

## ORGANIZING YOUTH HIKING TRIPS AS A METHOD FOR CULTIVATING SAFETY AWARENESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

### ORGANIZAR EXCURSÕES DE CAMINHADA PARA JOVENS COMO MÉTODO PARA CULTIVAR A CONSCIÊNCIA DE SEGURANÇA NO DIA A DIA

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#### **Abstract**

The article examines the organization of tourist hikes with children and youth groups as an effective tool for fostering a culture of life safety from an economic perspective. In the context of increasing modern risks, ensuring the safety of the younger generation has become a priority task requiring significant investments. It has been established that tourist hikes not only help develop skills for safe behavior in natural environments but also optimize educational costs through hands-on learning. The study analyzes the economic aspects of preparing for hikes, including expenses for equipment, instructor training, and safety measures. Based on participant surveys and case studies, it has been revealed that such activities help reduce social

#### **Resumo**

*O artigo examina a organização de caminhadas turísticas com grupos de crianças e jovens como uma ferramenta eficaz para fomentar uma cultura de segurança da vida sob uma perspectiva econômica. No contexto do aumento dos riscos modernos, garantir a segurança da geração mais jovem tornou-se uma tarefa prioritária que exige investimentos significativos. Constatou-se que as caminhadas turísticas não só ajudam a desenvolver habilidades para comportamentos seguros em ambientes naturais, como também otimizam os custos educacionais por meio da aprendizagem prática. O estudo analisa os aspectos econômicos da preparação para as caminhadas, incluindo despesas com equipamentos,*



costs associated with injuries and lack of preparedness for emergencies. The results emphasize the need for investments in educator qualifications and the development of tourism infrastructure as a factor in regional sustainable development. Additionally, these initiatives promote physical activity and risk-awareness among youth through experiential learning outside traditional classroom settings, aligning with sustainable development principles.

**Keywords:** Tourist Hikes. Safety Culture. Life Activity. Tourism Economics. Education. Regional Development.

*treinamento de instrutores e medidas de segurança. Com base em pesquisas com participantes e estudos de caso, revelou-se que tais atividades ajudam a reduzir os custos sociais associados a lesões e à falta de preparo para emergências. Os resultados enfatizam a necessidade de investimentos na qualificação de educadores e no desenvolvimento da infraestrutura turística como fator de desenvolvimento sustentável regional. Além disso, essas iniciativas promovem a atividade física e a conscientização sobre riscos entre os jovens por meio da aprendizagem experiencial fora do ambiente tradicional de sala de aula, alinhando-se aos princípios do desenvolvimento sustentável.*

**Palavras-chave:** Caminhadas Turísticas. Cultura de Segurança. Atividade Física. Economia do Turismo. Educação. Desenvolvimento Regional.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Ensuring the safety and well-being of younger generations in the face of modern challenges has become increasingly critical. The growing number of natural and man-made risks necessitates equipping children and adolescents with skills to respond effectively to threats. In this context, tourist hikes with youth groups serve not only as a means of physical development but also as a cost-effective approach to fostering a safety culture. These activities provide hands-on learning opportunities, reducing the expenses associated with traditional education while enhancing preparedness for real-life situations. At the same time, there is a need to explore new educational approaches that combine learning objectives with minimal financial investment.

In this regard, Grishenkov and Yaroshchenko (2024) argue that hiking trips with young people help develop safe behavior skills, thereby reducing social costs associated with the consequences of negligence. Their research demonstrates that tourism can serve as a resource-saving tool through risk prevention.

Zotin (2024) emphasizes that hiking improves youth health, lowering healthcare costs and enhancing future workforce productivity. This makes such initiatives economically advantageous in the long term. Kladukhina and Melnikova (2024) highlight

that training programs for hike leaders, such as the "School for Beginner Instructors," increase the efficiency of tourism as an educational process while minimizing organizational costs. In this context, investments in personnel prove to be a key success factor.

Krivorotova (2024) suggests that hiking trips contribute to the cultural development of younger generations, indirectly benefiting regional economies by increasing interest in local resources. This underscores tourism's potential as a driver of regional development. Thus, hiking represents an economically viable approach to cultivating a safety culture, requiring cost-benefit analysis for broader implementation.

The purpose of this article is to examine the economic aspects of organizing hiking trips for youth groups and their impact on fostering a safety culture, as well as to identify key factors ensuring the effectiveness of such initiatives.

## 2 METHODS

For the analysis, data were collected through surveys of 120 hike participants (aged 10–18) and 25 instructors from various regions of Russia. The surveys included questions about preparation costs, perceived safety, and acquired skills. Additionally, expenditure reports from five regions for the year 2024 on hike organization were examined. The study employed both quantitative analysis methods (cost-benefit comparison) and qualitative assessment (analysis of open-ended responses).

The second phase of the research involved case studies of both successful and problematic hikes. Costs related to equipment, staff training, and safety measures were analyzed, along with their impact on overall effectiveness. Statistical tools, such as mean value calculation and correlation analysis between investments and outcomes, were used for data processing.

The economic analysis was based on comparing direct costs (equipment, transportation) and indirect benefits (reduction of social costs). This approach allowed for an assessment of the cost-effectiveness of hikes as an educational tool.

### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed that the average cost per hike participant amounts to approximately 5,000 rubles (~\$55 at current exchange rates), covering equipment, meals, and transportation. The largest expense category was safety provisions (40%), including first-aid kits, insurance, and GPS devices. However, these investments pay off by reducing incident rates: 80% of respondents reported that skills acquired during hikes helped them avoid injuries in daily life.

At the same time, training for group instructors requires additional investments—around 15,000 rubles (~\$165) per person under programs like the "School for Beginner Instructors." On the other hand, qualified personnel reduce the likelihood of errors by 30%, thereby lowering potential costs associated with mitigating consequences. For example, during hikes around the Multinskie Lakes, thorough preparation decreased medical assistance requests by 25% (Ishutinova, 2024; Kolodich, Korobkin, Liutoyev, 2024).

Hiking trips with youth groups extend beyond mere recreation or physical activity. They significantly reduce social costs, foster safety skills, and contribute to regional economic development. Below, we examine concrete data and case studies demonstrating how these activities address social and economic challenges.

A key societal benefit of hiking is its ability to improve participants' readiness for challenging situations (Voskovskaya et al., 2022; Dzhancharov et al., 2023; Cherdantseva, 2024). Surveys indicate that 70% of young hikers report better problem-solving skills in unfamiliar environments, making them more self-reliant in emergencies—whether natural disasters or everyday accidents.

This heightened awareness and practical competence directly alleviate pressure on emergency and healthcare services. Youth trained in first aid, wilderness safety, and risk assessment are less likely to require urgent intervention. For instance, the ability to treat minor injuries or prevent hypothermia during hikes reduces medical service demands, translating into regional healthcare savings.

The effect is particularly pronounced in regions with well-developed youth tourism programs, such as Crimea, Tambov Oblast, and Omsk Oblast. Data from regional

EMERCOM departments show a 15–20% decline in emergency service calls in areas with active hiking initiatives.

This effect stems from participants acquiring practical skills that enable them to either prevent incidents or handle them independently. For instance, knowing how to properly set up camp in bad weather or navigate using a map in the forest reduces the risks of getting lost or injured, thereby decreasing the burden on rescue teams (Shakhmametev, Strelets, Lebedev, 2018; Mikhailov, 2024; Dzhancharova et al., 2024). The redistribution of saved resources to other needs - such as infrastructure upgrades or preventive programs - creates additional benefits for local budgets.

Furthermore, hiking trips significantly impact regional economies by boosting interest in local infrastructure (Lebedev et al., 2018; Dzhancharova et al., 2023; Kosteniuk et al., 2024). Areas with active youth tourism programs experience a 10-15% increase in tourist inflows, stimulating economic growth. This occurs as hike participants, while exploring natural and cultural attractions, share their experiences and attract new visitors.

In Crimea, for example, 2024 saw a 12% increase in tourist numbers compared to the previous year, resulting in 15% higher tourism revenue. This growth was accompanied by the development of small and medium businesses, job creation, and increased tax revenues. Thus, hiking trips serve not only as youth education tools but also as catalysts for economic development.

Special attention should be given to practical training activities conducted during hikes, such as meteorological studies. The Tambov Oblast case demonstrates how such programs enhance participants' awareness of weather risks and reduce emergency response costs. During ski trips, students learn to analyze weather conditions, forecast changes, and take preventive measures.

These skills enable better trip preparation, helping avoid situations involving sudden snowstorms or strong winds. In 2024, Tambov Oblast prevented five potential incidents through timely weather data utilization, saving approximately 500,000 rubles (~\$5,500) in rescue operations. This demonstrates that practical outdoor education not only improves safety but also delivers tangible economic benefits.

For clearer visualization of hiking trips' impact on emergency services, we present data collected across various regions. Table 1 shows the correlation between youth

tourism development, reduced emergency service calls, improved participant safety awareness.

**Table 1**

*Impact of Hiking Trips on Reducing Emergency Service Load and Improving Safety Awareness*

Region	Reduction in Emergency Calls (%)	Increase in Safety Awareness (%)
Crimea	18	72
Tambov Oblast	15	68
Omsk Oblast	20	75

As shown in Table 1, regions with active youth tourism programs demonstrate a 15-20% reduction in emergency service calls, with participant safety awareness reaching 68-75%. These figures highlight how practical training during hikes develops youth skills that reduce emergency risks, directly contributing to resource savings.

The development of youth tourism generates not only direct savings through incident prevention but also indirect benefits by stimulating local economies (Demkina et al., 2019; Kreps, 2024; Potekhina et al., 2024). Increased interest in hiking regions boosts tourist numbers, positively impacting tourism revenue and employment. In Crimea, for instance, 250 new jobs were created in 2024 as a direct result of tourism growth driven by youth hiking programs.

Similar trends appear in other regions. Tambov Oblast saw 8% tourism growth, generating 10% higher tourism revenue and 150 new jobs. The presented data illustrate how organized hiking activities function as catalysts for regional economic growth. A comprehensive evaluation of this economic effect can be conducted using the performance indicators shown in Table 2, which captures the fundamental parameters of tourism expansion and its subsequent economic benefits across participating regions.

**Table 2**

*Economic Impact of Youth Tourism Development by Region*

Region	Tourism Growth (%)	Revenue Increase (%)	New Jobs Created
Crimea	12	15	250
Tambov Oblast	8	10	150
Omsk Oblast	10	12	180

Table 2 confirms that regions with developed youth tourism programs show sustainable economic growth. For example, Omsk Oblast's 10% tourism increase correlated with 12% revenue growth and 180 new jobs, demonstrating how hiking investments pay off through infrastructure development and visitor attraction.

Practical weather studies during hikes have proven particularly effective. In Omsk Oblast (2024), 3 incidents were prevented, saving 300,000 RUB (~\$3,300) in emergency costs. Tambov Oblast avoided 5 incidents, preserving 500,000 RUB (~\$5,500). Crimea prevented 4 incidents, saving 400,000 RUB (~\$4,400).

**Table 3**

*Emergency Cost Savings Through Meteorological Studies*

Region	Prevented Incidents	Cost Savings (RUB)
Crimea	5	500 000
Tambov Oblast	3	300 000
Omsk Oblast	4	400 000

As Table 3 demonstrates, meteorological research significantly reduces emergency expenditures. The 400,000 RUB saved in Crimea could fund educational programs or infrastructure improvements, creating additional economic multiplier effects.

The obtained data confirm that tourist hikes represent not merely an expenditure process, but rather an investment in the future. They transform the structure of education, making it more practical and less dependent on traditional learning formats. However, their success depends on maintaining a balance between initial investments and long-term outcomes. For instance, a 20% increase in participants following infrastructure improvements in the Tara Irtysh region led to an 8% growth in regional tourism revenue. Conversely, insufficient funding may negate the educational impact, necessitating the exploration of alternative financing models such as grants or private investments.

In the context of modern society, where risks associated with both natural and anthropogenic factors are becoming increasingly significant, tourist hikes serve not only as a leisure activity but also as a practical platform for developing safety competencies (Konovalova et al., 2018; Nikolskaya et al., 2018a; 2018b; Kundelskiy & Vorobyeva, 2024; Filonova et al., 2024). Children and youth participating in such activities acquire

fundamental skills for interacting with their environment, learn to assess potential threats, and make informed decisions in non-standard situations.

The authors emphasize that this approach contributes not only to individual participant development but also to establishing a sustainable safety culture that manifests in everyday life. This aspect proves particularly important when considering the imperative of preparing younger generations for 21st century challenges, where the ability to act consciously and responsibly becomes paramount.

#### **4 CONCLUSION**

Youth hiking trips represent an economically viable approach to fostering a culture of safety and resilience. While they require investments in equipment, training, and safety measures, these costs are offset by reduced social expenditures and stimulation of regional economies. The hands-on learning experience during hikes enhances participants' preparedness for real-world challenges—a particularly valuable outcome in the context of constrained education budgets.

To maximize effectiveness, targeted investments in instructor training and modern technologies are essential. Successful regional case studies demonstrate that such measures not only mitigate risks but also position tourism as a catalyst for development. Furthermore, government support and private-sector partnerships can amplify these benefits, ensuring program sustainability.

Ultimately, youth hiking programs transcend mere recreational activities, emerging as strategic tools that deliver both educational and economic returns. Their continued development requires an integrated approach to overcome existing barriers and harness tourism as a lever for sustainable regional growth.

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### **Authors' Contribution**

All authors contributed equally to the development of this article.

### **Data availability**

All datasets relevant to this study's findings are fully available within the article.

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