



Local company founder wins a globally recognised Responsible Tourism Award.

Gavin Bate (42), the founder of N. Irish adventure travel company Adventure Alternative and the charity Moving Mountains has just won the award for ‘Best Personal Contribution’ at the Responsible Tourism Awards held at London’s Excel Centre yesterday.

The awards are the biggest of their type in the world! The Oscars so to speak of the Travel World! Over 600 nominations for companies and people were received from all around our planet for only twelve specialist awards. Global industry professionals went on to scrutinise, validate and eventually shortlist all of the entries and finally select a winner.

So why Gavin? This is what the judges said:

‘Gavin Bate has proven with a number of projects that it is possible to share the benefits of responsibly run adventure travel with local communities in developing countries. His dedicated ethos led him to found and hand over the reigns of adventure travel projects in Kenya, Nepal and Tanzania to local individuals, providing them with a minimum of ten years full employment, and the training, guidance, and inspiration necessary for a new vanguard in responsible tourism. As a serial entrepreneur, Gavin has worked hard to put local individuals at the heart of local initiatives.’



Gavin’s background:

Gavin, who lives in Belfast, is most known for his tales of daring do on his five climbs of Mt Everest however this is only a small part of a busy life through which he has helped and shaped many lives in the developing world.

When most 21 year olds are busy with University or going on a gap year, Gavin was walking across the Sahara Desert by himself – a three month journey which nearly cost him his life. The isolation and challenge of this trip focused him and his life from that point forward.

Gavin, a former Coleraine scout leader, worked tirelessly with the young people of N.Ireland and also continued with his own travels and expeditions around the world. During these informative years he travelled throughout our planet from desert to glacier, from deep caves to the highest peaks. He drove trucks across Africa, through war torn countries for aid agencies, he even got arrested and found himself in an Algerian ‘hole in the ground’ jail accused of being a spy! Throughout his travels Gavin always returned to his favourite African country, Kenya. Here he lived on and off for many years in the vast slum of Kibera.

Gavin’s travels opened his eyes to the huge needs of so many people whose lives were merely a painful suffering existence. Gavin established Adventure Alternative in 1991 with a vision to create an adventure travel company which would be unique in the way it operated and which would wholly benefit the local people and places where it operated. From small beginnings with a typewriter and a small desk in his bedroom Gavin started on his life’s work.

Today, some eighteen years later, Gavin has developed a unique set of global companies and four global charitable arms to his Trust – Moving Mountains.

Gavin still lives in Belfast though he spends a lot of time abroad. Adventure Alternative is run from his main office in Portstewart, N. Ireland, which liaises with his offices in Kenya, Tanzania, Nepal and Russia. The international offices of Adventure Alternative have been set up personally by Gavin after years of training, advising and mentoring local people in each of the countries where his company works. The perfect example is the Kenya office which is run by Kelly Kioko, who roughly 15 years ago attempted to pick pocket Gavin. Gavin then took him off the streets where he lived rough, educated him, gave him advice, direction and training and now Kelly is the director of Adventure Alternative Kenya. For a street boy to become a company director in Kenya is unheard of. Kelly is also a shining example to all the other children which Gavin’s charity – Moving Mountains supports.

Gavin established Moving Mountains after years of personally supporting many children, adults and communities in Kenya and Nepal. Gavin now uses his company to pay for all of the charities overheads so that 100% of any donation reaches the people who need it most. The charity is registered in N. Ireland, Ireland, Nepal and Kenya. It has also recently become involved with projects in Borneo and the Ukraine. The main tenor of Moving Mountains is to positively develop the lives of young people who have no support, guidance or direction and who live in adverse conditions. Moving Mountains has built and manages orphanages, schools, clinics and supports many hundreds of children in the areas where it works.

Gavin’s concept of commerce supporting charity works very well and outside of this Adventure Alternative grows from strength to strength, allowing Gavin to directly employ more and more people around the world giving them and their families hope and a future.

Yesterdays recognition at the ‘Responsible Tourism Awards’ is so very deserved though Gavin himself finds it quite humbling as for him the award is reflective and deserving of the many great people and the Adventure Alternative team around the world who have made a difference to him and helped shape his own life.

Further details:

Responsible Tourism Awards: www.responsibletourismawards.com

Adventure Alternative: www.adventurealternative.com

Moving Mountains: www.movingmountains.org.uk