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03 Oct 2008 : Language to Generate Money

Kurus English, opening in Cape Town soon, is the first school of its kind to combine language learning with cultural discovery excursions giving international students relevant opportunities to practice their English and plug in to the diversity of Cape Town.

The official opening of this innovative language school next week will not only boost tourist numbers to the city but also position Cape Town as a pioneering destination, using cultural discovery as part of language learning to help students achieve a global competence in English.

The brainchild of Iain Harris, managing director of Coffeebeans Routes and entrepreneur Johannes Kraus, Kurus English will, over a 12-week programme, take international students on teacher-guided language excursions around the City which span different socio-economic, historical and cultural experiences.

"The Kurus model is about language, culture and discovery," says Harris. "When people have the opportunity to communicate authentically, this is when the best learning occurs. Each week, we will embark on a different cultural excursion showcasing various aspects of our city. These include everything from our cuisine to our media and students might find themselves taking part in a dance class on our art, dance and expression excursion or on a tour of the Greenpoint Stadium on our 2010 one.

"Students today are looking for courses that offer a global perspective of the English language. For example, different cultures and accents shape how English is spoken and understood throughout the world, and, especially in the business world, cultural sensitivity is paramount. With our rich diversity of people and cultures, Cape Town is a microcosm of the international community and the perfect place for foreign students to learn English."

Kraus, who is managing director of Kurus English, says that although Cape Town is an established business and leisure tourism destination, it has yet to harness its full potential as an English language learning destination. "People want an experience-based learning environment and we are receiving enquiries from Brazil, Europe and across the African continent. I believe we can position Cape Town as a premier language-learning destination, boosting the local economy through increased tourism numbers.

"We offer a full package to our students and this includes accommodation either with a host family, to completely immerse themselves in our community, or at a guest house or hotel."

Cape Town is home to 18 English language schools, but Kurus English is the first to offer this type of learning experience.

Kraus himself was a foreign language student in Cape Town three-years ago when he met Harris. "Students wanted to know where they could go to engage with local people and understand their history, music and culture. Iain started connecting us with his network of musicians, artists and poets to share their stories and experience their hospitality. It was from here that he started Coffeebeans Routes and that I was inspired to use excursions as part of a language learning process.

"It is fitting that a few years later, we have collaborated to create Kurus English," says Kraus.

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Kurus will use the internationally-respected Headway series published by Oxford University Press as learning materials. The school will take a maximum of eight people per class and offer six levels of competency, from Beginner to Advanced. Centrally located in an historical National Heritage Building, the school is ideally situated for visitors wishing to explore the city.

KURU

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