

ALONI LERNORT

EXPERIENCE-BASED LEARNING IN, THROUGH AND ABOUT THE NATURE
A PROJECT CONCEIVED BY ALEXANDRA KULLACK (C) 2009



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PROJECT AIMS:

ALONI is a holistic concept which offers children and adolescents a real-life form of learning. Learning through experience which challenges the intellect, the spirit and the senses collectively. Learning through individual, conscious and subconscious experience. "Learning by doing" in its purist form.

ALONI aims:

To inspire and to challenge, to open opportunities and to communicate values.

To draw children and adolescents away from the virtual cosmos of video games and TV serials, and to bring them back into the truly adventurous real world in which they live.

To offer young people perspectives for a shared intercultural future and to show them the beauty, strengths and weaknesses of Europe.

To foster each individual's sense of responsibility to society and our planet by fostering personal strength and personal initiative.

To give children and adolescents a place and a way to contribute to our world within their lives and their capabilities.



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CONCEPT:

"ALONI" is based on the paedagogics of active experience. We concentrate on the essentials! An island is a clearly defined geographic space with limited resources, thus easier to comprehend than a complex metropolis.

ALONI consists of three core modules: Adventure holiday Experience-based learning and Introductory courses/ professional internships.

For example, ALONI makes active use of a key aspect common to all humans and all living beings: the absorption of energy by eating and drinking.

The "social function", the "communicative event" of food consumption has been recognised since Simmel (1910).

How does this apply to our project? Simple: the honey extracted by the youths themselves, the fish taken from the sea at dawn, the lamb slaughtered by its shepherd for an Easter or Christmas feast, thyme, oregano and other fragrant herbs collected by the group, the wild artichokes handharvested, the sun-dried sea salt, the cheese from the local dairy: in turn, each of these foods is centerstage, and ultimately the group prepares and eats them.

The communal meal and the fact of one's personal involvement in the procurement and preparation of the food, the challenge of being creative, the sensual experience of the meal all strengthen the group bond and enhance the new impressions gathered throughout the day.

"Cooking together", be it in the kitchen of a small guesthouse, by a campfire or on a grill suddenly becomes "cool" and "hip".

The knowledge of where food comes from, the various production processes behind it, the understanding that everything forms a cycle - this all forms a further element of this project aimed at sensitizing children and adolescents to the economical, ecological and social challenges of our future.

Even when not produced by the group, the project provides for the savouring of

traditional specialties, such as milopita, tiropita, pastitsio, moussaka or choriatiiki in small local tavernas.

Among those things Greeks enjoy most is eating out with friends, not just for the purpose of eating, but to communicate, exchange ideas, enjoy shared time, deepen friendships.

ALONI offers children and adolescents concrete insight into the various professional worlds of agriculture. They can:

Learn from the organic beekeeper where the honey for our bread comes from. They can build their own beehive to produce honey themselves.

Join the fishermen at work: From the live fish in the sea to the canned product; the harsh competition among fishermen in the market; globalised trade to ensure survival. What remains ... antibiotics or quality?

Accompany the shepherd and see his role as "custodian of the landscape".

Help the wine-maker harvest grapes ...

Learn to locate "invisible" tracks in the open country, like a hunter, to find and observe animals. Must Greeks hunt to survive? No ... but for some it is the only way to still perceive that they live on an island!

Find out why one man goes fishing at four in the morning, and why another man has lost his arms ...

Experience the various sporting activities possible due to the unique geographic island terrain. Immerse themselves in a world of adventure, both in the sea and ashore, while discovering a new strange world: climbing, kayaking, mountain biking, trekking, horseback riding, spelunking, free climbing, snorkelling, night-time hiking, camping ... action, immediacy, suspense, emotion, variety and authenticity.

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SLOGAN:

To move something – to leave an impression behind – to feel – to change

TARGET GROUP:

Pupils age 13-16 (German school years 7-8), interns age 15-17 (German school years 8-10),

Montessori pupils age 16-17 (German school years 9-10) who intend to write their "major Montessori paper" on one of the topics mentioned below.

Interns at highschool level, age 16-18 (German school years 11-12).
Upper secondary.

PROGRAMMES & COURSES:

Combination of adventure, play, fun and learning.
Career orientation and sampler courses in agricultural businesses.
Ecotourism - learning to respect and preserve nature.
Small groups of up to five participants.
Qualified tutors, contact persons and guides

The following skills are modelled in a playful manner:

Self-confidence and trust in others – cooperation – teamwork – conflict mediation – tolerance – social competence

2 to 6 weeks (maximum) on the Greek island of Kefalonia in the Ionian Sea

THEMES:

- PAEDAGOGICS
- HISTORY
- LITERATURE
- GREEK MYTHOLOGY AND LEGENDS
- GEOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY
- FLORA AND FAUNA
- AGRICULTURE
 - Winegrowing
 - Dairy operation
 - Fishing/fish farming
 - Beekeeping
 - Olive farming
 - Stable hand
 - Shepherd
 - Hunter
 - Reforestation
 - Archaeology

- TRIPS & EXCURSIONS
- PLAY – FUN – ADVENTURE

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LEITMOTIV:

To offer children and adolescents a place where they can feel comfortable, safe and challenged all at the same time. To give them the opportunity to discover and develop their own strengths and talents. To increase their awareness of their surroundings and environment.

Why on an island far from home? An island is a small complex cosmos; it offers a great variety of activities without being overly distracting. The new, strange environment, a world that may appear far afield and unknown to many children although it is quite close, the confrontation with a completely new situation can erase routine concepts and established patterns of behaviour, thus widening their horizons.

The adventure of the unknown, the experience of embarking on some undertaking on one's own impulse, bolsters their personalities, gives them strength and allows them to develop a consciousness of themselves, their environment and fellow humans.

The programme, adjusted to the individual participants and their needs, is both supportive and challenging. They will learn to grasp contexts, understand procedures and courses of action, so as to avoid future mistakes.

To open up opportunities for European children and adolescents – to encourage them and show them that it is worth making an effort, committing, to help them become responsible, creative, happy and critically analytic human beings.

Any single individual thus reached and affected would justify such a project.

Everyone should be offered this chance, as everyone will benefit from the experience gained.

To pull them from their sometimes depressing everyday lives, to offer this opportunity not just to "privileged" young people, but to all, that is my most important motivation.



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- HISTORY:

Due to its geographic location, Kefalonia has repeatedly been a pawn in the game of the Great Powers of the West and East.

Critical historical discussion of events, e.g. the crimes of the Wehrmacht Division "Edelweiss", committed on 13 September 1943.

Study material: Captain Corelli's Mandolin, 2001 movie based on novel by Louis de Bernières.

Visits to various sites, interviews, talks with locals, discussion of judicial proceedings ...

Otto Friedrich Ludwig von Wittelsbach, I. King of Greece, Bavarian prince ...

- LITERATURE:

Famous German Philhellenes; Munich and its special role, ...

Franz Xaver von Baader, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Hölderlin, Friedrich Schiller, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Friedrich Wilhelm von Thiersch (Teacher to King Otto I)

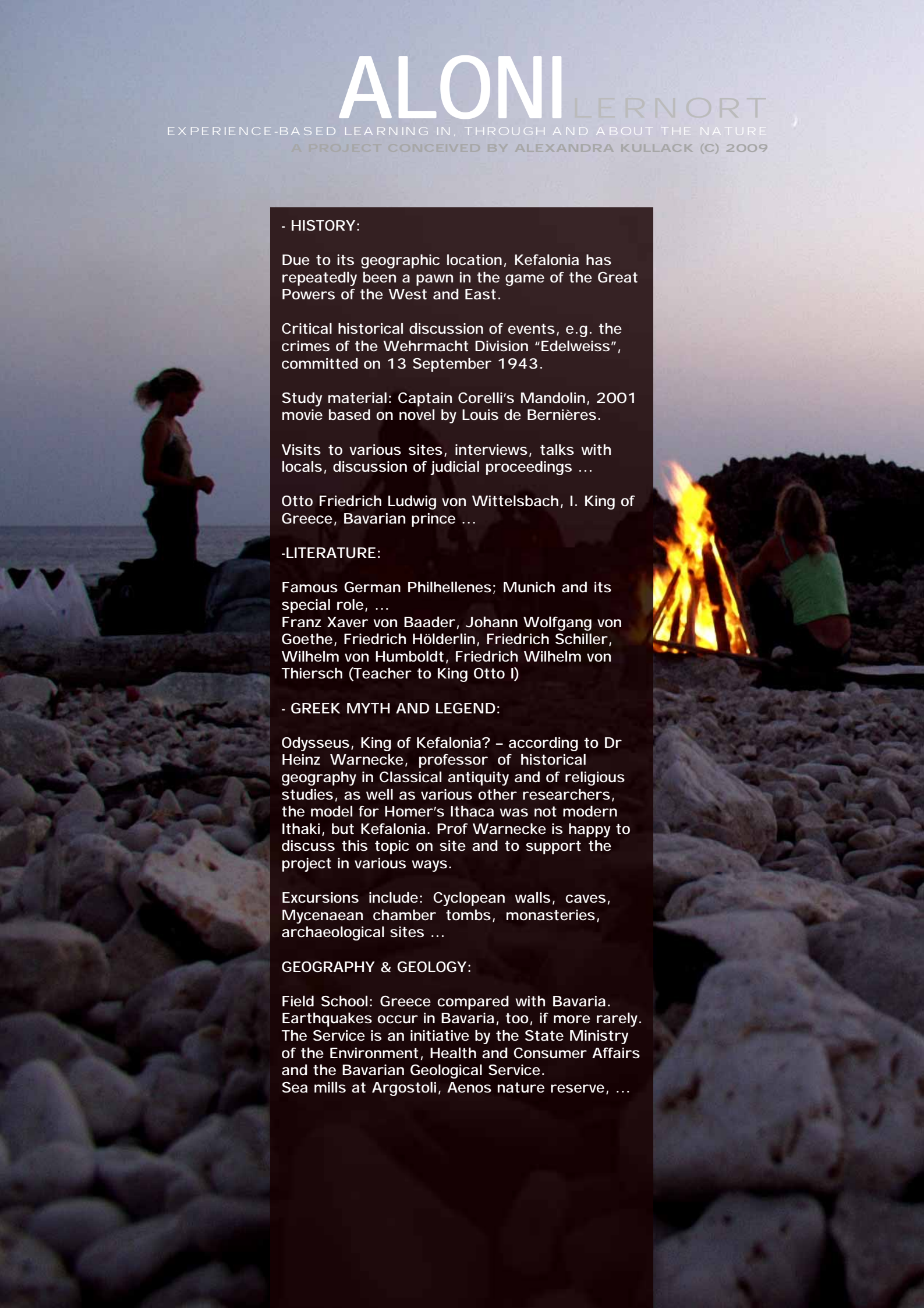
- GREEK MYTH AND LEGEND:

Odysseus, King of Kefalonia? – according to Dr Heinz Warnecke, professor of historical geography in Classical antiquity and of religious studies, as well as various other researchers, the model for Homer's Ithaca was not modern Ithaki, but Kefalonia. Prof Warnecke is happy to discuss this topic on site and to support the project in various ways.

Excursions include: Cyclopean walls, caves, Mycenaean chamber tombs, monasteries, archaeological sites ...

GEOGRAPHY & GEOLOGY:

Field School: Greece compared with Bavaria. Earthquakes occur in Bavaria, too, if more rarely. The Service is an initiative by the State Ministry of the Environment, Health and Consumer Affairs and the Bavarian Geological Service. Sea mills at Argostoli, Aenos nature reserve, ...



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FLORA & FAUNA:

Zoology of Kefalonia: Goats, sheep, caretta caretta (leatherback turtle) dolphins, fish farming, monk seals, wild horses, birds of prey, bees, snakes, lizards.

Botany: Grapes, olives, figs, fir trees, organic agriculture in Greece.

Taster courses and internships: smell, see, taste, experience, live ...

The courses comprise practical and theoretical segments.

Hands-on agricultural careers options, critical analysis and scrutiny, e.g. is the growing of GM crops unavoidable? Goat and sheep husbandry versus nature conservation? ...

-AGRICULTURE:

Winegrower: viniculture, production techniques, tending of vines, harvesting, production of wine and grape juice, storage ...

Dairy process operation: specialised in production of organic sheep's cheese, processing of milk, various production techniques: heating, cooling, mixing, separating, cheese-making and fermentation, drying ...

Fishing/fish farming: Naval activities, use of technical equipment on a caique (trawler), methods of husbandry or catch, work with the fishing net, fish traps or rods, processing, sales, operation sequences in fishing and fish farming, environmentally sustainable fishing to protect the environment ...

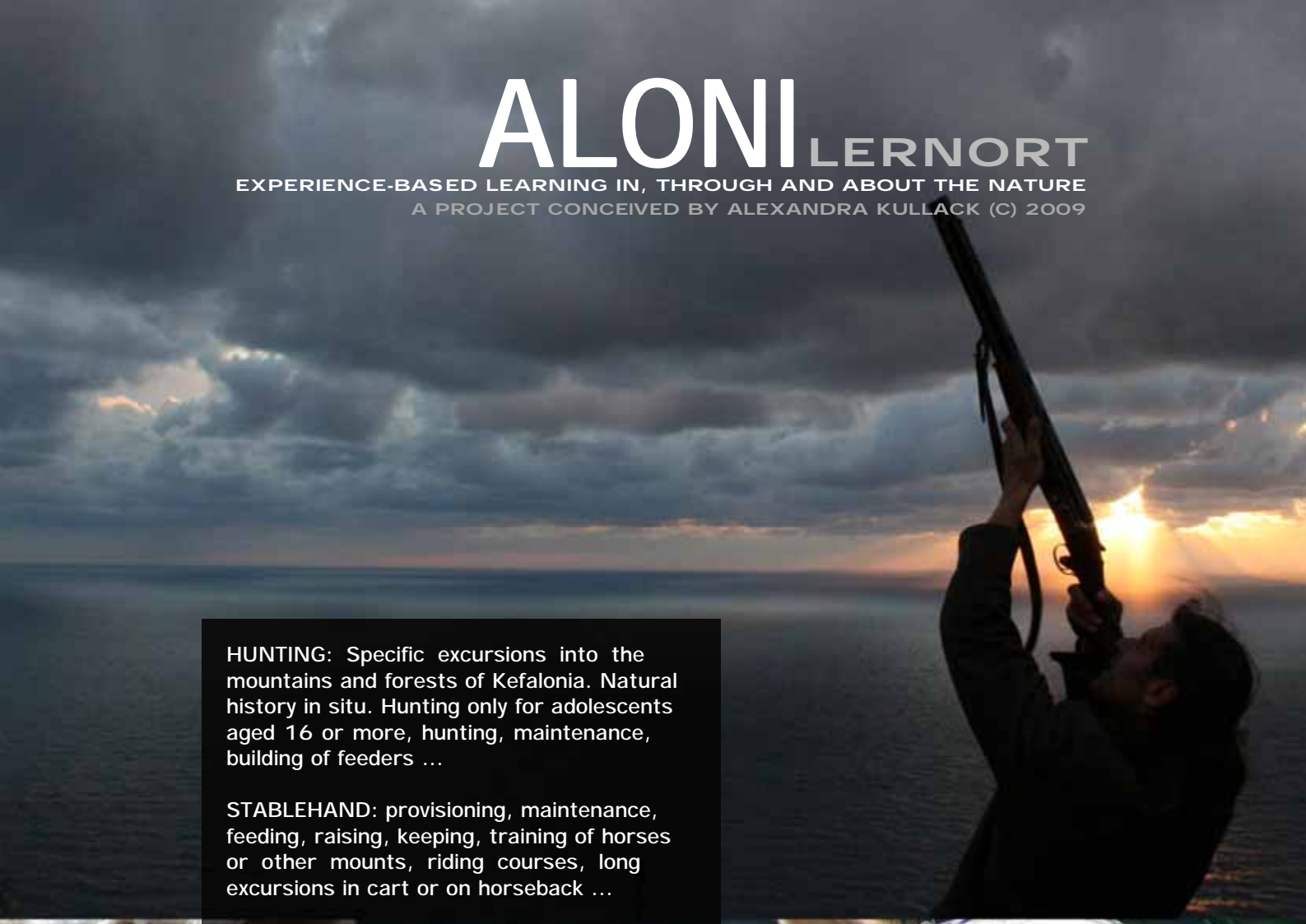
Beekeeping: Starter course on bees and honey, practice and theory.

Construction and/or restoration of a beehive, building of honeycombs, control of the brood nest, the swarm, winter preparations, uncapping of honeycombs, honey extraction, biology of bees, ecological contexts, bees under the microscope, honey in cuisine, cosmetics and medicine ...




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HUNTING: Specific excursions into the mountains and forests of Kefalonia. Natural history in situ. Hunting only for adolescents aged 16 or more, hunting, maintenance, building of feeders ...

STABLEHAND: provisioning, maintenance, feeding, raising, keeping, training of horses or other mounts, riding courses, long excursions in cart or on horseback ...



SHEPERDING: provisioning, maintenance, feeding, raising and keeping of wool, dairy or meat sheep, shearing, fattening, milking ...

OLIVE FARMING: Tree maintenance, pruning, planting, harvest, harvest by hand, processing at the oil press ...

REAFFORESTATION: Sensitisation for our environment, gaining environmental knowledge, developing environmental awareness, similarities and differences between the forests of Bavaria and Kefalonia. Economic significance, habitat, amenity, climate regulation ...

NATURE CONSERVATION: "Archipelagos" is a charitable organisation concerned with environmental planning as well as the protection and managed of natural ecosystems, both on- and off-shore. To introduce the youths to the natural diversity of the island, specific hikes are undertaken together with experienced biologists, information and background material are provided.

ARCHAEOLOGY: Architectural, historical and art factual heritage of Kefalonia. The Director of the Argostoli Archaeological Museum permits pupils to take part in excavations.

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TRIPS & EXCURSIONS:

Eg. Aenos nature reserve: With a height of 1.628m, Aenos is the highest mountain in the Ionian Islands. It is especially famous for the Black Kefalonian Fir and for the local population of wild horses. Walks through gorges, on old mule tracks and goat tracks, with fantastic vistas, make this tour an unforgettable adventure.



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PLAYING - FUN - ADVENTURE:

Beach Soccer, Beach Volleyball, or simply relax in the sand.
Water skiing, fun or supervised pure desperation.

Kayaking: From the assembly of a folding Kayak to the Eskimo roll, short 3-4 hour tours to lonely beaches unreachable by foot, or 1-2 day expeditions with beachside nights in a sleeping bag under the stars. Coordination, discipline, forward planning and flexibility are required. Teamwork!

Snorkelling: From the monastery beach at Kipouria via the deep sea trench to Platia Amos.

Climbing: Climbing and free climbing by the coast, spelunking in the Aenos nature reserve or abseiling into caves.

Learning to trust one's partner and oneself, motor skills, dexterity and courage!

Hiking/trekking: Transcend borders, find new things, along coastal cliffs, on old goat paths, to abandoned monasteries or villages destroyed in the earthquake. Experience nature with all senses.

Camping: Building communal campsites, lighting campfires, cooking, adventure games, playing in the woods, night-time walks to the beach, moonlight bathing, noticing the sounds of nature, seeing sand-flees jump in the light of a fire, fascinating marine fluorescence, spotting constellations.

Horse riding: 1-5 hour trips through 3,000 year old olive groves and orchards, all day excursions including a picnic in the mountain, exercising or swimming with the horse, etc.



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MEETING:

Exchange and meeting with pupils of the local Greek school. Development of a shared project, aiming to produce and bolster, through direct contact, their intercultural understanding, mutual tolerance and sensitivity for culture, religion and traditions of the partner school.

The pupils should be given the possibility to develop a shared project under their own control, assisted by the teachers only through discrete and indirect help.

Climax and end point of the project should be a performance, presentation, publication or completion of a product to do with the project, to give the pupils lasting positive motivation and make their time in Greece unforgettable.

Supporting self-subsistence, self-confidence and social skills would be a natural outcome of such a project. To gain experience together, move something, leave something behind ...

CONCLUSION OF THE PROJECKT:

At the end of a course or internship, the group/participants should be given the opportunity to keep something, e.g. a jar of self-extracted honey, or the school should be given something to lastingly embody the gained experience, such as its own beehive for biology classes, a vine, a small olive tree ...

Personal experience, personal exploration, personal activity - Wake up to discover the world.

The entire stay can also be considered as a small LANGUAGE COURSE, as communication will be partially in English.

The six-week courses would also offer the opportunity for a small Greek course.

Greek words in the German language, the overall influence of Greek, the etymology and history of specific words (e.g. "Philosophy", composed from the words for "friend" and "wisdom"), small travel glossary ...

The return trip, by ferry boat from Patras to Ancona, can be used by teachers and pupils to reflect the project in retrospect and process the impressions gained individually and collectively.

SPECIAL MOMENTS:

Campfire and night on the beach, farewell dinner at Kipouria monastery.

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DAILY SCHEDULE:

Since the individual courses or starter internships have different requirements in terms of working times, thus necessitating individually designed schedules, and furthermore because some depend on weather conditions, the daily routine has to be flexibly adjusted for each individual course.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE:

The programmes are individually designed for the respective school, its pupils, their needs and desires; individual modules can then be combined.

COSTS AND SERVICES:

We are happy to provide specific information and prices on request.

Accommodation in tents or small guesthouses

Full- or half-board depending on programme

24-hour supervision

Adventure programmes

Starter courses

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KEFALONIA:

Kefalonia (mod. Gr. Κεφαλονιά, anc. Gr. Κεφαλληνία, Ital. Cefalonia), the most westerly island of Greece, lies in the Ionian Sea, in the channel leading into the Gulf of Patras, between Lefkada to the north, Ithaki to the east and Zakynthos to the south. With its ca. 780 square kilometres, the island is the largest of the Eptanissos, the Seven Islands, as they were known under 19th-century British rule.

Turquoise seas, lush green vegetation, wild, sheer mountain scenery and a fascinating variegated geological profile have given Kefalonia a special atmosphere and beauty.

Broad sandy beaches, small coves, steep cliffs and coats, steppe-like plains, fertile valleys, dense black forests of fir, a unique complex of caves and the highest mountain in the Ionian Islands, 1628m Aetos, are the most striking features of the island.

Kefalonia is characterized by the creative forces of nature and a three thousand years of cultural history.

Because of its strategic position in terms of military geography, the island was a frequent pawn in the struggle between various Mediterranean powers. From antiquity until the late 19th century, various European powers appreciated and thus occupied the islands: the Romans, Normans, Venetians, Ottomans, Russians, French, British, and, in World War II, Mussolini's Italians followed by Hitler's Wehrmacht laid claim to this paradisiacal island.

Only in 1864 did the "Septinsular Republic", founded in 1825, join the modern Greek state, but only after World War II did the island enter a phase of geopolitical peace and stability.

In 1953, a further devastating catastrophe, of a type that affects the Ionian Islands, located on the edge of the Eurasian continental shelf, from time to time. A massive earthquake destroyed nearly 90 per cent of buildings in the island, roads disappeared, houses lay in ruins. Hole settlements were levelled. The entire island was lifted upward by about 40 cm. Many of the survivors left the island.

This is only one, so far the last, of four major earthquakes that affected Kefalonia in modern times (1766, 1867, 1910, 1953).

The architecture, once predominantly Venetian in style, was adjusted to modern conditions; regulations for earthquake protection have ultimate priority, as the quakes of the last half century show. Kefalonia's houses are built earthquake-safe. After the almost panic emigration of the 1950s, a movement of returning to the island is underway since the 1990s.

In 2008, the economic magazine Forbes ranked Kefalonia as the fourth most idyllic places in Europe, rich in natural beauty and with the qualities of relaxed and comfortable life

The island of Kefalonia, a place of special attraction and magic.

New research by the ancient historian Dr Heinz Warnecke throws a different light on the island. For the first time, his recent work Homers Wilder Westen convincingly interprets the geography of Homer's Iliad and thus proves Kefalonia to be the home of Odysseus, ancient Ithaca, an idea of which the Kefalonians have long been convinced.

Kefalonia offers many work opportunities based on nature and tourism. For example, the island is one the main producers of organic farmed fish globally.

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A close-up photograph of a light brown praying mantis perched on a dry, spiky plant stem. The mantis is facing right, with its long, thin antennae extended. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brown.

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ΛΑΣΚΑΡΑΤΟΥ
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