

# snapshot

a glimpse into the daily work of  
global business assist  
around the world

> June 08

## Joel Shuflin – Adventure Capitalist

*Contributed by Joel Shuflin*

In the early 1990's, Jim Rogers popularized the term Adventure Capitalist through his book of the same name: a travelogue combined with investment advice, globetrotting, world economic and political commentary - all focused on the idea of investing in opportunities around the world for personal gain.

Simultaneously, and a bit more quietly, gba President, Doug Mann, began developing the concept of adventure capitalism with a decidedly different approach. Experience has shown that humanitarian efforts which appropriately distribute physical aid in times of crisis are not the right avenue to stimulate long term development; people need more than a hand out, they need a hand up.

The gba model is to connect people like me, a westerner with business experience, to entrepreneurs in developing areas of the world. These connections are purposeful. They empower emerging entrepreneurs to create sustainable businesses that will not only feed their families, but also contribute to the economic development of their communities - and ultimately their regions and countries. My opportunities to participate in this vital connection came not only through donations to specific empowering projects such as micro-financing and business grants, but also more directly through participating in a developing world business training seminar.

In these seminars, gba volunteers instruct and coach entrepreneurs in everything from bookkeeping to sales, promotion to leadership, and principles of becoming benevolent stewards of economic success. My journey as an Adventure Capitalist began with this kind of seminar - taught in Sunyani, Ghana. I was not really sure what to expect upon arrival in Ghana, West Africa, but our assignment with gba was to train approximately forty owners of small-to-medium sized businesses (SME's).



**Adventure Capitalist, Joel Shuflin, talks business at gba's Sunyani, Ghana training seminar**



## INDIVIDUALS LIKE YOU CHANGE LIVES.

*a new, model for serving the  
world's poor...*

**T**he scope of our training was fairly broad, and rooted in basic values that motivate - what many call "social entrepreneurship". This includes issues such as stewardship, integrity, honesty, fairness, honoring customers, employees and business partners with respect and love, and community service. The training covered the basics of accounting and cash flow management, budgeting, inventory control, selling, promotion, project management and people management. I admit that I initially felt a bit overwhelmed and particularly challenged as to how to communicate in relevant ways across the boundaries of language, culture and the varying types of businesses I encountered.

Amazingly, I discovered that commerce is almost as universal of an experience as music. I was pleasantly surprised to find that our discussions of the "how to's" of business and commerce resonated with these farmers, tailors, retailers and small manufacturers in West Africa. Of course, questions came up about applying these new business concepts in the context of local customs - and what challenging questions they were!

Now, weeks after the training has concluded, the gba team has evaluated many business plans produced by graduates of the class, and we've picked the top four to receive additional coaching and business loans.

My experiences in Ghana were life-changing. All these entrepreneurs have great dreams for their businesses, their families and their communities. I returned to the States with eyes opened to a new understanding of how my life might be able to impact the less fortunate of this world in the future.

*As it turns out, there were more than four deserving entrepreneurs in our graduating class in Ghana, but not enough funding to underwrite more loans. Even if you never plan on traveling to Ghana, you can join me as an Adventure Capitalist, financially helping gba bring these additional solid business plans of our Sunyani students to life.*

Sincerely –



**Joel Shufli**  
GBA Adventure Capitalist Volunteer



helping the world's poor... help themselves

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