Guludo Beach Lodge - Tourism Model in Mozambique

Mozambique
Tony Carter

Project Summary

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Bespoke Experience Ltd and its associated charity Nema Foundation, were set up in 2003 by 22 year-old Amy Carter-James and her (now) husband, Neal. They are currently working in rural Northern Mozambique where a high-end eco-lodge situated on one of the best beaches in the country (Guludo Beach Lodge, www.guludo.com) enables community-driven health, education, water, enterprise and environmental projects.

Your idea

This will be the address used to plot your entry on the map.

Street Address
Guludo Beach Lodge
City
Mucojo
State/Province
Cabo Delgado
Postal/Zip Code
Country

Year innovation began
2003

Geotourism Challenge Addressed by Entrant
Quality of benefit to the people of the destination

Place your video embed code here from YouTube, Google Video and other video sharing websites. How to embed a video from YouTube.

Paste your code here

Indicate sector in which you principally work
Tourism-related business

Geographic location
Rural, Coast, Multiple locations.

Plot your innovation within the Mosaic of Solutions

Main barrier addressed
Lack of quality assurance

Main insight addressed
Develop community assets

Innovation

What is the goal of your innovation?
Use tourism to create a self-sustaining model that alleviates poverty in rural communities and can be replicated across the world.

How does your approach support or embody geotourism?

Guludo Beach Lodge, was established with the objective of relieving poverty while protecting the environment and reviving local traditions. Guludo was built and is run to optimise its PPE triple bottom lines - profits, people and environment. The lodge operates using strict ethical principles which ensure that local people and environments benefit at all times. Our award winning architecture reflects local styles and has an absolutely minimal environmental impact. Over 95% of our staff are local, with almost all of them having no prior work experience or knowledge of English. Local entrepreneurs provide products and services for constructing, fitting out and running the lodge. Many "main stream" activities are offered to guests,
such as scuba diving and island visits but most guests also visit Guludo village to enjoy traditional dancing and the buzz of everyday life. Our bar staff need no encouragement to talk about Guludo’s life, local myths, legends and ceremonies and teach guests a few words in the local vernacular. Our business gives a percentage of each bed-night sold to Nema Foundation. Nema is a charity which we set up to implement community and conservation projects. The priorities of projects are agreed with the community.

Describe your approach in detail. How is it innovative?

We have created a self-sustaining model to enable rural communities to address their most pertinent problems that lock them into poverty while ensuring environmental resources are managed in a way that prevents degradation. The model consists of a commercial business and a charity. Our commercial business, BESPOKE EXPERIENCE, invested in a tourism eco-lodge, run using fair trade principles which ensures that all local benefits are maximised. The business creates an economic environment favourable for local entrepreneurs; shop keepers, fishermen, transport suppliers and many more. In addition 5% of every night sold at the lodge is given to our charity. Our charity, NEMA FOUNDATION, plans and implements projects in the Guludo area, which aim to: -Operate through community partnerships which use traditional community decision making principles; -Tackle all roots of poverty in Health, Water, Education, Enterprise and Environmental areas; -Be run by members of the community which creates community ownership; -Predominantly focus on women, the primary children’s caretakers; -Work with local government while following and supporting national policies; -Put 100% of donations into projects (made possible by Bespoke’s 5% donation) and; -Always have a strong emphasis on research and monitoring helping to ensure maximum success.

What types of partnerships or professional development would be most beneficial in spreading your innovation?

EXISTING PARTNERSHIPS: WWF Mozambique helped us to find Guludo in the new Quirimbas National Park in 2003 and has assisted us in finding our next lodge locations. Nema has established formal partnerships with all the communities we work with and signed MOUs (Memoranda Of Understanding) with each community Project Committee. We also work closely with Local Government Departments. Nema has partnered with Global Angels, a UK based children charity, which fund-raises for Nema projects. We will form NEW PARTNERSHIPS with new communities and their local government authorities as we scale-up existing projects and start new ones.

Impact

In one sentence describe what kind of impact, change, or reform your approach is intended to achieve.

Guludo Chief 2005: “Before Bespoke came to Guludo, everyone was hungry. Now no-one is. Soon we will all be fat!”

Describe the degree of success of your approach to date. Clearly define how you measure quantitative and qualitative impact in terms of how your approach contributes to the sustainability or enhancement of local culture, environment, heritage, or aesthetics? How does your approach minimize negative impacts? 200 words or less

Our COMMUNITY-LED, life-saving projects give a new generation hope for a future free from the chains of poverty. Some of our most significant achievements over the last 18 months include: -enabling over 10,000 women and children to sleep under mosquito nets; -building and/or rehabilitating 26 water points (mid way through); -hygiene & sanitation workshops run in every household in 3 villages; -construction of primary schools (one nearing completion the other starting now, due to finish late ’08); -provided 49 secondary school scholarships; -created 5 enterprise groups and; -fed 264 children daily school meals in 2007 and now 304 in 2008. Our ENVIRONMENTAL achievements include: -starting a carbon offsetting project which protects vulnerable coastal forest and re-forestation through working with village committees; -establishing fishermen associations as part of a marine management plan; -carrying out a coral reef survey; -Adult Agricultural training starts this year and will reduce the destructive “Slash and Burn” farming; -Annual humpback whale surveys. There is a complete absence of community base-data so, in spite of our data collection through socio-economic surveys, it is not yet possible to quantify the full impact of our work.

How does your program promote traveler enthusiasm, satisfaction, and engagement with the locale?

Our lodge guests almost always visit the village which is about 1km away. They see proud, happy adults and children, and no-one asks them for money. The local tailors will make skirts, dresses and trousers if requested. Our young guests can make friends and language is no problem. Everyone in the local villages are football mad and the kids enjoy a kick-about at any time with footballs made from old plastic bags: adult matches are arranged regularly. When leaving Guludo, many guests tell us how their attitude towards tourism has changed completely.

In what ways are local residents actively involved in your innovation, including participation and community input? How has the community responded to or benefited from your approach?

Our biggest success is that there is now a revitalised village economy fed by money from our employees and suppliers whose money is spent again and again as it passes from hand to hand. This reduces the community’s reliance on the sea and land and increase food security in the village. The community as a whole is deeply involved in our innovation by employment, product supply, welcoming guests to the village, involved in traditional dance competitions, making and selling craft products, eating a school lunch every day, tailoring and just wearing tribal dress again now that they can afford to.

Describe how your innovation helps travelers and local residents better understand the value of the area’s cultural and natural heritage, and educates them on local environmental issues. How do you motivate them to act responsibly in their future travel decisions?

We also have encouraged a revival in tribal dance and singing traditions. Only the oldest of the villagers remembered the songs and they have passed on their skills to the younger generations who can now enjoy singing and dancing. Over last Christmas we hosted a competition between 6 different communities! Our guests enjoy watching and listening to these exciting performances. The local people are very proud of their cultural traditions. We give all our guests instructions on how to avoid damaging the environment and how to dress and behave when visiting the villages to avoid offending anyone.

Sustainability

Is your initiative financially and organizationally sustainable? If not, what is required to make it so? What is the potential demand for your innovation?

Our successful, growing tourism business will support Nema’s running costs for the foreseeable future. Within Nema’s 10-year plan all the health, water, education and environmental issues will have self-sustaining solutions: e.g. the school feeding programme will be superseded by high yield food from the school community farm and better farming techniques throughout the community in 3 years. SMME development will bring further
prosperity to the community and will enable families to pay to send children to school, for water, medical care and the other essentials of life. Tourism is growing fast in Mozambique promising high demands for our holiday products.

How is your initiative currently financed? If available, provide information on your finances and organization that could help others. Please list: Annual budget, annual revenue generated, size of part-time, full-time and volunteer staff.

Bespoke is privately financed, but expects to have outside investment next year to enable us to speed up new lodge development. Guludo Lodge opened for business in 2006. In 2007 we doubled the sales made in 2006 and with an increase in sales of only 7.5% we would have reached profit after only two years full trading: this is half the time taken by most lodges. We employ 80 lodge and construction staff and a total of 120 people sell fish, game, vegetables, eggs, lodge maintenance materials, pottery and tailoring services directly to the lodge or guests. We only employ 5 ex-pat staff, so, over 97.5% of all our staff are indigenous to the area. Of these, 5 members of staff have been promoted to junior management positions, 2 to middle management and 1 is now a senior manager. Nema is managed by a board of trustees.

What is your plan to expand your approach? Please indicate where/how you would like to grow or enhance your innovation, or have others do so.

Our Model Development Plan for our first location started with Guludo Beach Lodge. When the lodge was established, we started to role out Nema community and environmental projects. Each project was trialed in Guludo or another local community and when we were satisfied, we rolled it out to other villages. This process will, in 2 to 3 years time, involve 25,000 people in 13 adjoining communities. We will repeat this process with each new development. We plan to support each of the community projects for 10 years and then provide visiting consultancy for at least a further 10 years.

What are the main barriers you encounter in managing, implementing, or replicating your innovation? What barriers keep your program from having greater impact?

The main problems are the same as all companies and charities suffer, but in addition there are the “African Problems” of inertia and transport. We suffer from time consuming HR, and supplier negotiations. Poor roads cause delays, damage to vehicles and accidents. Cash flow is always a problem.

The Story

What is the origin of your innovation? Tell your story.

INITIAL IDEA: In 1998, aged 18, Amy spent 8 months teaching classes of up to 60 children in a remote primary school in rural Kenya before going to study marine biology at university. This is where the idea was born. Tourism seemed an obvious mechanism to use to relieve poverty and to fund environmental conservation. When Amy met Neal (now husband and wife) later that year we started to develop the idea further. The journey to OPENING GULUDO: In 2002 we decided to explore the idea further. So we started looking for somewhere that had great tourism potential next to extreme poverty. Mozambique’s poverty situation is extreme! In Northern Mozambique the adult life expectancy is 37.8 years, under-5 infant mortality is 29.5% and the average amount of schooling received is 1.5 years. We attended the 2002 “World Sustainable Development Summit” in Johannesburg. Then, with WWF Mozambique’s help, we found our way to Guludo. Upon stepping onto the beach in Guludo we knew our journey was over. We immediately arranged a community meeting where the predominant question was “when can you start?” The beach was beautiful but livelihoods were exclusively subsistence with severe food shortages for 3 months of the year exacerbated by crop raiding elephants. MOVING TO MOZAMBIQUE: So in 2003 we moved to Mozambique and started fighting our way through the bureaucratic jungle (without paying bribes) to gain the necessary licenses to start building. Nine months later building started using a 100% local workforce using local building materials. During this phase in 2004 there were many delays, the majority due to tragedies, including a car accident and loosing a colleague from AIDS. In 2005 The lodge was almost ready and we had a period of “soft opening” while staff training, teaching English and building continued. We worked hard on marketing and our sales products and explored for dive sites. SINCE OPENING: We are very proud of our “Responsible Tourism” awards. Recognition from our peers in the tourism industry is praise indeed! We are now upgrading our accommodation to bandas (bungalows) with the very highest environmental, social and cultural integrity. MANAGEMENT TEAM: We now have great management team, lead by a Mozambican and a Brit. They achieve a consistently high standard of service in Guludo Beach Lodge and they are enabling us to scale-up, develop new lodges and reach new communities and areas with Nema.

Please provide a personal bio. Note this may be used in Changemakers’ marketing material.

Amy Carter-James established the social enterprise, Bespoke Experience and it’s sister charity, Nema Foundation in 2002 aged 22. Amy now lives in Mozambique developing tourism lodges and implementing water, health, education, enterprise and conservation projects reaching tens of thousands of people. Amy won the “Young Social Entrepreneur of the Year 2006” award and was a finalist for the “Women in Ethical Business Awards 2007”. Guludo was highly commended in the 2006 and 2007 “Responsible Tourism Awards - Best for Poverty Reduction”. Amy is an Ambassador for Global Angels and addressed a symposium on “Zero Footprint Tourism” at ITB Berlin 2008.

Please write an overview of your project. This text will appear when people scroll over the icon for your entry on the Google map located on the competition homepage.

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