



2021 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Paradise in Palawan, Philippines: Turning Waste to Wonderful

Destination Name: Club Paradise Palawan

Dimakya Island, Coron, Northern Palawan

Country: Philippines

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Position: Hotel Manager

Nomination Category: *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.

- Localizing the destination supply chain
- Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Tourism Reset & Recovery

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".

Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact top100@greendestinations.org

DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced

Club Paradise Palawan is located in a 19-hectare island in Coron, Northern Palawan called Dimakya Island. Being an island resort with abundant marine life in its surrounding waters and rich in a variety of flora and fauna, waste materials have to be disposed of or repurposed properly in order to keep the environment clean, green and healthy.

Some of the waste management problems that the property faced were:

- Lack of regular collection and hauling of compostable and non-biodegradable waste. Aside from this, the transportation fees for hauling is expensive.

Club Paradise Palawan commissions a waste management group to ferry waste outside the island for proper disposal on the mainland. However, the extra weight of waste incurs high costs to the company amounting to approximately Php 80,000 per month or Php 960,00 per year. This definitely impacts the operational expenses.

Around 30% of the waste is compostable such as fruit and vegetable trimmings, fish guts, and food scraps. While around 70% of the waste is non-biodegradable such as plastic bottles, plastic bags, old car tires, scrap fabrics and more. These were all disposed and hardly repurposed. There were also certain periods in the year wherein collection was not done regularly due to the unavailability of transportation services.

- The Material Recovery Facility (MRF) of Club Paradise Palawan is a small area only and plastic waste have been accumulating over the years. In the mainland, there are no proper recycling facilities as well.

Club Paradise Palawan has to comply with the Philippine's Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. Therefore, single-use plastics used for bath amenities, drinking water, snacks and other basic resort amenities had to be eliminated or reduced. Based on resort records, Club Paradise Palawan used approximately 120,000 plastic tubes for amenities like lotion, shampoo and hair conditioner. For bottled water given to guests, the resort ordered around 5,107 bottles per month or an average of 60,000 per year. All of these were single-use plastics that were simply thrown away and they are non-biodegradable waste with a life expectancy of over 1,000 years!



Methods, steps and tools applied

Club Paradise Palawan team created the **EcoConserve Program**. The program is comprised of 4 teams namely: GarMa (Garbage Management) Task Force, Green Thumb, Sea Guardians and FEW (Fuel, Energy, Water) Champs. All teams were created to work towards the program's primary goal which is to Rebuild, Protect and Conserve. Three very important tasks to ensure that the island and its surroundings are properly cared for.

The primary team in-charge of the waste management project is the GarMa Task Force. They were given the challenge to spearhead solutions to the 2 major waste management issues that the resort was facing. Their goal: to craft winning solutions and to turn "waste into wonderful" - they rose up to the challenge.

First, a campaign to reduce single-use plastics was created. They looked at each department and checked what items should be replaced or eliminated altogether. Buy-in is also vital so the leaders educated the team on the importance and implications of this campaign. GarMa Task Force also did a cost analysis to make sure the expenses were kept to a minimum.

The resort started with replacing small plastic tubes for bath amenities with 500 ml refillable pumps. The plastic wrappers and packaging were changed to recycled paper. An investment was also introduced – the Ecopure Water Purification System. This allowed the resort to purify and bottle their own water for guests' consumption. Reusable bags were set-up in all villas, all plastic cups replaced with paper cups, metal straws were introduced in lieu of plastic straws, plastic bags and cutleries replaced with cassava-made versions ...and the list continues to grow. Although, 100% elimination of single-use plastic has not yet been achieved, Club Paradise Palawan continues to think of ways to reduce its use.

The second challenge for the GarMa Task Force was the disposal of biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste. For this, the team used their creative side to think of ways to properly dispose and repurpose these wastes. Biodegradable or compostable items like food scraps, fish guts and vegetable trimmings were sent to the resort's nearby organic farm, Taranuman. After natural fermentation which takes about two weeks, vegetable trimmings become organic fertilizers while fish guts become organic pesticides. Paper scraps from the back offices are shredded and fed to the African Night Crawlers at the farm to produce Vermicast, also an organic fertilizer.

Non-biodegradable items on the other hand were given "new life" by the team. For example, old van tires from the resort's transportation fleet were used as steps for the Eagle's point hiking trail, used wine bottles were made into lovely vases for the rooms and restaurant, oversized wire spools became beautiful plant racks, tree trunks that were washed ashore were saved and repurposed as chairs for the Sand Bar, and surplus fabric were sewn into facemasks and donated to the front liners in Coron Town.



The project that the team is most proud of is the Ecobricks Project. Here, the staff learned how to make strong ecobricks using plastic scraps and soda bottles. Ecobricks were used to construct a Vermi house (for African Night Crawlers) at Taranuman farm. The GarMa Task Force also conducted several ecobrick-making trainings for the local elementary students at Coron.

The beach clean-ups were also spearheaded by the GarMa Task Force. The members, with the help of other teams, would wake up early to scour the 700-meter beachfront of Dimakya Island to pick up trash/waste. After a busy morning, they collected PET bottles, snack wrappers, wood scraps, and broken bottles – all washed ashore from neighboring islands...and even other countries as some items have foreign language written on the packaging!

Key success factors

The challenges were indeed tough as many factors had to be considered. Will the guests embrace the new changes? Will the team be able to achieve the action plans? Will the stakeholders accept the recommendations? Can the resort afford the costs?

In spite of these factors, Club Paradise Palawan was able to celebrate several wins and the key success factors can be attributed to the following:

- **Creation of the EcoConserve Team and a strong and dedicated campaign to reduce the use of single-use plastic:** Because of everyone's involvement, their eyes were opened to the importance of taking care of the environment and what they learned as a member of the EcoConserve team did not end in the projects at the resort. They made it a way of life as well. The EcoConserve project was also adopted by the resort's sister company, Discovery Shores Boracay when they started strengthening their environment, conservation and sustainability efforts.
- **Research and Information Gathering:** Thorough research had to be done to be able to get to the best solutions. Cost analysis were done most especially on bigger investments like the EcoPure Water Purification System. The resort also employed the services of a Farm consultant to share his expertise on organic farming and to adapt best practices both locally and globally that are suited for the Taranuman farm.
- **Trainings:** Learnings and trainings were conducted by HR Head who guided the team in ecobrick-making and the Philippine Center for Environmental Protection and Sustainable Development Inc. (PCEPDSI) who did trainings on solid waste management awareness. Once the Club Paradise team learned the ropes, they made sure to pass on their knowledge to their colleagues and of course, to the Coron community. The EcoConserve program has also become a part of the employees' onboarding program so that new staff members can fully understand the sustainability and eco-friendly efforts of the resort.
- **Support from the Stakeholders:** The owners were supportive and embraced the recommendations made by the EcoConserve Team. Investment on EcoPure Water Purification

was supported by management because this eliminated usage of plastic bottles that had significant impact to environment if not properly disposed.

As the famous soccer player Pele once said *“Success is no accident. It is hard work, perseverance, learning, studying, sacrifice and most of all, love for what you are doing.”* It was no accident for Club Paradise Palawan’s EcoConserve Team because they worked tirelessly to achieve their goals...and at the same time, they were happy doing it.

Lessons learned

The initial challenge faced during implementation was how the staff would embrace a new concept and make it part of their day-to-day life in the island. Their mindset should be that of an “Eco Warrior” – to believe in the project and implement it from the heart. But because they appreciate the beauty of the island, they are proud of their workplace and most importantly were having fun doing the various activities of the program, the challenge did not prove too difficult.

Data gathering and methods of data collection were a challenge as well. Since the team was new at this and they also had their daily resort operations, they had to manage their time in order to devote a portion to data gathering. It was added work for them but since they saw the importance of this (and how the data would impact the resort and the environment) they soldiered on.

Single-use plastics are difficult to eliminate altogether. But by doing small steps at a time, the resort has already reduced the single-use plastic by 70%. The important thing is that Club Paradise Palawan started efforts and will continue to do so in the months and years to come.

Repurposing is key. If you cannot get rid of these plastics....repurpose, reuse, recycle! Club Paradise Palawan repurposed old water buckets and condiment containers as plant holders.

We also have to educate our guests. Majority of the guests visit the island for rest and relaxation. They demand all the luxuries of a 5- star property therefore expect certain items of top quality. They should realize that waste management is something greater than the resort cost-cutting on bottled water or plastic bags. It is important to let them know that sustainability and love for the environment is also luxurious.

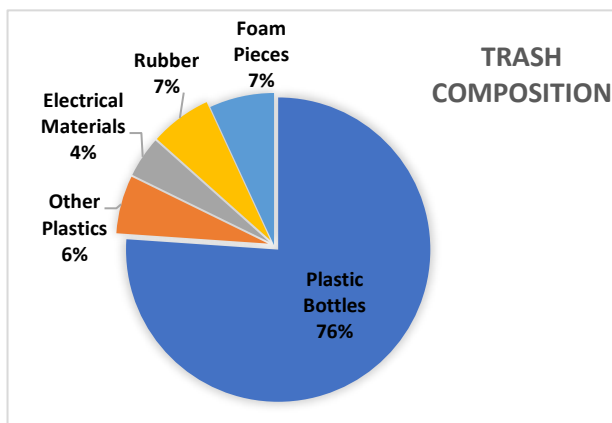
Results, achievements and recognitions

- A total of one hundred sixty seven (167) bricks were completed and were used to construct a Vermi house (for African Night Crawlers) at Taranuman farm. The GarMa Task Force also conducted several Ecobrick-making trainings for the local elementary students at Coron.
- An average usage 120,800 small plastic tubes annually were eliminated by ordering refills for the bath amenity pump dispensers.

- For bottled drinking water, an average of 60,000 PET bottles were purchased in a year. Club Paradise Palawan no longer makes these purchases but instead, they use reusable glass bottles for purified water from the EcoPure Water Purification System.
- Plastic straws and stirrers have now been totally eliminated saving the resort a total of Php50,000(USD1K) in 2018.
- From old tires just stored at the MRF, thirty five (35) were used for the Eagle’s Point trail leaving seventeen (17) to be repurposed this year.
- A huge driftwood that was seen floating by the shore was made into 10 chairs at the Sand Bar.
- A huge wooden spool for electrical wires used by the construction team was also transformed it a beautiful plant racks.
- Coastal Clean-Up Drive: On November 2019, clean-up drives were launched by the Sea Guardians committee to address the immediate concern of trash, particularly water bottles coming in from neighboring countries like Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia. The pieces of trash were washed into the shores of the Club Paradise by the Northeast monsoon coming from the West Philippine sea.

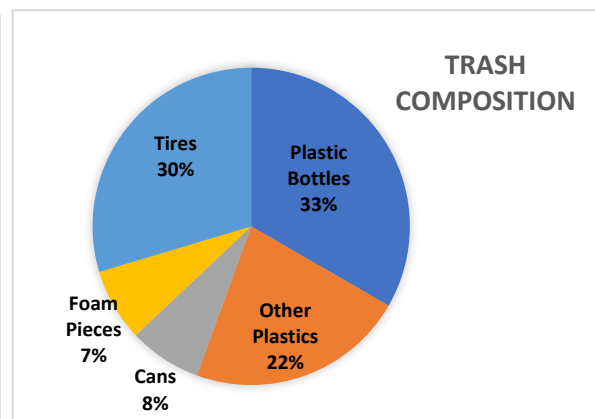
NOVEMBER 13, 2019

Total of 27.6 kgs of trash were collected. Items collected were mostly plastic bottles from Malaysia, Vietnam and Indonesia.



NOVEMBER 30, 2019

Total of 13.5 kgs of trash were collected from Vietnam and Indonesia.



- Creativity: Indeed, there is no limit to one's imagination. Repurposing of items can be done in so many ways and the team's vision to use these items to beautify the property were not only appreciated by guests, but the stakeholders as well.

Club Paradise Palawan made it to the Top 100 Green Destination List as the first Private Entity globally in 2020. Also, because of the success story of the Taranuman farm, the resort placed 3rd in the 2020 Sustainable Awards under the Asia-Pacific Category and recently placed 5th for the People's Choice Award also from Green Destination.

Some of the guest comments/commendations about our efforts lifted from TripAdvisor are available on the Google drive provided below.

Additional references

Club Paradise Palawan – Environmental Sustainability projects

URL: <https://www.clubparadisepalawan.com/discover/environmental-sustainability/>

“Waste to Wonderful” Photos and Trip Advisor Reviews

URL: <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16ydAsJQDbkdWXLWUsVAUCxNkWJEi8T3V?usp=sharing>

