With a “Backpacker’s Passport”, Pioneer Secondary won international prize

How would you introduce your country to backpackers?

Led by Pioneer Secondary School, “Backpackers’ Passport” is an online intercultural learning project inviting 200 students from 11 schools in Singapore, Denmark, India, Portugal, the Philippines, Sweden, France, Estonia, and Cyprus to plan a 3-day itinerary for backpackers. The students introduced their countries through photography and short web-videos.

Project coordinator, Ms Yuen Chailin (27 years old) responded to the interview saying, “the school used i-Collaborate, a ICT collaborative platform, for the international students to upload and share with other students. This platform has instant messaging capabilities for students and teachers to interact. The platform...
is open only to participating schools and thereby protects the privacy of the students as well as copyright of the content uploaded."

She pointed out that “the rate of participation is the highest this year. Pioneer Secondary School picked backpackers as the central topic because these travellers are typically interested in local culture and customs. In introducing their countries, students had to delve deep into understanding the highlights, festivals and food customs etc."

Students are divided into teams to design a 3-day itinerary. For example, a team from Pioneer Secondary School further sub-divided the 3-day trip into cultural tours, entertainment and the heartlands, hence allowing visitors to experience a multi-faceted Singapore.

The itinerary is not just a plan on paper. Participating students have to physically follow the itinerary in order to ensure that the plan is sound. In this process, students filmed short videos as supplement for others to learn more about Singapore.

Nur Shafiq Amira (14 years old) is a secondary two student at Pioneer Secondary School who had participated in this online intercultural learning project. Together with the project coordinator, she had recently participated in the 8th Asia-Europe Classroom Network Conference held in Denmark to present ‘Backpackers’ Passport’.

She said, “in the process of designing the 3-day itinerary she had discovered some highlights of Singapore which she was unaware of, such as MINT museum of toys.” She took time to visit the museum and provided an account of her visit and the interesting collection.

With a keen interest in food, Yu Qunjie (14 years old) filmed a video of a vendor processing sugar cane juice at the hawker centre. He was particularly impressed by the Portuguese students’ presentation on the process of making Portuguese egg tarts.

‘Backpackers’ Passport’ was commended at the 8th Asia-Europe Classroom Network Conference, bagging one of the three AEC (Asia-Europe Classroom) awards. It is also the only project from Singapore which won a prize. The other two projects winning the award were from schools in Finland and Greece.

Readers can go to www.pioneersec.moe.edu.sg/ic_new and go to “Backpackers’ Passport” to view the presentations of their country by participating students.