

Sandals Jamaica

Montego Bay, Jamaica
Kate Hendrickson



Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

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

The Sandals & Beaches Resort Group environmental program is designed primarily to boost destination sustainability through the education of team members and the persons from the local communities in which we operate such that they understand the relationship between hotel activities and the impact on their lives at home via the natural environment. The approach of the program involves development of material that encompasses global and local environmental and social issues and explains the links between these issues in a way that ensures that people understand the importance of caring for the environment towards a sustainable future for themselves, their families, and the hotels within ...

About You

Contact Information

Title

Mr.

First name

Richard

Last name

May

Your job title

Director of Environmental Affairs

Name of your organization

Sandals Resorts International

Organization type

Business

Annual budget/currency

N/A

Your idea

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

Street Address

5 Kent Avenue

City

Montego Bay

State/Province

St. James

Postal/Zip Code**Country****Geotourism Challenge Addressed by Entrant**

Quality of stewardship of the destination.

Organization size

Large (more than 1000 employees)

Indicate sector in which you principally work

Tourism-related business

Year innovation began

1998

Indicate sector in which you principally work

General tourism.

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

Innovation

What is the goal of your innovation? Please describe in one sentence the kind of impact, change, or reform your approach is intended to achieve.

The program is designed to improve quality of tourism offered by destination and also the quality of life experienced by members of the surrounding communities.

Please write an overview of your project. Include how your approach supports or embodies geotourism or destination stewardship. This text will appear when people scroll over the icon for your entry on the map located on the competition homepage.

The Sandals & Beaches Resort Group environmental program is designed primarily to boost destination sustainability through the education of team members and the persons from the local communities in which we operate such that they understand the relationship between hotel activities and the impact on their lives at home via the natural environment. The approach of the program involves development of material that encompasses global and local environmental and social issues and explains the links between these issues in a way that ensures that people understand the importance of caring for the environment towards a sustainable future for themselves, their families, and the hotels within which they work.

To ensure the message grows with the community, the company engages primary and secondary education institutions and conducts regular awareness and improvement activities and events with the students in these schools to ensure they too take the message home. This is designed to educate the upcoming generation about role they will have to play and the risk that they may lose the pristine environment if they do not participate and encourage the members of their households to also conduct their activities with due respect for care and preservation of the natural environment.

Explain in detail why your approach is innovative

Our approach is innovative because of all the hotels that started in the Caribbean in 2007, ours is the ONLY consistently operated environment and social responsibility program existing to date. We have designed our programs around the needs of the communities and countries in which we operate and this makes all the difference in the results that we record from energy management, waste recycling, water conservation, agricultural development for small farmers in Jamaica and St. Lucia.

In the later years other companies and organizations have found models that work for them, but it is the Sandals model that has been recognized on numerous occasions by the UNDP, UNEP, CHA, CAST, and a number of governments and agencies in the region. We have now launched the Sandals Foundation to allow our team members, guests, affiliates, and the company itself to make donations towards the very environment we have taught and spoken about for the last 11 years. The Sandals Foundation holds the responsibility of being the gateway through which all expenditure and benefits for the environment can be captured for more definitive reporting of our environmental and wider CSR programs.

IDB/Fomin

Si perteneces a un país de Latinoamérica y el Caribe tienes la oportunidad de presentar tu iniciativa para acceder a fondos para innovaciones en turismo sostenible del BID/FOMIN (para mayor información leer la sección sobre la oportunidad BID/FOMIN en la página principal del Desafío).

No deseo postularme.

Si perteneces a un país de Latinoamérica y el Caribe tienes la oportunidad de presentar tu iniciativa para acceder a fondos para innovaciones en turismo sostenible del BID/FOMIN (para mayor información leer la sección sobre la oportunidad BID/FOMIN en la página principal del Desafío).

Consumidores (viajeros), Grupos comunitarios autóctonos, Atractivos naturales y culturales.

Indica cuáles de estas temáticas cubre tu innovación (elige todas aquellas opciones que apliquen)

Profesionalización, buenas prácticas y certificación de servicios turísticos sostenibles.

Impact

Describe the degree of success you have had to date. How do you measure, both quantitatively and qualitatively, the impact on sustainability or enhancement of local culture, environment, heritage, or aesthetics? How has it transformed or contributed to the power of place or demonstrated the sustainability of tourism? How does your approach minimize negative impacts?

We consider our programs to be very successful in delivering the level of development we anticipate within our surrounding communities and within our operations affecting lives both directly and indirectly

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

The level of involvement by members of the local communities has consistently been very strong in all our programs as can be evidenced at the various beach clean-ups, marine reef cleaning, and watershed improvement events that we conduct across year and according to the company's environmental calendar. In all cases the community partners (the residents) welcome our approach to the well-being of the environment in which

they live. On many occasions we are able to make representation on their behalf to secure assistance from local government entities and agencies.

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

Guests are always encouraged to interact with the local community and natural environment when they visit a Sandals or Beaches hotel as we believe that they will be more conscious of their impacts while on vacation if they can actually relate to the state of the environment and locals on a personal level. The programs identify and highlight green tours, community assistance programs and charities that are available for guest involvement and assistance

Describe how your work helps travelers and local residents better understand the value of the area's cultural and natural heritage, and educates them on local environmental issues.

The company has been heavily involved in community development as a way of life ever since its inception over twenty-five years ago. Today the hotels all adopt schools, and in some cases entire communities, in an effort to ensure that the message of environmental concern is filtered into all levels of the community. Of interest is the fact that all awareness sessions conducted receive rave reviews from the audiences, which include schools, community associations, religious and other groups as may be relevant to the topics being addressed. Throughout the document you will find that most of the impact of the programs involves increasing the awareness of team members, guests, and the communities in which we operate. The fact that the environment is so intricately inter-related makes it difficult to singly identify any one aspect and speak about it fully without involving other areas that may be affected.

Sustainability

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.

Currently, all initiatives are financed directly by the company's budget for environmental affairs and that of the public and community relations department. Funds are directly from the company's revenues and with the launch of the Sandals Foundation the goal is to make it easier for guests, visitors, locals, and international bodies and people to make donations and specify just how they would like to see their donations applied across the varied projects and programs that the company currently supports, whether this be the building of classrooms for a school or the strengthening of institutional capacity for farmers or other community focused groups.

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

Yes the initiative is financially stable as it is supported and completely backed by the Sandals Resorts CSR program which recognizes that these efforts are not to be allowed to fail especially in times of recession because their failure will generate devastating ripple effects across the wider communities and in fact across the entire tourism industry in Jamaica. Launching the foundation in the midst of the recession is proof of the commitment that the company has for these programs and processes as a part of the company's DNA.

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 barriers to the expansion or maximum impact of our program lie in the absence public education campaigns to address the importance of environmental care, conservation, community development, education in the minds of the younger generation. The fact though is that the government is already strapped for resources in providing these programs and our resources as a company cannot effectively serve to educate a country, however, for the communities in which we operate we take the challenge seriously and continuously work towards improving the reception and application of the knowledge we seek to impart and the benefit we seek to generate for the environment and the people who depend on it for their survival.

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

The company's plan for expansion lies in the growth of the Sandals Foundation, www.sandalsfoundation.org, which has been launched and is being registered in different countries around the world to facilitate easy supportive actions and donations towards new and existing initiatives. The Foundation represents the portal to the world for making meaningful donations into helping local communities and funding the restoration or care of the natural environment in at least five destinations in the Caribbean region. It should be noted that the foundation's work spreads farther away from the hotel operations as its mandate is much wider than the original scope of the Sandals & Beaches environmental program.

The Story

What is the origin of your innovation? Tell the Changemakers and media communities what prompted you to start this initiative.

The company was formally introduced to environmental management systems when the management of Sandals Negril Beach Resort determined that earning Green Globe 21 Certification would be one of the major objectives of 1998. The hotel had learned about the Green Globe 21 standard from the launch ceremony earlier that same year in Portland, Jamaica, and decided that it was an award worth earning for its environmental efforts. The company hired consultants (Hagler Bailly at the time – now PA Consulting Group Inc.), to assist with the implementation of this new program and to ensure that it was correctly done. Initially, the thoughts about the EMS were as simple as the implementation plan. The program was operations-based and so the Hotel Manager, who manned the day-to-day operations of the hotel, was charged with the responsibility of making it happen. Corporate Sandals observed the transformation of Sandals Negril from the sidelines allowing the hotel to be the guinea pigs of this "new" approach to management. The hotel was allowed to go through with the certification, as it seemed like a nice trophy to have at the time. There was a lot of interest in seeing the benefits to the hotel such as; financial savings, sustainability of progress, new operating practices, etc.

Since Sandals Negril's certification in 1998, and in the more recent years of hotel operation, Sandals Resorts' corporate environmental thrust has maintained a strong momentum as the aspects of health and safety management have been solidly molded into the mix of factors. Many educational sessions have been developed internally as the company seeks to ensure maximum safety for employees and guests in the resorts that we operate with minimal impact on the client's vacation experience and even less impact on the natural environment. The net effect is that the combined environmental health & safety program as it is now called, is more deeply embedded into the daily hotel's operations, and sometimes one may wonder, just how we could have operated without these programs in the first place.

The benefits to the environment are significant and come mainly through staff training and awareness. In their communities, many staff have

instituted changes in the way things happen based on what they have learnt at the hotels. Not everything is relevant and not everything is accepted easily, but for the little that has been accepted, the environment still benefits. The main measurable impact of the program on local communities to date comes from changes in waste disposal practices, the results of which are immediately visible even to the untrained eye.

Care of the environmental aspects of the operation have been classified into four main areas; conservation, management, preservation, and prevention & control. Each critical element of the program has been identified and explained in minor detail below to give an idea of the level of involvement of Sandals Resorts, we do little bragging about our environmental successes and are more inclined to having an all action – no talk approach to preserving our allotment of the natural assets of the Caribbean.

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

Richard May is the managing director of Echos Consulting Limited. A trusted advisor in the field of sustainable development, he has been recognized for his significant contribution to the success of environmental management policies in Jamaica and across the Caribbean. His career began with the internationally recognized verification and certification firm, Societe Generale de Surveillance. This transitioned into the travel & tourism industry where, as the Director of Environmental Affairs for Sandals Resorts International, he has created significant impacts in operating efficiency and sustainability via implementation of sustainability and environmental policies. Richard has multiple professional and academic designations including a BSc in Chemical Engineering, a MSc in Management, and internationally recognized professional designation as a lead auditor for ISO 9001 and ISO 14000 series of standards.

Describe some unique tourist experiences that your approach provides. Be specific; give illustrative examples.

Our programs allow guests who visit our resorts to elect completely green and environmentally friendly tours and excursions and thus to experience the destination in a very different theme not limited to a high-luxury vacation but rather having that vacation along with a tour package that offers an appreciation for the destination, its cultural history, and its natural beauty all in one package.

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

Partnerships with our newly launched Sandals Foundation whose focus is three-fold in the areas of education, environment, and community are at this time the most beneficial partnership resolves that we envision. Professional development could prove beneficial in the area of development for our core team in the area of Corporate Social Responsibility for companies such as ours and how best to progress with the current economic climate and the barriers that developing countries face with such programs.

Source URL: <https://www.changemakers.com/geotourismchallenge/entries/sandals-jamaica#comment-0>