



Bringing Africa Closer to the World through Volunteerism

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Presented during the **3rd Global Summit on Peace through Tourism**
Pattaya, Thailand. October 2-5, 2005

Objectives and Background

- Contribution to the 21st Century Agenda for Peace through poverty reduction, and promotion of cultural and international understanding, tolerance and cooperation
- A framework based upon volunteerism, as an initiative to broaden the cause of Africa, and impact upon the process of local development and international cooperation to enhance the state of progress vis-à-vis equity and social justice.





The Project:

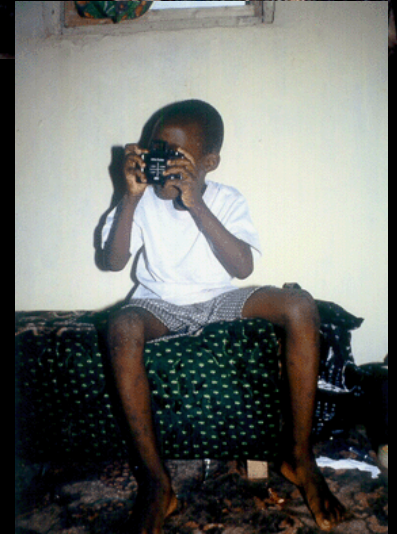
AFRICANIA
Solidarity tourism



Mission and Vision



- To promote Africa's rich cultural heritage and link it to different cultures and civilizations
- To promote a network of solidarity through the implementation of eco-tourism schemes for Africa, in order to harness a concept of equality of opportunities.



Keypoints

- To document positive aspects of Africa, and highlight approaches for policies, based upon evidential and informed practice.
- To promote access for all within the technological framework of ICT, as it should engage greater exposures of indigenous rights and culture liaised to African dynamics.
- Help people help Africa
- Increase the number of visitors to Africa



Keypoints

- To address matters of economic and social growth at local levels, through the promotion and integration of micro-enterprise programs
- Create package tours apart from the typical tours
- Promote local art and culture
- Create opportunities for cultural exchange for Africans



Special Activities



- Identify and create groups of host communities
- Identify and highlight the positive aspects of African culture and feature these with the travelers
- Establish cyber shops or internet cafes in selected areas
- Advertise or promote the project in multi-media agencies to get more volunteers and sponsors to help

Special Activities



- Encourage airline companies flying to Africa to provide better cost of travel to Africa
- Train locals in the following areas:
 - tour guiding and tourist reception
 - photography
 - events management
 - small scale business
 - computing and cyber cafe management
 - hospitality management
 - travel writing



Special Activities



- Create special participatory tours where travelers have actual experience of African culture
- Find organizations or agencies which can provide for cultural exchange for African students



Special Activities



- To apply approaches based upon Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as a tool to strengthen and mobilize corporate involvement in solidarity projects like building schools, seminars, technological and know-how transfer to train people in Africa and other projects to enhance tax incentives and investment frameworks.

Special Activities

- Convince organizations from all over to invest their money in solidarity projects like building schools, seminars, sending their specialized staff to train people in Africa and other projects that should return them tax
- Creating community partnerships between communities or councils in Europe and other local communities in Africa for cultural, business and tourism exchange





The Organization and the Seeds of Volunteerism

Solidarity Tourism

The Concept of Volunteerism



The Concept of Volunteerism

History and background

Online volunteerism

- unpaid service given via the internet
- donating one's time and experience to a cause one believes in, working together via the internet
- also known as virtual volunteering, online mentoring, e-mentoring, e-volunteering, cyber volunteering, cyber service, telementoring
- another way for people from all walks of life, all over the world, to connect with each other, and help each other



Profile of Volunteers



Profile of Volunteers

Total registered online volunteers to date

116 (since June 2001)
65% female, 35% male

Age range

from 20-61
average time devoted per week – 4 hours

Countries of origin of volunteers

China, Argentina, Africa, Chile, Ecuador, Spain, Ghana, Vietnam, Italy, Gambia, Nigeria, France, Canada, Philippines, China, Mozambique, Portugal, Germany, Belgium, USA, Ivory Coast, Nepal, Russia, Ireland, Romania, Italy, India, Switzerland, Senegal,

Online assignments

Translation, web programming, marketing, information technology, tourism, writing, journalism, public policy, project management



Work areas



Web site and Web Page Design

helping to design pages and content



Organization

putting the right information in the right place

Translation

translating information into different languages so that it can be accessed by other people

Work areas

Editing

helping to edit the newsletter that will keep all volunteers informed about the developments of the project on a fortnightly basis



Project Identification

helping to identify projects that can be carried out in Africa

Marketing and Promotion

getting in contact with news agencies, participating in forums or chats to advertise the website and the project and helping to look for donors and sponsors for the different activities

Key success factors

- Volunteers are highly motivated individuals, kept together and driven only by one cause and interest. Without need for pay or reward, volunteers continue to do their assigned tasks and deliver.



- There is a reservoir of knowledge skills and competencies just waiting to be channeled to the right places. Despite all the doubts and fears, there are a lot of good souls wanting to help the marginalized communities of the world.

Obstacles encountered and How these were handled

Obstacles with respect to the project africa

- There are many African communities that have no “voice” in the virtual world as they are computer illiterate, have no access to computers, face linguistic barriers, among other reasons. This is hoped to be addressed slowly by setting up small cyber cafes in selected areas
- Because of the above, African communities lack information on how to get in contact with potential travelers, and how to promote their cultural activities and projects. Africa hopes to help address this problem too.



Obstacles encountered and How these were handled

Obstacles with respect to the project africa

- There is an apparent lack of information for potential travelers, airline companies and even the rest of the world about the project Africa and the idea of solidarity tourism. The Africa website has started to address this problem.
- Flights to Africa are admittedly expensive. The regular package tours are a bit less costly but lacking in activities that highlight African culture. It will be better if cultural activities become regular inclusions in the tour packages. Africa intends to address this problem by liaising with the African airline association.



Obstacles encountered and How these were handled

Obstacles with respect to the project africa

- The lack of funding of the organization has kept it from sending volunteers to Africa and even taking care of its logistics needs. A marketing and promotions strategy is being formulated by the organization to get sponsors to support its cause through different ways aside from giving financial support - we will continue to open doors to all our friends in tourism and to possible partners to participate in the project -



Obstacles encountered and How these were handled

Obstacles with respect to the project africania

- It is difficult for volunteers to have a general assembly online. The most effective course of action is still to send volunteers to Africa to do actual volunteer work rather than just talk about it online. However, since it is really an online organization, members are being encouraged to devote more time and to be more dedicated to providing their insights.
- Volunteers are mostly full time workers and therefore cannot devote fixed or regular time, only their best efforts.



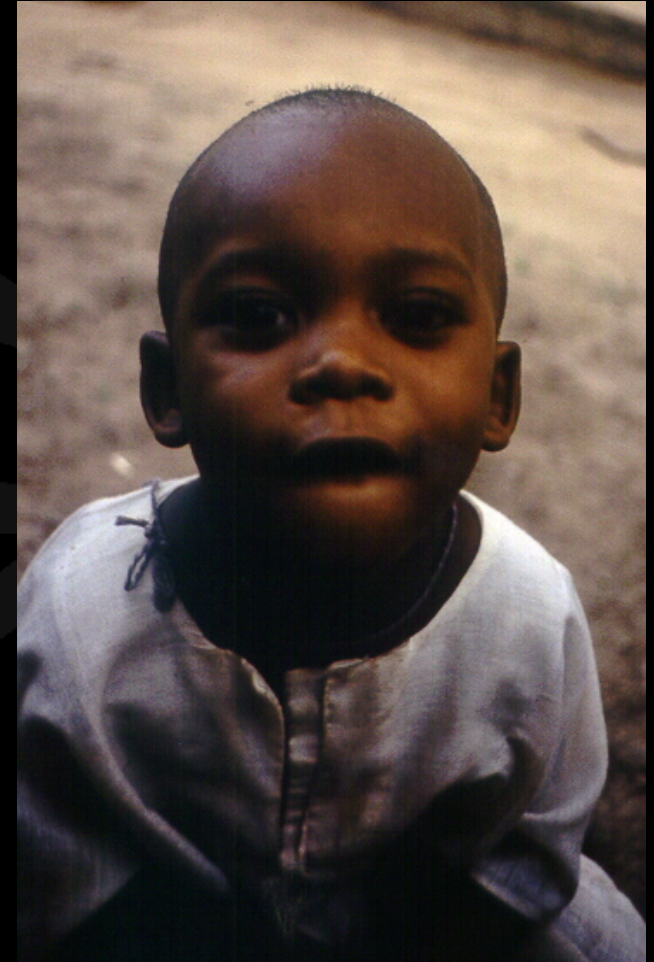


How can We Improve?



How can We Improve?

- By multi-media advertising of the tours and the possibilities for solidarity tourism activities
- By documenting and making a reportage of all tours conducted, all destinations visited as well as new recommended destinations
- By linking up with agencies which are into tourism development and capacity building work for Africa



Insights to a 21st Century

Agenda on Peace through Tourism



The initiatives of Solidarity Tourism as an organization through its Africana project all aim to contribute to the agenda of contributing to international understanding and cooperation, an improved quality of environment, preservation of heritage and poverty reduction, all helping to bring about a peaceful and sustainable world.



Thanks to all of you
for your attention

And thanks to the following
people for making it possible for
us to show you this presentation today:

Texts

Edna Eufemio (Philippines)
with the contributions of
Emmanuel Asomba (French/Nigerian) and
Michelle Temple (Spain)

Design

Carmenza Bacca (Colombia) and
Allyn De Ocampo (Philippines)
with the contributions of
Ismaila Ikani Sule (Nigeria)

Photographs

Alejandro Tevar Toledo (Spain)
Francisco Camarasa Bordallo (Spain)
Juan Carlos and Carmela

And most especially to our volunteer

Manager and mentor

Maria Calvo (Spain)