

# INNOVATIVE INTERDISCIPLINARY EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITY ON TOURISM

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## Abstract

*This innovative educational activity "JUNIOR TOURIST" is an attempt to create the knowledge conditions and skills based on tourism consciousness as well as the principles of sustainable development / (environmental, cultural and tourism) for all types of education (elementary students who constitute critical mass of infant tourists and high school students/who consist of the existing and emerging mass tourists).*

*In addition, it is formulated with love and interest, aiming to cultivate interpersonal relations, mutual cooperation and synergies, while at the same time is in favor of expression and mobilization of all participants, by respecting individuality and emphasising teamwork. Indeed, through active learning methods, the action aims to develop the creativity and the sociability of the trainee group.*

## Introduction

This educational program was created by serving the moto that "real life experiences are those that create in people the need to travel. More specifically, "JUNIOR TOURIST" is based on experiential tourism which is defined by the need of tourists to live authentic life experiences through effective participation by all their senses and not through detached observation.



## **Project's Objectives**

The basic objective of the program is to teach "tourism consciousness " to all pupils but at the same time to strengthen the commitment of children who will be firstly tourists at their own country and secondly locals in Greece which is a traditional country of welcoming hospitality.

## **Project's Innovation**

The novelty of "JUNIOR TOURIST" is that the trainees learn by non-formal educational methods, which is the traditional way of learning (passive learning), but through creative workshops, experiential applications and interactive presentations (active learning).

## **Project's Necessity**

The program aims to embrace younger trainees the necessary knowledge of their own country. "JUNIOR TOURIST" shows children how to protect the place / country they live in according to the principles of sustainability.

## **Project's Target-groups**

The target groups are the following:

- Pupils of early and primary education (infant, A, B, C, D, E, F grade).
- Students of secondary education (A, B, C grade of High School & A, B, C grade of Lyceum).
- Specific audience (students with disabilities, when facilities are provided).

## **Bodies of Implementation**

The implementation of the project is scheduled to be provided in places with cultural character such as:

- Primary /Secondary Schools inside and outside Athens.
- Other Multiplex Cultural Centres.

## **Project's Structure:**

The project's structure consists of two parts, the theoretical as well as the practical and each one is composed by three sub-parts as follows:



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## Theoretical part

The theoretical part includes compulsory modules included in the axes of:

- I meet/learn my country....so...
- I respect my country....so...
- I love my country....so...
- I protect my country....so...
- I promote my country!!!



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Each module is inextricably linked with each other, but at the same time retains its autonomy regarding content per unit so as every participant to be able to attend it selectively or as a whole unit.

The stages of the theoretical part are the following:

⇐ "Theoretical investigation": which presents the theoretical framework for concepts like Tourism, Environment, Culture, Gastronomy, Activism.

⇐ "Reflection: is performed through questions and answers, specialised case studies, working hypothesis that highlight the locality and common elements like language, customs etc and lead on respecting diversity and uniqueness of each other.

⇐ "Workshop": which aims to animate the trainee group and refers mainly to activities like stories that come alive through role play and expressive movement, paintings, art, improvisation, quiz, collage, photography. At the end of the session, children create something like an "Original Tourist Album" which includes either stories arising from the favourite holiday destinations (through their experience) or create their own tourist packages using everything they have learned during this activity.

At the end of the session, we offer a small gift related to the activity which will be kept by participants as a souvenir in order to keep this activity alive in the memories.

## **Practical part**

The practical part includes both thematic voluntary and mandatory activities that consist a booster to the theoretical part and of course actions directly related to it, having a social character since they encourage participants in awareness and actions. In addition, great importance is given to interests / demands of the group, type of activities etc. However, as we have already said, these activities retain their autonomy regarding content per unit so as every participant to be able to attend it selectively or as a whole unit.

It is structured in three parts:

⇐ "Monitoring": involves searching, finding, recording, selecting and monitoring an event f.e. a tour, a participation in selected cultural festivals and / or specialized tourist exhibitions etc. Participants collect material without active participation.

⇐ "Participation": is a necessary step for a smooth transition from the previous stage to the next. Its purpose is to engage learners in activities, reinforcing in this way partnerships, acquaintances but also contributing to cooperation by reinforcing the concept of activism.

⇐ "Emotions": aims to animate the trainee group and refers mainly to feelings caused by their activity. It is in short the impact and footprint finally left by this activity.

## Project's Best Practise

We wish this project to constitute best practice and have important impact (in mainland and then abroad) in the field of innovative educational programs.

We also propose the implementation of this project to hotels and the Cultural Centre of Santorini, during summer time, so that youngsters get to know better both the Island and its civilisation.



Drawing of "SANTORINI" created by a "Junior Tourist" of elementary school, called Dimitris Laganis.

## Project's Funding

It is recommended that the project is free for the trainees due to its increased importance as well as the multiply effects, but also due to general financial difficulty. There is a voluntary program titled 'COME WITH US' from a well known charitable foundation that which aims to inform and attract students in science, art, creativity and the excellence. It will act as a catalyst of inspiration for youngsters and is based on voluntary participation of its members. Members will offer disinterested knowledge, scientific and professional experience to students of schools of all levels with lectures, workshops, presentation of professions, etc. Thus, we are very glad that "JUNIOR TOURIST" will become a part of that effort.

## Project Benefits:

The results are very important and will be visible in micro and macro-level. More analytically:

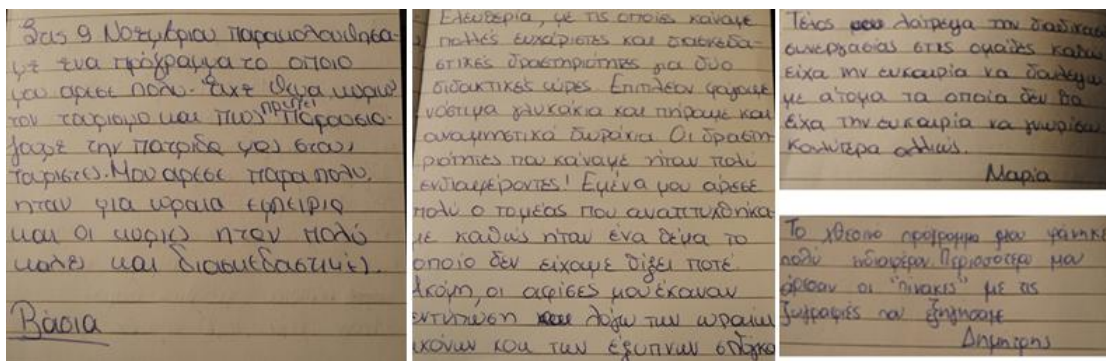
- ⇐ contact with different aspects of our cultural tradition,
- ⇐ familiarisation with triptych "TOURISM – ENVIRONMENT - CULTURE",
- ⇐ structured and organized approach to heritage tourism,
- ⇐ interdisciplinary approach of cultural issues such as tourism / environment / gastronomy.

⇐ planning and implementing various interventions for tourism / environment / culture that will lead to support the promotion of each region,  
 ⇐ development of skills such as observation, participatory activity, cultivation of aesthetic education,

⇐ possibility of extending the educational process beyond the program,  
 ⇐ unblock learners the role of an observer or a passive recipient and enable participants in decision making and active citizenship.

## Participants' Feedback

The project has a big success and has been embraced and accepted with enthusiasm. Some of the participants comments are as follows:



<p>At November the 9<sup>th</sup>, i attended a program that i liked very much. Its subject was mostly tourism and how we present our country to tourists. I truly liked it, it was a nice experience and the teachers were very good and entertaining.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Vassia</p>	<p>...we made many nice and funny activities for 2 hours. Furthermore we ate delicious sweets and we received souvenirs. The activities we made were very interesting! I liked a lot the subject presented cause we had not discussed it yet. Furthermore the posters made a great impression to me due to the beautiful sceneries and the clever slogans.</p>	<p>Last but not least, i adored the collaboration in teams because i had the chance to work with students who i would not have the opportunity to cope with.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Mary</p> <p>The program was very interesting. i enjoyed the most the paintings and the drawing which we analysed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Dimitris</p>
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## Conclusion

The innovative interdisciplinary experiential educational activity on tourism with the project “JUNIOR TOURIST” enhances multiplier effects of tourism and leads the participants into actions by obtaining “tourist consciousness” in favor of Greece.

## References

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