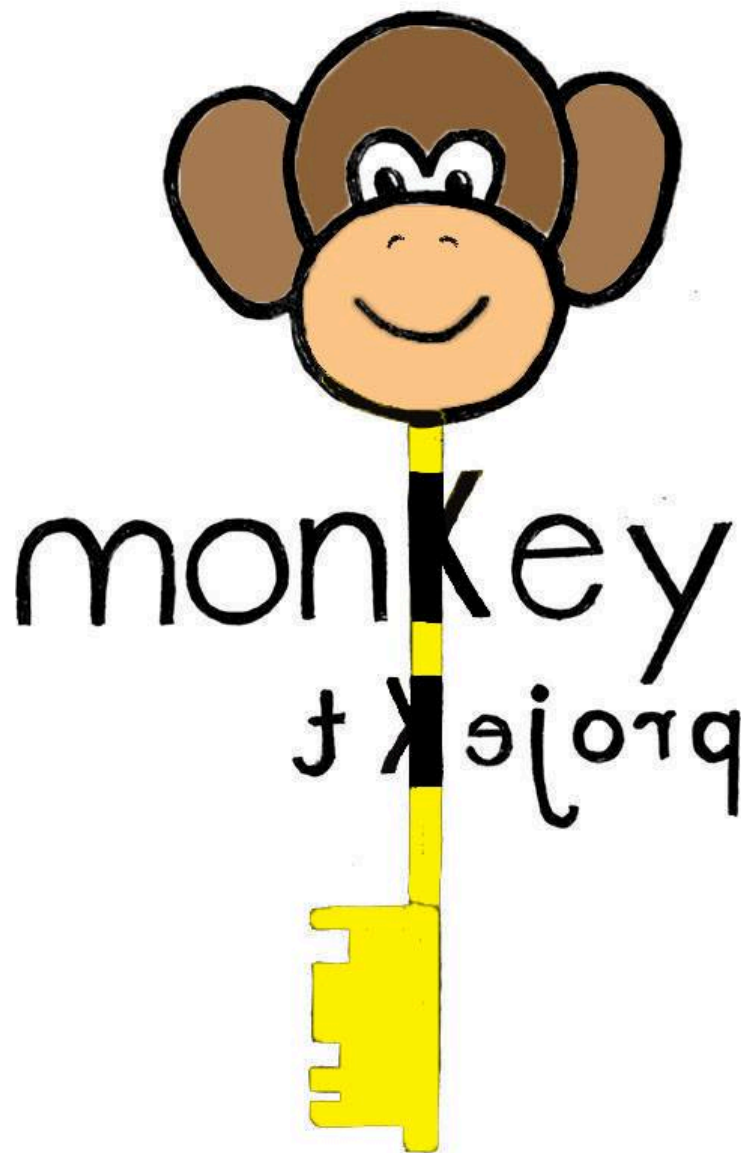


# The Great Transition group project - Note of intent

## The MonKey ProjeKt



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## **Problem**

By our project we would like to tackle the problem of disconnection of urban children with nature that implies their lack of knowledge of the nature and most importantly of the human impact on the environment. This phenomena leads to future superficial environmental consciousness and to further destruction of ecosystems. We believe that in order to fight climate change and stand for sustainability we need to start by educating the future generations by explaining them the basic notions from early age and by leading them by example.

It is necessary to raise awareness among children and to show the significant human impact on the environment through captivating stories and interactive games that would constitute a whole learning experience that children would remember and carry through their lives. Therefore, it is crucial to make the interaction passionate for both students and pupils as well as interesting for parents and school administration to continue the initiated efforts.

We are strongly persuaded that an early environmental education is a powerful tool to tackle the climate change. The younger generation are those who will directly face the disastrous consequences of the climate change. Today, the world is experiencing the great transition, so it is important to make our children understand the environmental issues. Children's early acquaintance of this major problem may also boost their creativity and they may propose innovative solutions in the future.

## **Proposed concept**

Our project goes by the name of « The MonKey Projekt », which has been inspired by two main ideas: on the one hand, it is a fun name that we thought would easily attract the interest of children and its originality would make this name stick in their minds. On the other hand, we also wanted to provide a name that would express our will to change the mindsets and prepare future generations for changes regarding human impact on the environment. **The monkey is agile** The first K appears in capital letter to distinguish the word « key », since we strongly that our project has strong keys for success in the change of mindsets.

The projects consists in workshops and outdoors activities guided by Sciences Po students and teachers of kindergartens and primary schools, with the pupils. Our main goal is to create a connection with the children through a powerful speech and fun activities that will make the pupils understand the notions we explain to them, see concretely was challenges our planet is facing and how everyone can contribute with individual efforts, and find the activities interesting enough to establish a set of several sessions throughout the year.

Our solution has the advantage of being particularly feasible and effective.

Its feasibility is clear, since the most complicated step is to find schools and teachers that are open to give us an hour two or three times during the trimester to organise these activities. We have noticed that the MonKey project attracts the attention of many administration members, and such interventions could also be vapisable for schools' image.

By doing intervention in classrooms in primary schools, we strongly believe that such an educational project has the tools to convince young citizens of their duties regarding conservation of the environment. Indeed, by creating a bond with young adults, they will not receive our explanations as general knowledge transmitted by an authority figure, but rather perceive it as experiences lived by other young people who came to share with them. Furthermore, the fun aspect of the project will help them get involved, fella concerned about the studied notions, and can make them want to explore methods of protecting the planet at home, with their parents. Therefore, the project has an impact not only on students, but also on their families

and friends. Finally, the interactiveness of the activities that we offer both inside the classroom and outside, with visits of farms for example, will help the children remember the ideas shared with them thanks to educative and enjoyable experiences.

The proof of concept has been done, with a first intervention in school, on the 11th December 2018. We visited a class of kindergarten in the city of Paris where we presented the problem of deforestation in Amazonia. We made the lesson interactive with a story of a monkey that has lost his house (a tree) because of deforestation. We explained to children what is deforestation and why it is important to preserve forests and biodiversity of our planet. The interactiveness also consisted to ask each child to build a tree with materials we provided them. This simple exercise aims to enrich the experience of children as they made the trees themselves that they would probably remember. We provide a video with children's feedbacks where they explain what they understood and share their experience in general. Our idea of interactive educational program is practical as it has a very interactive approach. Taking into account children's positive feedback and general understanding of a major issue as a deforestation in just 30 minutes proves the practical potential of the concept. Based on the research in the field of education, we assume that people remember concepts better when they are taught notions presented as a case study rather than in a theoretical way, especially children. We believe that the ideas presented would stick in their minds. If the project continues with a number of various workshops and outdoor activities, children would be more aware of the surrounding nature and its fragility.

### **Expected positive impacts**

Regarding the qualitative sustainability of the solution, the best indicator will undoubtedly be the participation and the responsiveness of the pupils during the activities that we propose. A key tool to observe the sustainability of the project is the expression of the children's willingness to explore further during and after workshops and experiences outdoors.

A quantitative impact is hardly measurable with this kind of project. The problem we tackle must be solved by citizens, through their actions, and by governments through public policies. It is an issue that can't be solved by us only, but our project is a powerful tool to educate and motivate the future social actors to do something to protect the environment. Therefore, our project will see its results in a broad scope of actions, and on a long term basis, thanks to the initiation of children, at a young age, to the struggles our planet and species are facing.

On the whole, the positive impact of The MonKey project will allow us to expand our activities to more schools, and eventually adapt the program, in the future, to the levels in school, and develop new activities around the notion of eco-friendliness.

### **Major risks and actions to reduce them**

As any other project, ours will surely face some struggles on its path. The major risk we have seen and will therefore make sure it will be avoided, is not presenting a program that is interesting enough for the pupils in primary schools. It is a hard topic to study for children, and not an intuitive debate. Therefore, we must present in a way that will make them enjoy the experience with us, learning about the topic, and remember the main ideas that we want to transmit to them. The goal is also to make

sure the children will express the wish to repeat the experience, this is why we must be sure our interventions are both pedagogical and playful.

The MonKey project must also be sufficiently well-designed to convince school administration that it is worth their trust and they can give us time to make interventions in classrooms. Teachers and school principals must feel the utility and credibility of the project, just like the children, to be seduced by our proposition.

There is major issue that we will face when the project starts developing and activities multiplying: time and people management. It is 100% voluntary work, and our team is only composed of eight people working on their free time, outside classes. Once activities will begin on a regular basis, we will have to find more people keen on doing the interventions, and set a timetable for the team to make sure every intervention can be realised by at least three people, for organisational purposes (carry material, help children in small groups). Nevertheless, the Sciences Po student's community is highly interested in the studied topics, and we believe the question of the volunteers will be quickly answered. Time management will be a bigger struggle, but we will be able to organise every intervention properly and with sufficient advance to secure replacements if needed.

The last struggle the MonKey project can find is of logistical nature: we might face schools that don't let us take the children on full-day activities for financial or time reasons or for security matters. For the outdoors activities, we think it can be a problem to find farmers able to receive a class, or not finding the time to bring the children outside of Paris and bringing them back, namely because of traffic jams in Paris and the Ile-de-France highways in mornings.

### **Deployment strategy and major milestones**

The project is implemented and the program developed through a series of steps.

The first step is to create the project and define the activities from scratch. We have ideas that have been tested in a school in Paris, and more ideas to come. The first test brought us positive conclusions and teachings, but we must also test other ideas in the future to set an even stronger educational program.

The second step is to find the schools that agree to make a partnership with us and let us organise one activity at first, and more later on if they are convinced by our intervention. there are lot of schools in Paris, and contacts can easily be found on the internet. Phone calls and e-mails are the best way to reach schools, present our project and settle partnerships. Schools will also have to chose workshops and excursions in a list that we offer. This will make them feel that they also get to decide and really take part in the project in cooperation with us. If we bring the ideas, the good conduct of the activities will depend on a solid cooperation between members of schools' administrations and of the project.

The third step has to do with outdoors activities: if the first goal is to make efficient and enjoyable interventions in class, we also want to bring the children outside the walls and make them see concretely what we explain to them during workshops. We plan to organise visits of traditional farms and urban agriculture / gardening spaces.

The fourth step is to maintain the contact with every school we work, in order to implement the program after the first intervention and have the chance to make more activities.

Last but not least, communication on the media must be ensured during the whole existence of the MonKey Project. This communication, which is a long term « step » for the good development of the program, can be ensured via different platforms:

school magazines, associations webpages and social media accounts, and through our own « MonKey Media pages » on social networks, in order to increase our visibility and to find more potential partners.

### **Budget and return on investment analysis**

The return on investment is not relevant since it is a pedagogical project, our activity is purely based on volunteering and does not intend to generate revenues. The return on investment will be the children's motivation, curiosity, their better understanding of environmental issues and the more careful relations with nature.

The budget will exclusively cover the costs of materials and equipment. Revenues will come from donations or public subsidies. Estimated cost of in-class workshops are materials for games (cards, dice, paper etc) that is approximately 10 euros per workshop. As for tastings, a more significant budget needs to be anticipated (approximately, 50 euros). As for outdoor activities, the project needs to cover bus rental as well as snacks (approximately, 790 euros). We intend to organize such activities on a regular basis (3 times a trimester → 9 times a year).

For indication: programs will be adapted taking into consideration the age of children.

1. 1st trimester:

- A workshop on deforestation (10 euros);
- A discovery of agriculture through a vegetables tasting (50 euros);
- An outdoor activity: a visit to a farm (550 euros a bus rental + snacks 240 euros = 790 euros).

2) 2nd trimester:

- A workshop on water pollution (10 euros);
- A workshop on waste disposal (10 euros);
- An outdoor activity (790 euros).

3) 3rd trimester

- A workshop on global warming (10 euros);
- A workshop on soil and land pollution (10 euros);
- An outdoor activity (790 euros).

Estimated costs for one group of 30 pupils are of approximately 2470 euros per year.

### **Organization**

For the organization of this project, we need a motivated team of young adults that are willing to devote their free time by exchanging with children. Young "teachers" need to have basic knowledge of environmental issues and a capacity of sparking children's interest. For this, the required skills are basic teaching abilities, patience and flexibility as well as strong communication skills. In terms of financial resources, the project needs to be supported by public or private actors. The project does not need a significant budget as you can see in the costs presented above. However, it is important to have partners that could be also the sponsors of the project. We need to establish partnerships with schools, farmers, associations to make the idea supported and to potentially grow it by guaranteeing the durability of the project. As for sponsors, we consider to look for donors among private enterprises that could be interested as a part of their corporate social responsibility goals and public institutions (town hall, region) that could be interested as this initiative undoubtedly creates positive externalities.