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# **ТУРИЗМЪТ И ГЛОБАЛНИТЕ КРИЗИ**

**TOURISM AND THE GLOBAL CRISES  
ТУРИЗМ И ГЛОБАЛНЫЕ КРИЗИСЫ  
TURISMO Y CRISIS GLOBALES**

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**ИЗДАТЕЛСТВО "АЙ АНД БИ"  
2021**



## **ТУРИЗМЪТ И ГЛОБАЛНИТЕ КРИЗИ**

СБОРНИК ДОКЛАДИ ОТ МЕЖДУНАРОДНА НАУЧНА КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ,  
ОРГАНИЗИРАНА ОТ КАТЕДРА „ТУРИЗМ“ НА СТОПАНСКИЯ ФАКУЛТЕТ НА  
ВЕЛИКОТЪРНОВСКИЯ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ „СВ. СВ. КИРИЛ И МЕТОДИЙ“,  
21 АПРИЛ 2021 ГОДИНА

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ДОКЛАДЫ ОТ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЙ НАУЧНОЙ КОНФЕРЕНЦИИ,  
ОРГАНИЗОВАННОЙ КАФЕДРОЙ „ТУРИЗМ“, ФАКУЛТЕТ ЭКОНОМИКИ,  
УНИВЕРСИТЕТ ВЕЛИКО ТЪРНОВО „СВ. СВ. КИРИЛ И МЕФОДИЙ“, БОЛГАРИЯ  
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## **TOURISM AND THE GLOBAL CRISES**

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# EXCHANGE AND EXPERIENCE TOURISM: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES, A STUDY ON AIESEC

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***Abstract:** The exchange is a practice increasingly sought, especially concerning the opportunity to experience new experiences, learn a new language, get to know other cultures, and expand the curriculum, since this type of experience has a great differential in the market. The general objective of this study was to present how the AIESEC exchange program contributes to experience tourism, expanding the opportunities of cultural and social experience, which are limited in traditional tourism. The methods used to reach the proposed objective were bibliographic and documentary research. Through the analysis, it was possible to observe that AIESEC's exchange proposal provides a suitable environment for the practice of a tourism experience based on the understanding of the needs and challenges of the modern world.*

***Keywords:** Exchange. Experience tourism. AIESEC*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Many reasons lead young people to seek an exchange program. Whether it's to expand the resume, learn a new language, or get to know new cultures, this activity has been practiced all over the world and is considered a great differential for the job market.

The historical clippings that refer to the practice of the British aristocracy of the "Grand Tour", show the educational character that this activity has had for so many years. As presented by Milheiro and Melo (2005), it was with the so-called "knights' journeys" that tourism had its origin in the 17th century in England. These trips were made by young aristocratic males, as a way to supplement the education of these young men who were being prepared for careers in politics, government, or diplomacy. Also according to Milheiro and Melo (2005), over two or three years, they would embark on a journey through Europe in a kind of educational ritual, to complete their cultural education.

Just as travel functioned as a kind of educational support in the 17th century for future leaders, exchange experiences have also proven to be an excellent educational experience, with great potential to transform and develop professionals around the world. However, what used

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to be a privilege for men of the British aristocracy is now being extended to a larger portion of the population. And although it is not yet so accessible, many opportunities arise for those who do not have the resources to have such an experience.

An example of this is AIESEC - International Association of Economic Sciences Students, which also aims at complementing academic education through youth exchange through practical international experiences. According to the organization's website, AIESEC is the largest international organization and the largest youth leadership movement in the world. Now active in 120 countries, the organization was created in 1948 after World War II. The purpose was to seek solutions to avoid conflicts similar to those that occurred in this period, through multiculturalism and the development of young leaders. (Aiesec, 2020)

This type of exchange gives many young people the opportunity to practice experience tourism far beyond a consumer activity; realistically, experiencing the reality of the professional market in another country, as well as deeper social and cultural issues. These are practical issues that are often omitted in an activity that is more restricted to tourism, but that can be experienced when inserted into an exchange activity.

## **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Exchange, opportunities, and challenges**

Exchange is considered when a certain period is spent abroad for academic, professional, and/or personal purposes (Ministério do Turismo, 2010). Participation in an exchange program consists in the involvement in courses and work, this experience allows an exchange of experiences and knowledge in the social and cultural sphere of the place where the exchange program is held, providing the interchange student with a high level of knowledge in the professional, academic and personal area. Learning and improving languages, work, and study techniques (Oliveira, 2000).

This segment is quite old, it started in places like Athens, Rhodes, Pergamos, Alexandria, with the purpose of literary, philosophical, and artistic studies. It developed after the Protestant reform and in parallel with industrial development (Sebben, 2007).

Among the opportunities and challenges that exchange can provide, Santos et al., (2019) highlight the opportunity to improve language fluency through contact with native speakers, to get to know new cultures, to become more communicative and more able to solve cultural adversities, to improve interpersonal relationships, and to add considerably to the résumé, allowing for greater opportunities to enter the job market.

Educational trips make tourism an opportunity for in-depth study as they promote the immersion of the exchange student in another culture, presenting a different reality and broadening his vision and understanding of the world. According to Santos, Hardt and Jordão (2014:66), “it can be verified, therefore, that tourism, in general, is a practice in which the subject has the opportunities to get to know new places and to live diverse experiences according to his/her predisposition, from those simpler and basic ones to the most complex and alternative ones. The exchange program fits into this context, since it is a cultural and intense activity, with the experience providing unprecedented personal development and professional evolution.”

The exchange also favors an exchange of knowledge and friendship between exchange students, that is, between travelers and/or students from different countries. In this sense, there is the possibility of staying for free in the homes of these new friends in the future (Di Doné et al., 2012).

Bett (2012) warns about some of the challenges encountered in the exchange, such as culture shock, language, and different habits that end up generating a feeling of loneliness, of not belonging, which is quite common in some exchange students who are faced when leaving the familiar comfort zone. Depending on how long the experience and adaptation last, this feeling will make your exchange experience unproductive.

## **2.2 AIESEC Exchange**

AIESEC is a non-profit organization coordinated by young people at the international level. It aims to facilitate international youth exchanges, involuntary and paid internships in non-governmental organizations (Peixoto, 2005).

Present in more than 120 countries, it has already organized more than six thousand exchanges since its creation in 1984. To participate, it is necessary to register at AIESEC's website, choose the unit closest to your city of residence, and then a consultant will contact you to present the program and guide you on how the exchanges work. There are three modalities, global volunteer, you must be between 18 and 30 years old and it lasts 6 (six) weeks, providing experience in NGOs or international schools, working 25 (twenty-five) hours a week having contact with young people from all over the world; for the global entrepreneur, must be between 18 and 30 years old, depending on the country it is necessary to have intermediate level English or Spanish, and in most countries professional experience is required, it lasts from 6 (six) to 12 (twelve) weeks and works in a Startup in the Marketing, Administration, IT or Design area, providing the opportunity to enrich the resume with an international experience; and the global

talent, it is also necessary to be between 18 and 30 years old, have advanced English and professional experience in the area you want to work, it lasts from 3 (three) to 12 (twelve) months, in this case the work is in companies in the Educational, IT, Administration, HR and Marketing sectors, the differential of this modality is that the exchange student receives an allowance to pay for basic expenses (Aiesec, 2020).

### **2.3 Exchange as experience tourism**

The exchange students are part of a tourist demand with a common interest, which is to experience new tourist experiences at the chosen destination. Some factors that influence these consumers are free time, purchasing power, attractive offers, values, and fashion (Tomazzoni et al., 2013).

Globalization has brought about changes in the ways of consumption, and when it comes to tourism, the services offered need to provide unique emotions. And through this new configuration services are created focused on experiences that generate emotional value, and provide unique memories that are engraved in the memory. Tourism itself is an experience activity, but with significant differences when it comes to specifically experience tourism, because it is focused on the experience of the consumer, exclusively and integrally, with activities that stimulate the five senses, creativity, interaction between the tourist and the local community, stimulating engagement and experiences that generate memorable learning (Sebrae, 2015).

The exchange students contribute to the local development of the destination because they enjoy the tourist attractions and use the services (Victor, 2009). The exchange also provides the exchange student, some aspects related to the concept of experiential tourism, as presented by Sebrae (2015:10), among them; "the focus on the consumer experience, the tourist as a rational and emotional consumer, and the use of multidisciplinary and varied tools."

### **3.METHODOLOGY**

In this study, bibliographic and documentary research was conducted on an exchange, experience tourism, and the AIESEC organization. The institution's website, articles, and graduation papers about the institution were analyzed to know and understand the opportunities and challenges of AIESEC's exchange as experience tourism. Publications that presented the relationship between experience tourism and exchange were also researched.

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND RESULTS**

In a world that is increasingly competitive, globalized, and full of accessible and easily shared knowledge, personal experiences have become an asset of great importance in the professional and academic spheres. The search for experience includes volunteering, traveling, unpaid internships, and exchange programs.

In the case of AIESEC, the experience provided by the agency involves experiencing another culture, professional practice in another country, tourism, and mainly, experiencing the social reality that is often disguised by traditional tourism.

The proposal of developing young, proactive leadership that can adapt to changes makes the experience provided by AIESEC a suitable environment for understanding the needs and challenges of the modern world. Far beyond the experience provided by leisure tourism, this proposal enables the construction of purpose and personal fulfillment.

It is important to highlight that this exchange format focused on the development of leadership and volunteering allows the application of future studies regarding the experiences lived in a world impacted by a global crisis. Since these experiences may be influenced by the need for support and collaboration in several countries, due to the impacts caused by the current health crisis.

#### **5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Experience tourism is among the innovative market offerings, enabling the active participation of the visitor with the local culture, generating an emotional connection with the place visited. Making it an experience in which the visitor will leave impacted, and consequently indicating the experience.

The exchange can provide experiences that experience tourism also offers. In this sense, the connection between these segments can generate a partnership of services, making the exchange a tool for the development of experiential tourism.

AIESEC can contribute to experiencing tourism mainly through its global voluntary exchange program, which is directly linked to experiences with NGOs that work with communities. Going far beyond volunteer work, this exchange activity provides an understanding of the social and political reality of another country. It gives the exchange student a global vision of the social issues most discussed and debated in much of the world.

In this sense, AIESEC exchange is a tool capable of providing unique experiences, it offers experiences based on the contribution of the SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals,



and the mobility program encompasses experiences directly local while enabling contact with people from other countries who are also on exchange.

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