

Tourism- More Than You Imagine?

2017's International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development begins in this environmental education series by Jeanie Clark

Summer holidays! A time for trips! Where have you been? What have you done? Children and adults use such conversation starters when they 'catch up' with friends when school resumes.

What is being discussed? It's more than holidays - it's about tourism. This article will look at reasons and ways to include tourism in education.

Tourism tales

Conversations about holidays and trips are often used as resource for discussions or writings early in the school term. The word 'tourism' does not need to be named, but it could be introduced later to extend this discussion/writing. For example...

Today we went to buy some farm equipment at Wareek. On the way back, driving the accompanying vehicle, I was free to enjoy and to stop to photograph: farm and natural landscapes, trees, plants in reserves, streams with and without water, wedge tailed eagles, heritage buildings (in good nick and not!), and lunch from a country bakery eaten in a shady, green, small, country garden park (below).



Would your children recognise tourism in the above story or photo? To do so, they need to know the word 'tourism'. If 'no', then introduce its meaning by, for example, using the 'dictionary skills' activities covered in my 2016 Otherways article, 'From Soils to Pulses' on page 29 in issue 147. In any case, check its meaning!

Tourist tales can cover many activities. Beyond the 'tale', how could children become more aware of their experiences as 'tourism' over summer, for example, or any other time. You could try this 'holiday trips' list: 1. Make a list of all the places travelled to and what was done there. 2. Cross out those with no tourist activities. 3. For the remainder, group like activities together. 4. Give labels to the groups. 5. Identify this as a description of the tourism industry sector which these children experienced. In my example above, I'd cross out the drive to Wareek (work).

My tourist activities were: seeing new places, photography, relaxing in a park, enjoying food. Children might have: camps, sport, movies, etc.

Tourism in the Victorian Curriculum F-10

Tourism is the focus of the 2017 International Year (IY). Can it fit in the Victoria curriculum F-10? (See <<http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au>>)

Tourism is one of the biggest industry sectors in the world. From towns, to shires, to states, to countries, tourism is sought to bring in money that would otherwise not be there. Public and private businesses spend money to attract tourists. Tourism is a part of Economics in the Victorian Curriculum F-10.

Through tourism, we explore places and their people – and affect them to varying degrees. The 'tourist dollar' has great potential to do good, but tourism has the potential to create both benefits and damages to the destination. These are parts of tourism in Geography in the Victorian F-10 curriculum.



Development'. Big words? Yes - see the box below. This theme is about raising awareness of tourism's effects and its potential to improve the world. 'Sustainability' is a 'cross-curriculum priority' in the Australian Curriculum (AC). In Victoria's F-10 curriculum, 'sustainability' is integrated across all parts and levels. 'Development' (growth) of economies is found in both Geography and Economics.

Sustainability "addresses the ongoing capacity of Earth to maintain all life. Sustainable patterns of living meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.... Actions to improve sustainability are individual and collective endeavours shared across local and global communities. ... Sustainability education is futures-oriented, focusing on protecting environments and creating a more ecologically and socially just world through informed action".
Source: ACARA 2016 "The sustainability cross-curriculum priority"
<<http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/crosscurriculumpriorities/sustainability/overview>>

Sustainable tourism "takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities".
Source: United Nations World Tourism Organisation 2017 'Definition' at
<<http://sdt.unwto.org/content/about-us-5>>

“Tourism has become a pillar of economies, a passport to prosperity, and a transformative force for improving millions of lives. The world can and must harness the power of tourism as we strive to carry out the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” said United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres. 19 January 2017
 (Source: UNWTO 2017 <<http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-01-19/international-year-sustainable-tourism-development-2017-kicks>>)

Sustainability in tourism

How could we develop children’s awareness of this concept? Try this with an example from their holiday trips list: 1. Which businesses provided the activities? 2. Is the place managed to provide these activities long-term? If yes, how? 3. What about the people there - was anyone’s lifestyle affected by these activities? 4. What about travel there - was environmental damage done on the way? 5. Do the activities have good long-term effects on places, resources and people. In other words, is it an example of ‘sustainable tourism’?



In my example above: 1. The shire provides these public gardens with the help of the local historical society and state government agencies. 2. It has gardeners to care for the plants. Its design includes paths, bins and seats to keep people from damaging plants. Signs inform users about the park and its plants. 3. Locals and visitors are refreshed by using the gardens. 4. It has adjacent parking, so cars do no damage here – apart from greenhouse emissions en route. 5. Conclusion - This place provides greenery and relaxation long-term. St Arnaud’s Queen Mary Botanic Gardens is a ‘sustainable tourist’ place and resource.

Development in tourism

On the global scale, a lot of money is involved in tourism. The United Nations World Tourism Organisation’s (UNWTO) ‘Why Tourism Matters’ diagram describes its size (see below, source : UNWTO, 2016 <<http://www2.unwto.org/content/why-tourism>>). How big is tourism? Find the US\$ amount. Find the jobs involved in tourism globally. What is the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) statistic?



Money spent by tourists can help local economies. To help children be aware of this money (economic) aspect of tourism, ask them about money spent on a place on their holiday trip list: 1. Where was it spent? 2. On what? 3. Why spend it there? 4. Who benefitted locally? For example, our lunch at the park was bought from the bakery over the road, supporting jobs for three shop assistants.

Governments and businesses invest money to provide (tourist) places like this park to encourage people to spend their money in the businesses in their town. That money helps grow, or develop, the economic well-being of that place.

Sustainable development goals in tourism

From the quote at the top, we see that ‘Development’ is much more than money. It now includes the UN’s 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (at <<http://icr.unwto.org/content/tourism-and-sdgs>>). To which of these SDGs could tourism contribute? UNWTO’s answer is on their ‘Tourism and SDG’ webpage.

For this, the IY promotes five roles for tourism:

- (1) *Inclusive and sustainable economic growth;*
- (2) *Social inclusiveness, employment and poverty reduction;*
- (3) *Resource efficiency, environmental protection and climate change;*
- (4) *Cultural values, diversity and heritage; and*
- (5) *Mutual understanding, peace and security.*

(Source: UNWTO 2016 <<http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2017-01-03/2017-international-year-sustainable-tourism-development>>)

How could the above roles be communicated? See the UNWTO’s video at <<https://youtu.be/fqkdbEVXzWE>>. Children could also use the ‘Why tourism’ statistics at <<http://www.tourism4development2017.org/why-tourism/>> and turn them into graphs or graphics (which is both Maths and Visual Communication Design).

Aims for this IY

The first aim for an IY is to raise **awareness** of its theme – you’ve now been a part of doing that! This IY’s main aims are to contribute to the **SDG’s** - consider it too.

What else could tourism aim to do?

*“In fostering better **understanding** among peoples everywhere, in leading to a greater awareness of the rich **heritage** of various civilizations and in bringing about a better appreciation of the inherent values of different **cultures**, thereby [tourism is] contributing to the strengthening of [world] **peace**”.* (Source: UNWTO 7 Dec 2015, PR15094 at <<http://media.unwto.org/press-release/2015-12-07/united-nations-declares-2017-international-year-sustainable-tourism-develop>>)

Does this 2017 IY of tourism fit into Victorian Curriculum F-10? It does as the ‘F-10’ aims are to **prepare** “students for life-long learning, social development and **active and informed citizenship**.” (Source: VCAA 2016 ‘Home’ page at <<http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/>>).

“Tourism is much more than you imagine!” is the 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development slogan. Another aim? It could be!

© Text and photos by Jeanie Clark, enviroed4all®, Warracknabeal 2017 ♦