrooms, and remote instruction, an action plan for the implementation of distance education was developed in June 2020 for use in academic year 2020–2021. During that school year, 2,125 television scripts and 734 hours of educational programming were produced for all lower primary subjects. In addition, more than 1,500 accompanying digital teaching materials were prepared and published on the MoSE i-class webpage.<sup>i</sup>

### **Additional Impact on Fourth Grade Learning**

On top of the COVID-19 crisis in 2020, central Croatia was struck by two devastating earthquakes. Just one week into the partial lockdown, in the early morning of March 22, 2020, an earthquake of magnitude 5.3  $M_w$  hit Zagreb, Croatia’s capital, causing substantial damage in the historical city center. Apart from old residential buildings, dozens of primary and secondary school buildings got so damaged—to the point of becoming unsafe for use—that entire school populations were displaced and accommodated by two, three, four, or even five neighboring schools for the rest of academic year 2020–2021 or longer. Consequently, when schools in Zagreb reopened, students from originally six primary schools had to attend classes in morning and afternoon shifts in 21 different buildings. This required using school bus transport for many students and adapting to completely new environments for learning. At that point, the MoSE allowed schools to shorten the usual 45-minute period to 40 minutes and generally recommended reorganizing daily timetables to adjust to double or triple class periods per subject.

The second major earthquake of magnitude 6.4  $M_w$  hit central Croatia near Petrinja, in Sisak-Moslavina County, during the Christmas holidays, midday on December 29, 2020. In that region with approximately six times fewer lower primary school students than in the capital city,<sup>30</sup> the destructive seismic activity provoked longer power outages and estimated total damage of more than 5.5 billion euros, amounting to half the estimate of the earthquake damage in Zagreb<sup>31</sup> that affected 26,197 buildings.<sup>32</sup> Sisak-Moslavina County saw entire villages and towns get heavily damaged or collapse, and many families with children were forced to move and seek shelter. Sixteen primary schools with one-third of all primary school students in the county were not ready

<sup>i</sup> See <http://i-nastava.gov.hr/> for more information.

to start the second semester as originally planned and were granted a longer winter holiday to recover from damage and distress.

Besides the city of Zagreb and Sisak-Moslavina County, neighboring Zagreb County, Krapina-Zagorje County, and Karlovac County (which comprise one-quarter of 21 counties in the Republic of Croatia) suffered damages from the impact of numerous aftershocks from the two earthquakes during the coronavirus pandemic.

## Suggested Readings

Jurić, M. (2017). *Čitanje u tiskanom i digitalnom okruženju* [Reading in printed and digital format] [Doctoral thesis, University of Zadar]. Digital Repository of Evaluation Papers of the University of Zadar. <https://repositorij.unizd.hr/islandora/object/unizd:2055>

Kolić-Vehovec, S., Rončević Zubković, B., & Pahljina-Reinić, R. (2014). Development of metacognitive knowledge of reading strategies and attitudes toward reading in early adolescence: The effect on reading comprehension. *Psychological Topics*, 23(1), 77–98. Retrieved from <https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2014-25618-004>

Markočić Dekanić, A., Gregurović, M., Batur, M., & Fulgosi, S. (2019). *PISA 2018: Rezultati, odrednice i implikacije – Međunarodno istraživanje znanja i vještina učenika* [PISA 2018: Results, characteristics and implications – International study of student knowledge and skills]. Zagreb: National Center for External Evaluation of Education. Retrieved from <https://pisa.ncvvo.hr/nacionalni-izvjestaji-sazeci-i-priopcenja/>

Peti-Stantić, A. (2019). *Čitanjem do (spo)razumijevanja* [Through reading to comprehension/cooperation]. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.

Rončević Zubković, B. (2009). *Vještina čitanja u ranoj adolescenciji: profili učenika* [The skill of reading in early adolescence: Students' profiles]. *Društvena istraživanja*, 20(1) (111), 189–210. Retrieved from <https://hrcak.srce.hr/clanak/97846>

Rončević Zubković, B. (2013). *Samoregulacija čitanja* [Self-regulation of reading]. In M. Mićanović (Ed.), *Čitanje za školu i život. IV. simpozij učitelja i nastavnika hrvatskoga jezika* [Reading for school and for life, Proceedings of the 4th Croatian teacher symposium] (pp. 33–41). Zagreb: Agencija za odgoj i obrazovanje. Retrieved from <https://www.azoo.hr/app/uploads/uvezeno/images/izdanja/citanje/Citanje.pdf>

Visinko, K. (2014). *Čitanje, poučavanje i učenje* [Reading, teaching and learning]. Zagreb: Školska knjiga.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Croatian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *Osnovne škole kraj šk. g. 2019./2020. i početak šk. g. 2020./2021.* [Basic schools end of 2019/2020 school year and beginning of 2020/2021 school year]. Retrieved from <https://podaci.dzs.hr/2021/en/10501>
- <sup>2</sup> Council of Europe. (1998). *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages*. Retrieved from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-charter-regional-or-minority-languages>
- <sup>3</sup> Croatian Parliament. (2000). *Zakon o uporabi jezika i pisma nacionalnih manjina u Republici Hrvatskoj* [Use of Language and Letter of the National Minorities in the Republic of Croatia Act]. Retrieved from [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000\\_05\\_51\\_1128.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2000_05_51_1128.html)

- 4 Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. (2006). *Nastavni plan i program za osnovnu školu* [Syllabus for Primary School]. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2006\\_09\\_102\\_2319.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2006_09_102_2319.html)
- 5 Ministry of Culture and Media. (2017). *Nacionalna strategija poticanja čitanja za razdoblje od 2017. do 2022. godine* [National Strategy to Revive Book Reading 2017–2022]. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from [https://min-kulture.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Nacionalna%20strategija%20poticanja%20C4%8Ditanja\\_tekst.pdf](https://min-kulture.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Nacionalna%20strategija%20poticanja%20C4%8Ditanja_tekst.pdf)
- 6 Ministry of Science, Education and Sports. (2010). *Nacionalni okvirni kurikulum* [National Curricular Framework]. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from [http://mzos.hr/datoteke/Nacionalni\\_okvirni\\_kurikulum.pdf](http://mzos.hr/datoteke/Nacionalni_okvirni_kurikulum.pdf)
- 7 Ministry of Science and Education. (2014). *Strategy for Education, Science and Technology*. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from <https://mzo.gov.hr/naslovna-blokovi-369/about-this-department/strategy-for-education-science-and-tehnology/385>
- 8 Ministry of Science and Education. (2019). *Kurikulum međupredmetne teme: Uporaba informacijsko i komunikacijske tehnologije* [Curriculum of the Interdisciplinary Topic: Information and Communication Technology Use for Primary and Secondary Schools]. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from <https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages/dokumenti/Publikacije/Medupredmetne/Kurikulum%20medupredmetne%20teme%20Uporaba%20informativske%20i%20komunikacijske%20tehnologije%20za%20osnovne%20i%20srednje%20skole.pdf>
- 9 Croatian Parliament. (2008–2020). *Zakon o odgoju i obrazovanju u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi* [Primary and Secondary School Education Act]. Retrieved from <https://www.zakon.hr/z/317/Zakon-o-odgoju-i-obrazovanju-u-osnovnoj-i-srednjoj-%C5%A1koli>
- 10 Croatian Parliament. (2008). *Državni pedagoški standard osnovnoškolskog sustava odgoja i obrazovanja* [National Pedagogical Standard of the Primary Education System]. Retrieved from [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2008\\_06\\_63\\_2129.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2008_06_63_2129.html)
- 11 Ministry of Science and Education. (2021). *Pravilnik o izmjenama i dopunama pravilnika o napredovanju učitelja, nastavnika, stručnih suradnika i ravnatelja u osnovnim i srednjim školama i učeničkim domovima* [Regulations on Amendments to the Regulations on the Promotion of Teachers, Teaching Associates and Principals in Primary and Secondary Schools and Student Dormitories]. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2021\\_03\\_32\\_679.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2021_03_32_679.html)
- 12 Roeders, P. (2013). *Analiza postojećeg AZOO sustava stručnog usavršavanja nastavnika* [Analysis of the current ETTA in-service teacher training system]. Retrieved from <https://www.nszssh.hr/pdf/ANALIZA%20POSTOJECEG%20AZOO%20SUSTAVA%20STRUCNOG%20USAVRSAVANJA%20NASTAVNIKA.pdf>
- 13 Ní Bhroin, O., O’ Brien, S., Balfe, T., Brennan, A., & Pennycook, C. (2020). *Sustav procjene kvalitete stručnog usavršavanja u nadležnosti Agencije za odgoj i obrazovanje (QA-INSETT-ETTA), Izvješće* [The system of quality assessment of professional training provided by the Education and Teacher Training Agency (QA-INSETT-ETTA), report]. Retrieved from [https://www.azoo.hr/app/uploads/2020/12/Rezultati\\_istra%C5%BEivanja\\_projekta\\_AZOO-a\\_Sustav\\_procjene\\_kvalitete\\_stru%C4%8Dnog\\_usavr%C5%A1avanja.pdf](https://www.azoo.hr/app/uploads/2020/12/Rezultati_istra%C5%BEivanja_projekta_AZOO-a_Sustav_procjene_kvalitete_stru%C4%8Dnog_usavr%C5%A1avanja.pdf)
- 14 *Pravilnik o načinima, postupcima i elementima vrednovanja učenika u osnovnoj i srednjoj školi* [Regulatory Act on the Methods, Procedures and Elements of Evaluation of Students in Primary and Secondary Schools]. (2019). Retrieved from [http://www.propisi.hr/files/file/1\\_Propisi/2010-2019/2010/p2010-112-2973c03\\_PRO-LT.pdf](http://www.propisi.hr/files/file/1_Propisi/2010-2019/2010/p2010-112-2973c03_PRO-LT.pdf)

- 15 Buljan Culej, J. (Ed.). (2012). *Izvešće PIRLS 2011. Međunarodno istraživanje razvoja čitalačke pismenosti* [Report on PIRLS 2011 – Progress in International Reading Literacy Study]. Zagreb: National Center for External Evaluation of Education. Retrieved from <https://www.ncvvo.hr/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/PIRLS-2011.-%E2%80%93Izve%C5%A1%C4%87e-o-postignutim-rezultatima-iz-%C4%8Ditanja.pdf>
- 16 OECD. (2019). *Hrvatska – Bilješka o zemlji – rezultati istraživanja PISA 2018* [Croatia – country note – results from PISA 2018]. Retrieved from [https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018\\_CN\\_HRV.pdf](https://www.oecd.org/pisa/publications/PISA2018_CN_HRV.pdf)
- 17 Ministry of Culture and Media. (2020). *Ruksak (pun) kulture* [Backpack (full) of culture]. Retrieved from <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/aktualno/ruksak-pun-kulture-16272/ruksak-pun-kulture-8718/a-backpack-full-of-culture/9961>
- 18 Ministry of Culture and Media. (2020). *The Year of Reading in Croatia (Highlights)*. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/the-year-of-reading-in-croatia/20875>
- 19 Education Agency. (2021). *Važnost čitanja od naranije dobi* [The importance of reading to early childhood and preschool age children]. Retrieved from <https://www.nsk.hr/vaznost-citanja-od-najranije-dobi-strucni-skup-azooa-u-sklopu-programa-godina-citanja-2021/>
- 20 Education Agency. (2013). *Čitanje za školu i život, IV. simpozij učitelja i nastavnika hrvatskoga jezika, Zbornik radova* [Reading for school and for life, Proceedings of the 4th Croatian teacher symposium]. Retrieved from <https://www.azoo.hr/app/uploads/uvezeno/images/izdanja/citanje/Citanje.pdf>
- 21 Ministry of Culture and Media. (2021). *International Conference on the Promotion of Reading*. Retrieved from <https://min-kulture.gov.hr/vijesti-8/international-conference-on-the-promotion-of-reading-read-or-be-lost-for-words/conference-program/21394>
- 22 Ministry of Science and Education. (2019). *Kurikulum nastavnoga predmeta Hrvatski jezik za osnovne škole i gimnazije* [Croatian Language Curriculum for the Primary Schools and Gymnasiums]. Retrieved from [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2019\\_01\\_10\\_215.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2019_01_10_215.html)
- 23 Ministry of Education and Culture. (1991). *Pravilnik o osnovnoškolskom obrazovanju darovitih učenika* [Regulations on Primary Education of Gifted Students]. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1991\\_07\\_34\\_967.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/1991_07_34_967.html)
- 24 Ministry of Science and Education. (2015). *Pravilnik o osnovnoškolskom i srednjoškolskom odgoju i obrazovanju učenika s teškoćama u razvoju* [Regulations on Primary and Secondary Education of Students with Disabilities]. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from [https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2015\\_03\\_24\\_510.html](https://narodne-novine.nn.hr/clanci/sluzbeni/2015_03_24_510.html)
- 25 Megna, R. (2020). First month of the epidemic caused by COVID-19 in Italy: Current status and real-time outbreak development forecast. *Global Health Research and Policy*, 5(43). Retrieved from <https://ghrp.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s41256-020-00170-3>
- 26 Ministry of Science and Education. (2020). *Croatia—how we introduced distance learning?* Retrieved from <https://skolazazivot.hr/croatia-how-we-introduced-distance-learning/>
- 27 Ministry of Science and Education. (2020). *Distance teaching and learning diagrams*. Retrieved from <https://skolazazivot.hr/distance-teaching-and-learning-diagrammes/>
- 28 Ministry of Science and Education. (2020). *Questionnaire on distance teaching and learning - results*. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from <https://skolazazivot.hr/questionnaire-on-distance-teaching-and-learning-results/>
- 29 Institute for Social Research in Zagreb, Center for Research and Development of Education. (2021). *Nacionalno praćenje učinaka pandemije bolesti COVID-19 na sustav odgoja i obrazovanja u Republici Hrvatskoj* [National monitoring of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the education system in the Republic of Croatia]. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from [https://www.idi.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/P\\_NACIONALNO\\_PRAĆENJE\\_UCINAKA\\_PANDEMIJE\\_NA\\_OBRAZOVNI\\_SUSTAV-IDIZ-ZA\\_MEDIJE-FINAL.pdf](https://www.idi.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/P_NACIONALNO_PRAĆENJE_UCINAKA_PANDEMIJE_NA_OBRAZOVNI_SUSTAV-IDIZ-ZA_MEDIJE-FINAL.pdf)

- 
- <sup>30</sup> Croatian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *Osnovne škole, kraj šk. g. 2019./2020. i početak šk. g. 2020./2021.* [Primary schools, end of school year 2019/2020 and beginning of school year 2020/2021]. Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from [https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv\\_Eng/publication/2021/08-01-02\\_01\\_2021.htm](https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv_Eng/publication/2021/08-01-02_01_2021.htm)
- <sup>31</sup> Ministry of Physical Planning, Construction and State Assets. (2021). *Reconstruction of earthquake-damaged buildings in the City of Zagreb and Krapina-Zagorje County.* Zagreb: Author. Retrieved from <https://mpgi.gov.hr/reconstruction-of-earthquake-damaged-buildings-in-the-city-of-zagreb-and-krapina-zagorje-county-13567/reconstruction-of-earthquake-damaged-buildings-in-the-city-of-zagreb-and-krapina-zagorje-county/13723>
- <sup>32</sup> Markušić, S., Stanko, D., Korbar, T., Belić, B., Penava, D., & Kordić, B. (2020). The Zagreb (Croatia) M5.5 Earthquake on 22 March 2020. *Geosciences*, 10(7), 252. Retrieved from <https://www.mdpi.com/2076-3263/10/7/252/htm>