

# Abelana Game Reserve nabs Responsible Business Education Award

South African teaching case, *Abelana Game Reserve: Community Partnership Driving Shared Value in Ecotourism* - compiled by Amy Moore and Verity Hawarden - has won the Financial Times Responsible Business Education Award in the Teaching Cases category.



Source: Supplied

Global news publication, Financial Times, sets out to honour and promote sustainability and improved social impact through its annual Responsible Business Education Award. The award acknowledges researchers, academic institutions and alumni who are contributing to changing how the world does business.

## Academic teaching

Teaching cases form part of research information made available to universities and business schools globally and are rich narratives that consider problems and viable solutions, using real-life examples. According to Ivey Publishing: "Cases are powerful tools for teaching key concepts in the context of management decision-making."

Recognising a lack of South African teaching cases of an international standard, Amy Moore and Verity Hawarden of the University of Pretoria's Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) collaborated to research a South African organisation implementing extraordinary measures that enrich a local community sharing its natural resources with the business.

## Promoting ecotourism

The teaching case explores Abelana Game Reserve and its efforts to promote ecotourism while partnering with the neighbouring Mashishimale community, which owns the reserve land. Commenting on the study, Amy Moore says: "Verity and I spent time at Abelana River Lodge interviewing the CEO, Ian Beauchamp. We were enchanted by the beauty of the terrain and the lodge. We found this story inspirational – something more ecotourism businesses could aspire to. My dream is that this teaching case will be taught at institutions around the world, and at Abelana itself, among its staff and community

members."

The teaching case observes the opportunities and challenges that Abelana Game Reserve faced, launching two luxury lodges just weeks before the Covid-19 pandemic shut the tourism industry down.

## **Inspiring communities**

In the report, Moore and Hawarden unpack how the reserve management and shareholders continued to pursue ambitious goals, despite hardships – especially those goals concerning collaborative cross-sector partnerships with the community. These initiatives include training and developing workers in the hospitality sector, job creation within the community, supporting local businesses, and educating the youth on ecotourism and wildlife conservation.

"Of course, being recognised by Financial Times gives us such a thrill. We were exhilarated by the news!" Moore goes on to say.

In response to the Financial Times Responsible Business Education Award, Abelana CEO, Ian Beauchamp expresses his delight: "We're honoured to have been the subject of this award, and we're grateful to Amy Moore, Verity Hawarden and Ivey Publishing for choosing to document Abelana's work in the ecotourism space.

"We've always taken the land, the wildlife and the community into consideration – how can we leave things better than we found them? It's really something to have these efforts recognised, and we hope to inspire other communities, land-owners and organisations to learn from our model."

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