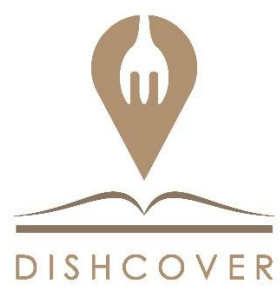


Interview with Mr Dimitri GEORGIOU, Founder and CEO of Dishcover Tours
(<https://www.dishcover.tours>)



- Dimitris, please briefly introduce yourself

I started investing in the stock market at the age of 14, while at 23 I was working as investment analyst for a private equity and later on for the European Central Bank. However, my volunteering experience in the cultural field inspired me to realise that finance can be used to create sustainable business models and address social issues, so I decided to explore this path, combining it with my passion for traveling & food.

During this quest, I had an exchange with the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs program on sustainable/alternative tourism (Italy), I pursued a Master of Philosophy in Finance (University of Cambridge) and volunteered for multisensory cultural projects (Greece, Austria, Germany). Returning to Greece, I worked as Associate to the Secretary General of the Greek National Tourism Organisation.

Finally, I felt I had enough experiences and the right team to establish Dishcover.

- What is Dishcover Tours about?

Dishcover (<https://www.dishcover.tours>), officially established in 2019, is the result of two former initiatives I developed in experiential tourism: Food Chronicles and Flavors of Art which were exploring the cross-section of gastronomy and culture towards meaningful experiences.

Dishcover is the first to offer an interactive mobile app with AR elements that allow users to discover a city and its history at their own pace by tasting its best flavours, as curated, self-guided food experiences. Moreover, it provides quality activity providers and creatives with an easy way to create and offer their own top-notch, self-guided food experience, expanding their audience.

Dishcover aims to combine the power of food to carry stories with innovative technology, in order to provide the visitors with meaningful, tailor-made culinary experiences highlighting the unique dimensions of our history. At the same time, it aims to provide its partners with the opportunity of a new market and promote the sustainable development and cultural heritage preservation in its local communities.

There is already a critical growing market niche for such services. However, Dishcover is getting even more important particularly now, due to the increased safety measures and concerns and budget restrictions.

- How your participation in Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs programme helped you establish Dishcover Tours

My participation was transformative. Before that I had awards and distinctions on relevant projects and studies. However, during my cooperation with the Host Entrepreneur and the team of Smeralda Consulting, my skills and knowledge reached a different level through robust experience. Indicatively, I:

- got professional experience around designing tree diagrams, Gant tables and setting milestones, among others for effective project planning and management.
- involved in projects of cross-border partnerships.
- researched and created manuals around agricultural and maritime tourism
- involved in special events such as the “Magie d’Inverno” that combined exhibition of luxury products (Cartier etc) with local culture and products.
- familiarized with youth programs and programs of knowledge and innovation transfer.
- experienced how my finance, research and business skills can lead to preservation of cultural heritage through and got to know the whole process including gathering of photos, designs, historical content and other unpublished material through interviews, including legends and stories.

Of course, being in a different country helped me also open my horizons and mind, in new practices, approaches and understanding of different cultural contexts. For instance, it was there that I realized that local products carry stories and can identify a place. Another example was when I spied some students to check where they would eat. This place now has 500 reviews on Tripadvisor, which shows by itself the usefulness of technology in tourism experience, but at the same time the need to preserve the authenticity and feeling of discovery.

So, in my case, everything ran very smoothly. The Host entrepreneur provided me with several opportunities for learning, while the help of Asset Tec and Mr. Andreadis, during the application and goals-setting process was important for the effectiveness of my staying. All in all, EYE supplied me with skills and a compass towards my entrepreneurship journey.

- Which are your future plans and aims?

Recently, we had the first agreement for cooperation outside Greece and thus we want to accelerate this process and expand further. After all, there is a strong momentum.

Moreover, we have started planning our fundraising efforts. We recognize that the investment landscape for traveltech startups is very challenging, but we have a very strong value proposition and innovative approach, while we have achieved several milestones, by

bootstrapping. Fundraising would help us to expand faster taking advantage of the current opportunity and evolve further our technology.

I would like to mention that for our future expansion I think seriously of the EYE Global, while in future, when I meet the criteria, I plan to become a Host Entrepreneur for the EYE program.

- What advice would you like to give to other NEs who wish to participate to the programme and establish their own business?

I strongly recommend the program for all the reasons above. However, in order to provide some food for thought, I would also like to add:

- Knowing the language of the place of visit is not prohibitive, but can be definitely advantageous. The deeper you go in a country and move away from its main cities, the more you will need such skills.
- Choosing the right momentum is important. It is an exchange that aims to the establishment of partnerships and a new firm. In my case, the experience there was transformative, but sometimes I find myself thinking that the timing could be even better.
- Be open minded. The cultural input is equally important to the professional skills.
- Have a roadmap set, but also be flexible enough for opportunities that might arise.

From the program perspective, I would recommend that EYE should consider ways to assist the young entrepreneurs even after the end of the program, with networking opportunities, mentorship and maybe some funding. Most of the young participated entrepreneurs lack resources, while due to several factors cannot find funding from other sources such as venture capitals, while lending can increase the default risk.

- Quote

“The EYE provided me with the rare opportunity to feel what a holistic, extraordinary gastronomy & cultural experience can be and at the same time the skills to organize and implement such a project in a sustainable way.”

- Success indicators

Company Established: Yes

Jobs created: 2

Cooperations established: 13

Countries with partnerships: 2

Multiplier Effect on local economy: 4-6x