



The Duke MBA Global Consulting Practicum 2010

Project Summary

Project Title: Tourism Development of Dangriga, Belize: Why-Not Island

Client Information:

- The Mayor's Office & The Town Council of Dangriga, Belize
- Mr. Aaron Jake Gongora, Mayor of Dangriga Town

Period of Performance: December 2009 - April 2010

Duke MBA Team:

- Mili Doshi (Fuqua '11)
- Stephanie Fruth (Fuqua '11)
- Priya Mohanty (Fuqua '10)
- Ramya Moothathu (Fuqua '11)
- Naveen Seshadri (Fuqua '11)
- Nobu Suzuki (Fuqua '11)
- Luke Zhou (Fuqua '11)

Instructors: Arlie Petters and Paul Bloom



Partner Description:

The Dangriga Town Council is a hard-working group of men and women who aim to develop and strengthen Dangriga Town. With a population of 11000, Dangriga Town is the capital of the Stann Creek District and the largest town in the south of Belize.

Problem Statement:

While Dangriga is "the cultural capital of Belize," there is no town center available to the local community to celebrate the ethnic heritage of the Garifuna culture or to congregate for social purposes. The Town Council owns a small island that has potential to serve these needs and also help drive tourism to the area, but the Council has been unsure how to satisfy all stakeholder needs and secure funding for the project. Why-Not Island is centrally located but only currently utilized occasionally.

Objectives:

- Gauge needs and interests of primary stakeholders
- Modify existing tourism development plan
- Identify feasible funding options for development
- Present a detailed, implementable project development plan to the Council

Approach / Methodology:

During the first three months of the project, our team conducted an extensive amount of pre-departure research including interviews with Belizeans in the United States. While in Belize, our team continued our research, focusing on interviews designed to gain an understanding of the competitive environment, project development costs, investment opportunities, competitor business models, consumer interests, and consumer behaviors. Our team completed over 75 interviews in the country.

Our team also took several trips while in Belize:



- Site visits to Why-Not Island and Dangriga Town Market
- Visits to potential tourism competitors (Hopkins Village, Placencia, South Water Caye, Old Belize, Belmopan)
- Visits to potential local competitors (local restaurants, food stores, cart vendors)
- Visits to potential funders and partners (local banks, food stores, community leaders, business owners in Stann Creek District)
- Visits to establish relationships with key political figures (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the United States ambassador to Belize, and the former Prime Minister)
- Visits to public offices to construct development plan (Building and Planning department, Works department)

Recommendations:

Based on extensive research, data analysis, onsite interviews, and investigation of the development of similar areas, our team generated a phased recommendation plan to develop Why-Not Island and its surrounding area. The plan details the steps necessary to first prepare the land for development, then construct temporary stalls to begin revenue generation, followed by the construction of permanent facilities, and finally completing a recreation center and restaurant for the town.

A phased plan of this nature can help Dangriga reach its development targets: to conserve and develop the Garifuna culture, to attract domestic and international travelers, and to benefit the local community by providing facilities for recreation and education. Furthermore, by dividing the project into different phases, the Dangriga Town Council can make sure to harmonize the project process with financing efforts.

Results Achieved:

Our phased development plan was well received by the Town Council, which has begun soliciting funds to start Phase 0 of the proposed plan. Our team believes that our recommended plan is fully implementable, and we hope that the Town Council will begin to see results quickly by acting upon our recommendations.