



Name: Mark-Anthony Villaflor

Age: 33

Nationality: Filipino

Category: Energy

Project: Renewable energy for sustainable tourism in the Philippines

What is the problem you are trying to solve?

The focus is to demonstrate the benefits of renewable energy for eco-sustainable tourism in El Nido, Philippines. Tourism development is often narrow minded, viewing tourists as short-term economic activity without consideration of long-term consequences on the community and the

surrounding environment. The Philippines bears the brunt of the impacts of climate change. In addition, recurring concerns of local citizens include electricity access and costs, proper waste and water management, food insecurity, price inflation and environmental degradation. Many businesses would like to be more responsible but don't have the proper support in place.

How does your idea help solve the problem?

We seek to demonstrate the cost and environmental benefits of solar energy for hotels using our hotel as an example, and use our magazine as the platform for local business owners to discuss sustainability, climate resiliency and lifestyle design on the island. We seek to give practical solutions to issues that arise from tourism or are associated with climate change and the challenges of our surroundings. Our first eco-campaign will gather baseline data on energy efficiency, look at the fuel costs of local businesses, and compare different energy systems currently found in El Nido. Using the Birdhouse, our hotel, as a test case for solar energy we hope to create a space for discussion and education and help connect customers to suppliers.

What inspired you to do this?

When my wife Camille and I first visited El Nido in 2015 we weren't very impressed -- specifically with the town's development. Still, we loved it enough that we ended up buying a small parcel of land on a hill overlooking the bay and began building a glamping site called the Birdhouse. We ran into a variety of issues while building and operating the property, and we hired an environmental consultant to help us come up with solutions. We want to change the travel industry, and using those solutions to create a climate-resilient property that is scalable and replicable is the example we hope to bring to the world.

Bio

Mark-Anthony Villaflor is a Filipino-American teacher turned entrepreneur. After obtaining a Bachelors in International Relations from Pepperdine University, he taught English in South Korea before going to Manila, Philippines to pursue a Master's in Education. After five years of teaching and travelling in China and other countries, Mark-Anthony and his wife Camille returned to the Philippines and are currently living in an island paradise.

Links

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