

# TRAVEL EXPERIENCES FUND HUMANITARIAN PROGRAMMES

*One Horizon is both an experiential travel company and a not-for-profit humanitarian aid organisation. Eugene Yiga spoke to founder and CEO Colin Murray to find out more.*

Learning the art of making Maasai jewellery from the ladies

***“...with the realisation that tourism can have a positive impact more travel agents now want to get involved.”***

Image courtesy of Eugene Viga



www.onroutemag.co.za



Peris at home

### **When (and where) did One Horizon start?**

One Horizon started in South Africa. When we started, we simply asked a concierge at one of the hotels if he knew of a community that needed help. Within thirty minutes, we were there. That was 12 years ago.

### **Where does One Horizon operate?**

One Horizon expanded into Kenya and is on the verge of operations in Tanzania. The structure of the organisation is different in each country,

which reflects social and demographic factors, the role of government in each country, and associated existing infrastructure.

### **What is the objective of the organisation?**

Our overall objective is to build people's skills and knowledge capabilities so that they can leverage these to support themselves and their families. The skills and knowledge capabilities are considered the stepping stones to self-sufficiency, an income and a

future. Our other objective is to provide seed funding so that these skills and knowledge capabilities can be leveraged into people's own small businesses.

### **What programmes do you run?**

Nutrition and feeding programmes, vocational retraining programmes for women and grandmothers, education and health programmes for children, small business programmes for women and grandparents and housing and resettlement programmes for abused women and abandoned children.



Peris, Emily and their shamba

Image courtesy of Eugene Yiga

### ***In what other ways has One Horizon grown?***

In Kenya, we have focused on implementing programmes and fund these through tourist visits and offering itineraries, and it's in Kenya that the greatest growth has occurred. This is our core model of operation. It has gained greater impetus as society has changed. Ten years ago we were ahead of the game, and travel agents just didn't get us; they couldn't understand the concept. However, with the realisation that tourism can have a positive impact more travel agents now want to get involved.

### ***How many tourists visit your programmes each month?***

International tourists average 25 to 30 visitors per month while local tourists – those that are usually part of a local company's corporate social responsibility programme – average 20 visitors per month.

### ***What do you think appeals to them about One Horizon?***

The greatest appeal based on the feedback we get is that it's not a 'tour bus' experience and that you meet the locals. One Horizon works in local communities and hence the interaction is one-on-one; it provides a

'grassroots' appeal. The other overriding factor is that it's something that the family can do together and that a person of any age can do. It's all about visiting and connecting, and because One Horizon doesn't build things, people are not required to have a skill or trade. Previously, organisations offering grassroots experiences were for adrenalin junkies and backpackers. One Horizon's appeal is that it enables ordinary people to meet and be part of a renaissance.

### ***What bigger impact do you hope to make with One Horizon?***

Our key objectives revolve around increasing the number of children receiving food by 20% a year, and we are on track to achieve that. We are looking to establish about 30 more pig farms and 25 chicken farms in the next 18 months that will support over 700 people in self-sustaining businesses. We hope to increase the capacity of our women's centre to ensure that 100 women are in the programme with each new intake. In short, to increase the number of people we touch and to establish these people with the skills to be able to support themselves and their families. And increasing the number of international tourists to 1 000 a year is at the centre of our efforts to achieve this. 🌱

*To broaden your horizons and expand theirs, go to [www.onehorizon.net](http://www.onehorizon.net).*

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### ***How has One Horizon changed over the years?***

In South Africa, we fund local initiatives on approach from individual organisations consistent with our objectives; this was an evolution from taking people to centres and hosting them. Our reputation has meant that we are approached from sponsors (organisations) wanting to contribute back to society, and we are the facilitators of the programmes and funding.



Founder and CEO Colin Murray

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