

**CITIZEN SCIENCE
IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

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CITIZEN SCIENCE IN CROATIA WITH THE EMPHASIS ON WORKING GROUP FOR CITIZEN SCIENCE IN LIBRARIES

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Citizen science entered the Croatian context primarily through non-governmental organization (NGOs), led by IRIM's Croatian Makers movement launched in 2014. After *STEM Revolution* projects equipped schools and libraries with micro:bit sets and training, IRIM expanded on this with *Digital Libraries for Local Development – DL4LD* in 2019, emphasizing the citizen science concept. This resulted in an atmospheric station across 100 Croatian and 5 Swiss libraries, forming a nationwide ecological monitoring network. In 021, *Citizen Science: Measuring and Observing Seas* project engaged nearly 200 institutions with underwater drones for continuous monitoring and documenting of the Adriatic temperature and marine environment.¹ All of the activities were complemented by their free educational web portal *Izradi!*, and the recently published *Citizen Science Handbook* (2020).²

At first, environmental protection dominated CS projects. Under the LIFE Euroturtles project, the Croatian Natural History Museum launched the *eTurtle* app in 2018 to improve the conservation status of turtles nesting in the Mediterranean, allowing citizens to submit and browse sighting photos.³

1 Institut za razvoj i inovativnost mladih, Građanska znanost: mjerenja i promatranja mora, accessed 20 January 2026. <https://seas.croatianmakers.hr/>

2 Nicola Schoenenberger, Paolo Zenzerović and Ana Tolić, „Priručnik za građansku znanost“, Zagreb: Institut za razvoj i inovativnost mladih, (2020), accessed 20 January 2026. <https://izradi.croatianmakers.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Prirucnik-za-gradjansku-znanost-cijela-knjiga-i-korice.pdf>

3 Aleksandra Pikić, „Građanska znanost (Citizen Science): kako se narodne knjižnice mogu uključiti?“, *Mreža narodnih knjižnica - suradnja u razvoju digitalnih usluga i predstavljanju javnosti* : zbornik radova (2022): 477–491.

Similarly, the Blue World Institute, as part of the LIFE DELFI project, developed the application *Marine Ranger* in 2021, enabling citizens to report sightings of dolphins, sharks, sea turtles, marine mammals, and environmental threats. It started with a public call in 2020 to help locate a large whale in the Velebit Channel, and in 2022 they organized Croatia's first Adriatic BioBlitz, mobilizing volunteers to rapidly document marine biodiversity.⁴

The BIOM Association dedicated to nature conservation with a focus on wild birds and habitats, has long relied on volunteer engagement, including early citizen science efforts like launching the portal *Fauna.hr* in 2017, mobilizing volunteers for nature protection through their phones.⁵

The Andrija Štampar Teaching Institute of Public Health, participating in the Aedes Invasive Mosquito COST Action project, launched a citizen science activity in 2019 focused on source reduction of the invasive tiger mosquitos. This expanded into the *Pour out the water so they don't bite us* project, with school and community educations and workshops in 2023, achieving exceptional results in trap deployment and egg mass detection.⁶

Before long, citizen science began to infiltrate the Croatian GLAM sector in the 2020s. The *Written Heritage* project (2021–2022) digitized, cataloged, and presented Glagolitic manuscripts via *GlagoLab* portal of the University of Zadar's Centre for Glagolitic Studies, facilitating collaborative research and promotion of Zadar Archdiocese texts from the 17–18th centuries.⁷ Evolving into *Civil Science in the Field of Glagolitics: From Crowdsourcing to Knowledge*, it engaged citizens through campaigns like *Let's Explore Heritage Together*, *Reading History Written in Glagolitic!* and *Let's Read Glagolitic Texts Together!*, using Transkribus for transcription of parish registers and land

4 Institut Plavi svijet, accessed 20 January 2026. <https://www.plavi-svijet.org/>

5 Udruga BIOM, „Svaka ptica se broji - i broji ih se više nego ikad!“, (2025), accessed 20 January 2026. <https://www.biom.hr/2025/08/05/svaka-ptica-se-broji-i-broji-ih-se-vise-nego-ikad/>

6 Ivana Vrućina, Enrih Merdić and Nataša Bušić, „Građanska znanost (Citizen science) - aktivnost zajednice u svrhu praćenja i kontrole invazivnih vrsta komaraca u Hrvatskoj“, Znanstveno-stručno-edukativni seminar s međunarodnim sudjelovanjem DDD I ZUPP 2024 - uključenost zajednice - zbornik radova : novine u u djelatnosti dezinfekcije, dezinskcije, deratizacije i zaštite uskladištenih poljoprivrednih proizvoda, (2024): 35–41.

7 Marijana Tomić, Laura Grzunov and Martina Dragija Ivanović, „Crowdsourcing transcription of historical manuscripts: Citizen science as a force of revealing historical evidence from Croatian Glagolitic manuscripts“, *Education for Information* 37, 4 (2021): 443–464, accessed 23 January 2026. <https://doi.org/10.3233/EFI-211555>

records.⁸ *DigiSport* is a project carried out by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb (FFZG) and Croatian Sports Museum in 2022 and 2023. The project engaged active and retired sports journalists from the Croatian Association of Sports Journalists, contributing detailed metadata to the digitized segment of the Croatian Sports Museum's Photo Collection from 1970–1994, through a custom digital tool.⁹ The State Archives in Zagreb organized a Transcribathon Zagreb in 2022, a week-long citizen science event held at FFZG, as part of the EU Enrich Europeana+ project. The project combined AI with students transcribing and adding valuable metadata to selected parts of funds and collections from 19th century, enhancing its public access.¹⁰

The Križevci University of Applied Sciences, aiming to promote the Historical collection of the agricultural education and its significance, invited former students to participate in the research and documentation of this rich collection. Linking open access and citizen science with cultural heritage, the *Revitalization of the Cultural Heritage of the College of Agriculture in Križevci* project in 2021 resulted in a new approach to interpretation and preservation of the school's cultural tradition, spanning more than 160 years.¹¹ ICARUS's Topotheque platform is a virtual archive enabling citizens to participate in preserving and promoting historical heritage by sharing photographs, documents, and stories. In cooperation with local institutions, such as the Prelog Public Library, more than 420 Topotheques have been established as part of the European network.¹²

8 Glagolab – portal i digitalni laboratorij za suradnička istraživanja i promoviranje hrvatskoga glagoljaštva, accessed 23 January 2026. <https://glagolab.unizd.hr/>

9 Goran Zlodi, Tomislav Ivanjko, Danira Biliš and Petra Husain Pustaj, „Mogućnosti primjene građanske znanosti u društvenim i humanističkim istraživanjima na primjeru istraživanja i opisa segmenta Zbirke fotografija Hrvatskog športskog muzeja”, Dvanaesti festival hrvatskih digitalizacijskih projekata : programska knjižica, (2023): 48–49, accessed 23 January 2026. https://dfest.nsk.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/D-fest2023_programska.pdf

10 Sonja Galina, „Transcribathon Zagreb 2022.”, Dvanaesti festival hrvatskih digitalizacijskih projekata : programska knjižica, (2023): 50, accessed 23 January 2026. https://dfest.nsk.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/D-fest2023_programska.pdf

11 Marina Vidović Krušić, „Povijesna zbirka poljoprivrednog školstva Knjižnice Veleučilišta u Križevcima u službi promocije kulturne baštine”, Kalibar 11, 2 (2024): 38–43, accessed 23 January 2026. <https://www.dkkz.hr/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/10.-Marina-Vidovic-Krusic.pdf>

12 Maja Lesinger, „Platforma Topoteka u kontekstu građanske znanosti - primjer Topoteke Prelog”, @rhivi 16 (2024): 12–13, accessed 23 January 2026. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/329532>

Croatian libraries actively support citizen science projects. Research shows librarians' willingness to participate, use libraries as platforms, and emphasize cooperation and education for scientific literacy and inclusion.¹³ Key promoters include the Working Group for Citizen Science in Libraries of the Zagreb Library Association (GZUK) and National and University Library in Zagreb (NSK).

The National and University Library in Zagreb began its systematic engagement in citizen science through the CeOS_SE project and subsequently continued to develop this field by initiating and implementing its own CS projects.¹⁴

The *Bees, Life, People* project was implemented in 2022 within the CeOS_SE project and the Science Festival, in cooperation with the Ivanić-Grad Public Library, and the Croatian Web Archive. The project focused on collecting and selecting web-based resources on bees as key organisms for biodiversity conservation.¹⁵ Following introductory lectures and a workshop on criteria for web content archiving, students of the Ivan Švarc Secondary School independently identified and proposed relevant online sources, which NSK librarians then evaluated, archived, and published in the Croatian Web Archive. The result was a thematic digital collection¹⁶ comprising 145 archived URLs, contributing to the long-term accessibility of digital content related to biodiversity.

The citizen science activity *Self-Help and Well-Being in the Academic Online Environment* was conducted in 2022 as part of the CeOS_SE project, in collaboration with researcher Iva Žurić Jakovina and the FFZG. Students enrolled in the course Digital Library 2 acted as citizen scientists, collecting data on open-access scholarly and professional journals addressing bibliotherapy, self-help, and subjective well-being. The activity included an introductory

13 Dolores Mumelaš and Antonija Filipeti, „Exploring the Perspectives of Croatian Libraries on Citizen Science”, *LIBER Quarterly: The Journal of the Association of European Research Libraries* 35, 1 (2025): 1–32, accessed 25 August 2025. <https://liberquarterly.eu/article/view/19014>

14 Dolores Mumelaš and Sanja Jurković, „Citizen Science in Croatia and the Contribution of the National and University Library in Zagreb“, *Čitalište: naučni časopis za teoriju i praksu bibliotekarstva* 47 (2025): 7–21, accessed 20 January 2026. <https://doi.org/10.5937/cit2547007m>

15 Dolores Mumelaš, „Mladi u ulozu građana znanstvenika i kvizaša“, *Kalibar* 10, 1/2 (2023): 30–36, accessed 5 January 2026. <https://www.dkkz.hr/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Kalibar-2023-1-30-36.pdf>

16 Croatian Web Archive, „Pčele, život, ljudi“, accessed 20 December 2025. <https://haw.nsk.hr/tematske-zbirke/42/p%C4%8Dele,-%C5%BEivot,-ljudi/>

lecture and practical training in searching the Hrčak portal. The collected data were processed and analyzed, and subsequently presented as a scientific poster¹⁷, and the results were further developed into a scientific article published in a peer-reviewed journal¹⁸.

The *Dendroteka* project was implemented in 2023 as part of the Science Festival, in cooperation with NSK, dendrology experts, and students from Zagreb secondary schools. The activity focused on identifying tree species depicted on historical postcards of Zagreb preserved in the NSK Graphic Collection. Participants collected data through fieldwork, the use of mobile applications, and by comparing historical and contemporary photographs. In collaboration with experts, changes in urban greenery over time were analyzed, and the final outcome was a publicly accessible portal¹⁹ with an interactive map of Zagreb, enabling the comparison of historical and contemporary views and identification of tree species. The project connected heritage collections, scientific expertise, and youth participation in research on the urban environment.

The *HAWathon* project began in 2023 as a pilot activity organized in cooperation between the National and University Library in Zagreb and the City Library “Ivan Goran Kovačić” in Karlovac²⁰. In 2024 it developed into a national crowdsourcing project, carried out in partnership with public schools and libraries across Croatia, focusing on collecting web-based resources for the Croatian Web Archive. A total of eleven HAWathons were held, involving 186 secondary school students. Participant evaluations indicated a high level of satisfaction and the development of digital, information, and critical thinking skills.²¹ Simultaneously, this significantly reduced the workload of librarians involved in web content collection, confirming the effectiveness of crowdsourcing approaches. New HAWathons are still taking place.

17 OAI14, „OAI13 Posters“, accessed 5 January 2026. <https://oai.events/oai13/posters/>

18 Iva Žurić Jakovina and Dolores Mumelaš, “Bibliotherapy, Self-Help and Subjective Well-Being in Open Access in Croatia”, *Socijalna psihijatrija* 52 (2024): 47–82, accessed 5 January 2026. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/file/462831>

19 Dendroteka, accessed 15 January 2026, <https://virtualna.nsk.hr/dendroteka/>

20 City library „Ivan Goran Kovačić“ Karlovac, „The first HAWaton competition was held in Croatia“, accessed 20 January 2026. <https://gkka.hr/hawaton-natjecanje-gimnazijalaca-uprikupljanju-mreznog-sadrzaja/>

21 Dolores Mumelaš, Ingeborg Rudomino and Anamarija Ljubek, „Evaluacija sudionika projekata rada mnoštva i istraživanje sudionika projekta Hawaton“, *Vjesnik Bibliotekara Hrvatske* 68, 1 (2025): 189–210, accessed 21 January 2026. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/330392>

The *Musical Intelligence in the Service of National Heritage* project was conducted in 2024 as part of the Science Festival and was organized by NSK. Students from primary and secondary music schools analyzed sound recordings from the legacy of Croatian composer Silvio Foretić, identifying musical genres, performing ensembles, and other characteristics of the recordings. The collected data were analyzed and published in a scientific article, with 90% of the analyzed recordings successfully identified.²² This project represents the first example of citizen science in Croatia focused on musical heritage.

The Working Group for Citizen Science in Libraries (GZUK)

GZUK was formed in March 2024 to strengthen collaboration among libraries, researchers, and the public through citizen science. By providing training, thematic workshops, and expert lectures, GZUK supports libraries in building their competencies and encourages broader community participation in scientific research. In doing so, it highlights the role libraries can play as key connectors between science and society. Through this collaboration, the Working Group publishes two regular alternating monthly columns: GZUK nauk (translated: GZUK science) and GZUK u praksi (translated: GZUK in Practice).²³ GZUK offers free workshops and organizes lectures for researchers. In 2024 and 2025, GZUK organized a few citizen science projects.

The project *Through the Streets of Medieval Rulers*, organized in 2024, is carried out in cooperation with public and school libraries across Croatia. It aims to document and map streets, squares, and parks throughout the country named after medieval Croatian rulers, focusing on five Croatian kings and five Croatian dukes. Professor Ivan Majnarić from the Catholic University of Croatia serves as the scientific partner, using the data for historical research on the presence and representation of medieval rulers in contemporary Croatian urban spaces. The initiative combines elements of both bottom-up and top-down models; GZUK designed the concept and scientific structure, while participating libraries, acting as community coordinators and research facilitators, and their

22 Tanja Mihalić and Dolores Mumelaš, „Baštinska glazbena građa u kontekstu građanske znanosti i kao izvor za znanstvena istraživanja“, *Vjesnik bibliotekara Hrvatske* 68, 1 (2025): 25–50, accessed 30 January 2026. <https://hrcak.srce.hr/330385>

23 Sanja Jurković, “Zagreb Library Association’s Working Group for Citizen Science in Libraries”, *Libraries in the Digital Age 2025: Libraries and Information Institutions in the digital age*, (poster) 2025.

users shape the project through active local engagement and data collection via Google Maps. The goal is creating the first comprehensive database of spatial references to medieval Croatian rulers in modern Croatian settlements.²⁴

In the Footsteps of Croatian Writers was a citizen science activity organized by the August Cesarec City Library in Zagreb, with the support of GZUK. Developed in collaboration with Silvije Strahimir Kranjčević Primary School and its school library, the activity took place on 28 March 2025 in the Study Reading Room of the August Cesarec City Library.²⁵ Pupils located 138 streets named after Croatian writers, covering authors from nine literary periods, from medieval Glagolitic and Latin writers to contemporary Croatian writers. The immediate outcome was a digital interactive map of Zagreb that displays all geolocated streets identified during the activity, created by librarians Ana Brekalo and Alenka Melkić²⁶. The project exemplifies how libraries can blend literature, digital skills, and scientific thinking through collaboration between public and school libraries, while demonstrating how citizen science can enrich their programs.²⁷

The *Spiders under the Magnifying Glass* project, organized by GZUK in cooperation with the Commission for Green Libraries of the Croatian Library Association, was initiated by biologist Iva Čupić and inspired by the 2025 Science Festival theme of nets and networks. Using the international platform iNaturalist, citizens were invited to photograph and document spiders found in their surroundings, primarily in Zagreb, but observations from all parts of Croatia are welcome.²⁸ This resulted in a large collection of verified spider observations documenting their presence in Zagreb and beyond, promoting

24 Radna grupa za građansku znanost u knjižnicama, "Projekt Ulice srednjovjekovnih vladara", accessed 1 December 2025. <https://gzukzkd.wordpress.com/2025/02/13/projekt-ulice-srednjovjekovnih-vladara/>

25 Radna grupa za građansku znanost u knjižnicama, "Aktivnost Tragovima hrvatskih pisaca", accessed 3 Decemeber 2025. <https://gzukzkd.wordpress.com/2025/03/12/aktivnost-tragovima-hrvatskih-pisaca/>

26 Padlet, "Tragovima hrvatskih pisaca", accessed 3 Decemeber 2025. <https://padlet.com/alenkana25/tragovima-hrvatskih-pisaca-zjnvttao97piexyl>

27 Radna grupa za građansku znanost u knjižnicama, "Održana aktivnost građanske znanosti Tragovima hrvatskih pisaca u Knjižnici Augusta Cesarca!", accessed 3 Decemeber 2025. <https://gzukzkd.wordpress.com/2025/04/15/odrzana-aktivnost-gradanske-znanosti-tragovima-hrvatskih-pisaca-u-knjiznici-augusta-cesarca/>

28 Radna grupa za građansku znanost u knjižnicama, "Pauci pod povećalom – pridružite se projektu građanske znanosti!", accessed 7 Decemeber 2025. <https://gzukzkd.wordpress.com/2025/04/24/pauci-pod-povecalom-pridruzite-se-projektu-gradanske-znanosti/>

ecological literacy and encouraging participants to observe nature more closely. The project concluded with a public showcase of the best photographs and awarding the winning spider photo at the Zagreb Library Association Christmas gathering.²⁹

Citizen science in Croatia began to develop more intensively in the 2020s, with non-profit organizations and libraries playing a particularly prominent role in its advancement. With systematic education and capacity-building activities carried out by the National and University Library in Zagreb, as well as training workshops organized by the GZUK, the number and scope of citizen science initiatives can be expected to grow. These efforts contribute to the gradual institutionalization of citizen science and create a foundation for its more sustainable integration into research, educational, and community-oriented practices in Croatia.

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29 ZLA Facebook. "Božićni domjenak ZKD-a 2025", accessed 15.12.2025. <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1G31cDoGKF/>

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