



Responsible Tourism Policy

Introduction

Cempedak Island is a 17ha island in the South China Sea just 12km off the southeast coast of Bintan, Indonesia. Two thirds of the island is covered in virgin rainforest and the coral reef surrounding the island is rich in marine life.

For the owners this is their second project having developed nearby Nikoi Island which opened in 2007. Nikoi has won or been selected as a finalist in a long list of sustainable tourism award programs.

Cempedak was a deserted island when the owners acquired the titles to the property. Very little is known as to whether the island was ever occupied. The current owners are a small group of friends who were disenchanted with the standard of holiday accommodation on offer within close range of Singapore. Cultural sensitivity, vernacular design, privacy and simple luxuries seemed unheard of.

Instead of advertising the approach has been to donate what might have otherwise spent on advertising to The Island Foundation, a registered charity in Singapore and Indonesia was established by the owners of Nikoi in 2009. Having established good relationships with the local villages this provided an introduction for The Island Foundation to start to help these villages in the area.

Cempedak and Nikoi are both located within a Marine Protected Area (MPA) of 1.2mn ha that was gazetted by the Indonesian Government in 2007. The owners of Nikoi and Cempedak have put in an enormous effort into surveying the area and developing a management plan to see this important maritime area is better protected.

Philosophy and Approach to Responsible Tourism

Cempedak Island is quite unique in many respects. The concept has challenged, at all levels, the preconceived norms of what guests and stakeholders expect from a hotel or resort. From an environmentally friendly design that avoids the use of air-conditioning, to the use of fixed menus in the restaurants, to the establishment of a foundation, to the minimal use of energy and the recycling of water and waste; Cempedak like Nikoi are developments that go beyond what any other hotel in the region has done in terms of sustainability. In the process the owners have shown that responsible tourism can not only be profitable for all stakeholders but also beneficial to the environment and without guests feeling that their comfort has been compromised.

From the outset, the owners had a strong desire to build and operate Nikoi in a sustainable and responsible manner. The owners were keen to take what had been

learnt on Nikoi and improve on it. As a member of the The Long Run, the objective has been to try and achieve an optimal balance of Conservation, Community, Culture and Commerce (the “4Cs”). This was adopted from the outset and has been a core component of the masterplan for the property.

Conservation

Cempedak’s commitment to conservation is to ensure that not only is the environment protected, but also to ensure that where it has been damaged, efforts are made to restore it. An important task in protecting the environment is to educate guests and the local population. There are guided nature walks and sustainability tours available for guests who are interested. Regular surveys of the flora and fauna have been undertaken and are updated by one of Singapore’s leading naturalists. These surveys have helped identify 8 possible new species of fish and a number of very rare marine animals that were not known to be resident in the area or in a couple of cases had never been photographed in the wild before.

A conservation officer was first employed on Nikoi back in 2011 to help survey the reefs and marine habitat around Nikoi. The goal has been to establish a proper management plan for the Marine Protected Area that was gazetted by the Government in 2007. In 2018 a MOU was signed with Conservation International (CI) to help develop a management plan for the existing MPA. Cempedak together with external donors has funded a detailed survey of the MPA that was led by Dr Mark Erdmann and Dr Gerry Allen from CI. An expert on MPAs has been engaged to help the local government develop a plan that will benefit all stakeholders. A 3 year work plan has been agreed with the Fisheries Ministry and other stakeholders to help implement a management plan for the MPA.

The owners have helped fund the establishment of a conservation foundation called Yayasan Ecology Kepulauan Riau which now has a full and is helping coordinate the drafting and implementation of the management plan for the MPA. The conservation team on Cempedak also supports the work of the local fisheries department and the local marine biology university with students allowed access to the island and the use of equipment for research purposes. Furthermore students and professors joined the survey work led by CI. A program to replant corals has been established in order to protect the marine ecosystem. The conservation team on Cempedak have also had success converting one of the last traditional hunters of Dugong (a critically endangered marine mammal) to become a local guide. They have also successfully encouraged local fisherman to release many sea turtles that were being held in captivity pending sale.

The owners have wanted to show that luxury does not need to be a room full of electronic gadgetry and fancy fittings but rather simplicity, privacy, space and honest and friendly service are the pinnacle of real luxury.

Total energy and water consumption levels will be well beyond best practice. With the experience of operating Nikoi the owners have taken care to install the latest technology to reduce the impact on the environment. A 53kWp solar PV array and battery bank allows the island’s generator to be switched off for less than 10 hours a day.

During the build Cempedak has gone to huge lengths to reduce, recycle, reuse or upcycle any building waste. No single use plastic bottles are shipped to the island and chickens and a kitchen garden helped keep the construction team fed. Suppliers are asked to only ship in reusable containers. All recyclable waste (steel, aluminium and paper) is returned to Bintan where it is sold/given to local collectors. Food waste is composted using an integrated system of biopods containing Black Soldier Fly larvae and red worms. A glass pulveriser processes glass bottles to fine sand that is used in cement. There is no glass recycling program on Bintan. Sewerage waste is treated in aerobic septic systems and then finished in waste water gardens that extract the nitrates and phosphates that cannot be removed through the septic systems. The resulting water can then be used for gardening and toilet flush.

Many of the goods and souvenirs sold on the island are made from recycled products. This includes flip flops made from car tyres and bags made from recycled rice bags.

Community

Not only was Cempedak built and is operated using local materials, labour and services but the owners have taken this one step further and taught many of their contractors and staff new trades and techniques. This not only makes operational sense but it also means that in the long run there is a mutual respect with the local community and the staff and tradesmen take greater pride in their work. In a number of cases staff run micro businesses that support the business.

Cempedak buys almost 100% of its supplies in local markets and from small traders. Wherever possible middlemen are avoided and locals are actively helped to establish businesses that supply fresh, sustainable and organic produce. The owners have helped establish many businesses from scratch including a car rental business that has seen a tenfold increase in their business since the operation was begun several years ago. The supplier of 'alang alang' for the grass roofs is another example of where the owners have helped them set up by providing training and support to help improve their product and service ultimately allowing them to provide a better product and charge a higher price.

All of the staff working for Cempedak including our GM are Indonesian, except one staff hired as Guest Relations Manager. Many of the staff started working for Nikoi during the construction phase and have gone on to learn new skills that have allowed them to work in front of house roles. Staff work a 5 day week (4 nights) whereas the standard working week in Indonesia is a 6 day one. A savings and loans scheme has been established that has helped the staff build nest eggs and borrow at more favourable rates than are available from local banks. Both formal and informal training is offered as well and a number of staff have external mentors.

Another contribution to the local community is the organizing of beach clean up events together with the local community. These events are held not only to educate and increase the awareness regarding plastic and ocean pollution but also to help revive the traditional culture with groups putting on performances and supplying local food. Other coastal clean ups have been organised in conjunction with external groups such as Seven Clean Seas. Many of our staff have volunteered to help and

organise these activities.

The most significant impact that Cempedak has had on the local community has been through the establishment of The Island Foundation to work with the local community on Bintan and neighbouring islands to help them to help themselves. The programs being run by the Foundation are being rolled out in the villages near to Cempedak.

The focus of the Foundation's effort has been to establish a network of learning centres so that the local children can be taught a curriculum that helps them to embrace the 3Cs (Confidence, Collaboration, Critical Thinking). Education was identified by the village leaders as their most pressing need. In addition to education the Foundation has helped to develop programs to teach adults English and IT, health, nutrition, football, sanitation and arts and crafts. As these programs have been developed the Foundation has sought to hand them back to the villagers. Education remains the core focus of the efforts of the Foundation.

Over 2,500 children have been taught at the 8 learning centres that have been established to date. These children are gaining access to a whole new world of learning and education through the bilingual curriculum that has been developed by the Foundation. In addition to educating children the Foundation also provides teacher training workshops for local school teachers. These workshops are recognized by the Ministry of Education and provide the teachers with credit points for their own education that in turn allows them to obtain higher salaries. The impact of the programs run by the Foundation reaches over 15,000 villagers.

All of the Foundation's programs are run along secular lines. One of the villages that the Foundation works very closely with are the indigenous Orang Suka Laut or sea nomads in the northeast of Bintan. The Foundation has been working with them to develop an arts and crafts business, improved education and through contacts with the government a dialogue with the government to help them to address the issues that face this marginalized community. There is a similar marginalise community of Orang Suka Laut near Cempedak that the business has been helping since Cempedak was opened.

The fact that the Foundation is registered as a charity in both Singapore and Indonesia has made it more attractive to external donors and the day-to-day functioning of the Foundation more transparent. In this way the Foundation is growing to be a bigger and stronger entity than it would if the funding only came from Nikoi.

As a result of this the Foundation is now working with several institutions that support it through the provision of resources and donations (2 of which have committed S\$1mn to date). The Foundation has an excellent relationship with several schools in Singapore, notably United World College who have helped develop a bilingual curriculum, run teacher training workshops for local teachers, the provision of books and other teaching materials. .

Culture

Bintan has always been relatively sparsely populated and therefore has lacked the

strong cultural identity that you find in other parts of Indonesia. Migration from other parts of Indonesia has diluted this further. There are very few culturally significant sites on the island and none either on Nikoi itself or on Bintan. Nevertheless we have worked hard to help document and salvage what remains.

Included as part of the activities offered to guests is a Cultural Trip program which takes guests to local villages. These trips introduce Bintan traditional culture to guests. A fee is paid to the local village for each visit. This goes to helping them make improvements to the village.

The Foundation has helped document and promote local culture through several programs. We have funded cultural exchange programs and sponsored a number of local cultural events. The arts and crafts program that the Foundation has helped set up has helped revitalize a number of dying art forms. In addition the Foundation has been helping the villagers document their history, stories and traditions.

The business sponsors a local jong race (unmanned sailing boats) and the races of a traditional manned sailing boat called a kelok. These events have helped revive the racing of jongs on this coastline and helped create greater interest for the younger generation in this fascinating cultural tradition. As part of that even cultural dances and the food stalls were organized all without the use of any plastic.

Commerce

Cempedak operates on the overriding principle that a profitable business is the most sustainable one. A significant portion of the company's profits are reinvested each year to continue to grow the business and develop further opportunities. The owners have a desire to continue to grow the business as expansion will allow the company to further build on their efforts in respect of Conservation, Culture and Community.

The company takes a holistic approach to commerce and by being seen as a valuable resource both in terms of employment and business opportunities for the community the community will see the benefits in working with the company. The most visible aspect of this has been the commitment to The Island Foundation.

All of the staff earn above market rates, have employment contracts and are provided accommodation, meals and medical cover free of charge. When medical treatment has not been available locally we have paid for staff and their family members to Singapore for treatment.

The company has helped a number of start up businesses develop or expand. Cempedak has a preference for using local suppliers and service providers owned by local individuals.

Recognition - Awards

[HICAP Sustainable Hotel Awards 2017 \(Winner of Sustainable Design category\)](#)

[National Geographic Traveller Big Sleep Awards 2017 \(Winner of Castaway category\)](#)

[Conde Nast Traveller The Hot List 2017](#)

Achievements to date

Below is a list of the achievements that we have made under The Island Foundation:

1. Established 8 learning centres with plans to open more
2. Developed a curriculum that helps children with their 6Cs (confidence, critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, curiosity, cooperation)
3. 500 children registered at the learning centres
4. All children are assessed for their knowledge of English and IT
4. Running daily classes in English and IT
5. Provided employment for the locals staffing the learning centres
6. Developed a strong link with UWCSEA to the extent that 10th grade students collaborate with TIF on a community project as part of their curriculum
7. Developed an impact assessment so the impact of the teaching can be assessed
8. Registered the foundation as a charity in both Singapore and Indonesia
9. Hosted batik workshops for 40 locals by Singapore's leading batik artist Said Sakarsi

10. Hosted teacher training workshops in conjunction with UWC one of Singapore's leading international schools
11. Established a retail brand (Kura Kura) to sell local arts and crafts
12. Helped villagers develop artisanal products to be sold under the Kura Kura brand
13. Planted mangroves and mahogany trees
14. Arranged for school students from Singapore to teach at the libraries
15. Organized for Singapore based musicians to perform at local schools
16. Organized for Nikoi's naturalist to talk to the children about the environment
17. Established a program for guests visiting Nikoi to donate books to the libraries
18. Raised hundreds of thousands of dollars from external donors to help fund the Foundation
17. In conjunction with the National University of Singapore designed and installed a PV system to power laptops for the libraries
18. Filmed and documented local cultural events
19. Helped locate patients for a Cleft Palate program run by Smile
20. Organized a group of village leaders to visit the PDA programs in Cambodia and Thailand
21. Helped organize and sponsor annual jong (traditional model sailing boat) races
22. Worked closely with Orang Laut village in Berakit to protect 2 kilns to be used for alternative uses (the government was going to tear them down)
23. Established a pilot program to show villagers how to control mosquito populations using ovitraps
24. Developed a bilingual curriculum for learning centres
25. Helped preserve two charcoal kilns to be developed as museums for local villagers
26. In conjunction with Swarovski crystals helped the villages make a fishing net that was exhibited in the National Museum of Singapore. It was subsequently auctioned off to raise money to build a fresh water treatment system for the village that was built in 2015
27. Established a learning farm for growing organic products and doing experiment on composting
28. Established a weekly football program
29. Organised a medical screening for more than 100 villagers
30. "Plastic Ocean" movie screening in two learning centres attracting more than 200 viewers

established drinking water system and bottling plant to be managed by Panglong villagers

Below is a list of Cempedak's achievements to date:

1. A vernacular building design which has minimal visual impact
2. Siting of all buildings and infrastructure to avoid cutting down trees and major earthworks
3. All natural materials and some recycled materials (ie driftwood), bamboo, alang alang, rubberwood, recycled teak furniture, sand floors, sand paths
4. Furniture built on site using driftwood, construction scraps and recycled timber
5. Natural ventilation instead of air-conditioning
6. Solar hot water systems installed throughout the property
7. Recycling of water for toilet flush and gardening
8. Minimal landscape lighting so as not to disorientate nightlife (particularly nesting turtles)
9. Low voltage LED lighting used exclusively
10. No tvs, dvds, phones or mini-bar fridges helping to reduce overall consumption of manmade materials and overall energy consumption
11. Planting of indigenous trees and shrubs
12. Local building materials were used almost exclusively
13. Local tradesman (training many in the process)
14. Local produce is used almost exclusively and almost no processed food is purchased
15. Fairtrade Indonesian coffee used
16. Boats were constructed and are maintained by local shipwrights
17. Recycling of waste (aluminum, glass, paper, cardboard and kitchen waste)
18. Single use plastic drinking water bottles are banned
19. No imported or local mineral waters are sold on the island
20. Carbonation of Cempedak's own water for soft drinks and mineral water
21. Homemade syrups for soft drinks (ginger, lemongrass, hibiscus, tonic water, nutmeg)
22. No drinks in plastic bottles are sold
23. Banning of plastic straws (handmade bamboo ones are used)
24. Drinking water is provided in reusable glass bottles
25. No printed brochures
26. Minimal use of plastic both in operations and in construction
27. Almost no painted surfaces
28. No fogging for mosquito or insects
29. Natural mosquito control using an automated ovitrap
30. Lemon grass planted around houses to repel mosquitoes
31. Toiletries made from natural ingredients are supplied in reusable containers
32. Biodegradable takeaway packaging and bags used
33. Sunscreen sold on island is reef friendly
34. Naturally dried laundry
35. Implemented a fixed menu to reduce food waste
36. Homemade muesli, juices, jams, bread, sambal, bar snacks, coconut milk, ice creams
37. Herbs, spices and some fruits are grown on the island
38. Minimal processed food used
39. Compliance with WWF sustainable seafood guide
40. Daily cleaning of beaches and removal of garbage
41. Organised regular cleans up of neighbouring islands

42. Established a micro enterprise for villagers to collect polystyrene foam on nearby beaches and recycle it for fill in bean bags. Bean bags made from recycled sails.
43. Swimming pools all using salt water chlorinator and energy efficient variable speed pumps
44. Petitioning of Singapore port authorities to stop dumping at sea
45. Established a coastal surveillance system to monitor and report on illegal dumping
46. Ensured an undisturbed intertidal zone
47. More than two thirds of the island has been preserved as a sanctuary
48. Regular surveys of the island's flora and fauna (land and marine) by external consultants.
49. Camera traps to used to study flora and fauna
50. Flora and fauna information guides in each guest rooms
51. Detailed description on our environmental policy and CSR policies in the room guides

47. Program to protect nesting turtles and monitor their nests.
48. Program to eradicate rats that were resident on the island when it was acquired
49. Two natural grass tennis courts have been built
50. Developed a natural paint for marking lines on the tennis courts
51. English lessons and first aid training programs have been offered for all staff
52. Opportunities provided for all staff to learn new skill sets using external trainers (barista training, rock climbing, mixology, scuba, nature, sailing, windsurfing, tennis, cooking, first aid, life saving, wine training)
53. Re-introduced native Cempedak trees to the island
54. Established a program to allow staff families to visit and stay on the island
55. Installed an aerobic waste water treatment plant and waste water gardens
56. Linen is 100% organic cotton
57. Mosquito netting was specifically designed and fabricated for Cempedak using organic cotton
58. Glass recycled using bottle pulveriser
59. State of the art shower heads were installed reducing total water
60. Water saving toilets used throughout.
61. Establishment of a staff savings and loan scheme. This is a separate entity managed by staff.
62. The introduction of a 5 day working week. The norm in Indonesia is a 6 day working week.
63. Recycling of grey water for watering gardens and toilet flush.
64. Switched to a toilet paper made from bamboo fibre rather than wood pulp.
65. Routine quality measurement of drinking water, ground water and waste-water
66. Installation of rainwater harvesting and 600m³ of water storage
67. Provided equipment, boats and staff in numerous emergency or recovery situations
68. Provided guided nature walk program for the guests interested to know more about flora and fauna on the island
69. Empowered local business by supporting staff's family members to supply some of our needs such as the bamboo straw
70. Established a closed-loop system to compost food waste by using Black Soldier Fly larvae
71. Working together with international organization – Conservation International – to help in conservation and establish an MPA (Marine Protected Area)
72. Helped fund a local conservation NGO to develop and implement a management plan for the MPA.
73. Funded a comprehensive dive survey of the area led by Dr Mark Earmann

74. Helped to fund a tree planting program on mine sites in the area that have not been restored.
75. Provided income for local villages through cultural trip which later can be used to develop their infrastructure
76. Provided maintenance of village generators
77. Provided an English lessons for local village (small island nearby) children
78. Donated books and tennis balls to local schools nearby
79. Established a green leaders program for staff to contribute and implement sustainability initiatives.
80. All diesel engines running on biodiesel 30
81. Sponsored traditional sailing boat (kelok) race
82. Created Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines as a reference in supply chain management
83. Complimentary sustainability tours are provided to guests
84. Hosted the first Asian gathering of Long Run members
- 85.

Future commitment and goals

Short term

1. Expand permaculture gardens to increase vegetables and fruits grown on island
2. Help improve areas where the reef has been damaged
3. Establish a no fishing zone on the reef around Cempedak
4. Continue to improve our knowledge of food sources and continue to ensure that seafood in particularly is from sustainable stocks and sources
5. Reduce plastic consumption by continuing to work with local suppliers
6. Help clean up local beaches of plastic and waste
7. Establish an artist in residence program for Indonesian artists

Long term

1. Establish a hatchery program for turtle eggs collected from neighbouring islands
2. Expand the no fishing zones around Cempedak
3. Employ local fisherman to help protect no fishing zones
4. Increase the use of renewable energy sources for power generation
5. Increase use of organic foods in our kitchen supplied by local community
6. Reduce carbon emissions to zero

This policy paper was reviewed by Andrew Dixon in March 2020 and is reviewed and updated annually. A copy of this paper has been translated into bahasa for staff who are not fluent in English.