



# OUTDOOR LEARNING IN FRANCE

**ALAIN KERJEAN, PROJECT INITIATOR & FOUNDER OF THE FRENCH BRANCH OF OUTDOOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING, WRITES ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN OUTDOOR LEARNING INSTITUTE IN FRANCE**

*The Institute for Outdoor Learning is delighted to support 'Apprendre par l'expérience' (Learning by Doing) Association and the INEX project. We share the same values and aspirations to champion high quality outdoor learning and support and train professionals in this sector. We are looking forward to developing closer links and learning from each other (Jo Barnett CEO, IOL).*

**Outdoor learning in France, written by Alain Kerjean (Project Initiator & Founder of the French branch of Outdoor Experiential Learning, 1987).**

[TRANSLATED]

We are delighted to have the support of the Institute for Outdoor Learning (IOL) for the creation of a comparable institute in France. I would like to introduce the thinking behind this new venture by sharing a summary of four articles we have recently published on the matter. We have always considered it necessary to build and innovate on what already exists: 150 years of educational heritage is to be updated in our country (the "school caravans", Pierre de Coubertin, etc.), but also 82 years of British adaptation of Outdoor Learning to young people and adults. We will be happy when the time comes to call on some senior instructors who are members of the IOL, in order to train a new generation of French instructors.

The Experiential Movement provides a response to the educational, social and economic challenge of developing and certifying human skills. Have you ever noticed that education adapts to crisis moments of each human generation? Generally, it has been the economists and entrepreneurs who sound the alarm and an educational innovation appears. Today, it is the digital revolution and the disruption of post COVID-19 lockdown that calls for a paradigm shift in education and training. Will the necessary adaptations happen again? (1,2)

Faced with the challenge of "soft skills" or "human skills", the time is no longer for diagnoses, benchmarks, studies and the intellectualisation of what we do not understand, for solutions that have already been proven. Through "the Singapore method", we only now understand that the common denominator of the countries at the top of the international rankings is a strategic investment in a globally recognised educational axis: Outdoor Experiential Learning (3).

However, the Experiential Movement has existed in France since 1987 (4). Our adventure programmes for young people and companies were a media phenomenon in the 90s and influenced countless educators and trainers who today claim "experiential pedagogy" without referencing its foundational principles.

Recent reports and studies recommend structuring a heterogeneous offer, training and supporting professionals in evidence-based solutions, including "experiential practices". This is precisely what the Experiential Movement proposes: to create an "Institut National Expérientiel" (INEX) as it exists in other countries, with a training and experimentation centre called the "Experiential Learning Lab" (ELLAB). We hope, with these developments, we can once again deliver world-leading services to the community of professionals in the development of "human skills" (5). As we did 36 years ago, it's not about pretending "we're already doing it" or reinventing the wheel, but about playing together for the common good and building on the existing. There is so much more to innovate! ▲

## REFERENCES

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2. La révolution sera pédagogique ou ne sera pas. Les Échos 25/07/2023
3. Le secret de la réussite scolaire de Singapour, Les Échos 05/12/2022
4. Hors limites-Outward Bound France (1987-1994), then "Apprendre par l'expérience (youth) and Expérientiel (corporate) (1997-2011).
5. Le Mouvement Expérientiel s'organise, Les Échos on line 13/03/2023