

# A Micro Enterprise Perspective on Travelers Philanthropy.



*'because we are different'*

- ❖ Meeting local needs in urban communities of Port Elizabeth, South Africa.
- ❖ A practical Account
- ❖ With reference to the Volunteer Sector



# Who is Calabash Trust and Tours

- ❖ **Tours is a commercial entity offering day tours to townships in Port Elizabeth.**
- ❖ **Pursues a Responsible Tourism path – Fair Trade in Tourism South Africa Accredited**
- ❖ **Exists to facilitate engagement between poor communities and visiting tourists. Aim to do this in a win/win fashion.**
- ❖ **Has impact on poor communities through business linkages, community service providers, local employment etc – but limited as micro enterprise.**
- ❖ **Trust was set up as a vehicle to harness travelers philanthropy, as it became apparent that a well structured interaction between visitors and communities unleashed a desire to assist.**
- ❖ **Trust is a legal vehicle (separate NPO with separate governance structure, separate staff, separate mandate) to Tours.**
- ❖ **Trust facilitates ongoing community development and support initiatives where Tours operates with visitors.**

# Calabash Trust Programmes

## Trust Focus:

- ❖ Nutrition – support for 3 pre schools, 7 schools, and 2 HIV and AIDS homebased care groups
- ❖ Educational Support – school fees, school furniture, development of sports field, mass participation sports programme, Volunteer Support – teacher development, Skills training. Educational Materials
- ❖ Shift Towards – Job creation
- ❖ Soap Making for Hospitality Industry
- ❖ Sewing project
- ❖ Employment and training in Projects
- ❖ Calabash Trust has allowed us to *'punch beyond our weight'* in terms of development impact. As Calabash Tours we could have made some impact, but harnessing TP has made all the difference



# The Challenges

- ❖ **Getting Legal – finding reliable Trustees, Finding appropriate legal structure etc**
- ❖ **Doing the work – initially board members did all the work as volunteers. Now have a staff of 6. TP is administrative, requires good communication, ongoing feedback, good record keeping.**
- ❖ **Also required fieldworkers to engage in communities, identify needs, monitor progress, engage with stakeholders etc.**
- ❖ **Resources in poor communities can lead to conflict as an unintended consequence.**
- ❖ **Ongoing struggle to find resources for running of office, staff and admin. Needed to engage creatively around it, and sought funding specifically for that. Travelers want to see their money in action in projects – NOT admin running costs.**
- ❖ **Making the shift – ongoing – from being a charitable organization giving food, school furniture etc – to becoming a developmental organization creating jobs, ongoing feeding solutions.**
- ❖ **We have remained realistic about who we are – a small tourism linked NGO – dependant on TP. We are NOT an NGO that exists off large scale donor funding ( and we don't want to be, as it comes with its own issues)). We have done much reflection on who exactly we are – and that determines our impact and how we implement and where we seek funding.**

# Remaining Real Needs Driven

- ❖ In our experience one of the weaknesses of TP is that visitor identified needs are not always real needs or priority needs. We must be vigilant in remaining real needs based.
- ❖ Examples include volunteers lugging vast amounts of stationary and paying excess baggage, when having bought it locally is better. Or supplying Art supplies to school when there are no books. Or wanting to fund computers, when there are no reading books.
- ❖ It requires a firm rooted ness in community needs. Which implies an ongoing assessment of community needs, which implies a good relationship with communities.
- ❖ And who exactly are these communities? And who speaks for them?

# Volunteer Tourism

- ❖ **Volunteer Tourism is a double edged sword – with many potential negative impacts. There are many ‘soft issues’ to manage.**
- ❖ **Well run Volunteer Programmes create ambassadors for projects – very often with a very clear identification of need, as a result of time spent in the projects**



# Volunteer Tourism - The Challenges

- ❖ **Volunteers cannot feed off of poor communities resources – should be self funding**
- ❖ **Does Capacity exist in project to manage them**
- ❖ **Are they screened if the project involves vulnerable adults or children?**
- ❖ **Are they taking jobs from locals?**
- ❖ **Do they have skills – what life skills do GAP years have to offer?**
- ❖ **Who is identifying community needs - 1st world retailers? Business? Or Community. Who is facilitating volunteer placements**

# Volunteer Tourism - It can work

- ❖ **Project managers should have existing relationships in community eg Calabash trust**
- ❖ **Base programmes on needs - and match skills accordingly**
- ❖ **Support Projects in managing volunteers**
- ❖ **Orientate them thoroughly**
- ❖ **And then a wonderful magic happens**

# Volunteer Programmes - Benefit

- ❖ Post Volunteer contributions are much more need based in our experience
- ❖ A sense of common humanity is established.
- ❖ A sameness, a humanization of poverty, a shift from the BBC sounbite and poverty snapshot
- ❖ An opportunity to impact on poverty – a sense of meaning in a world of disconnection and alienation.
- ❖ Sometimes a lesson in what Africa has to offer humanity.



# JUST DO IT

- ❖ **With vision, dedication and a genuine interest in poverty reduction I believe most tourism businesses can find small ways to harness TP.**
- ❖ **A Willingness to make a change is the first step.**
- ❖ **Honouring others efforts to be involved.**
- ❖ **Having a strong commitment to community engagement.**
- ❖ **A willingness to be wrong, and to try again.**

