



Amy Hackett-Jones

HELLO, AMY. THANKS FOR JOINING US TODAY.

HOW DID YOU END UP WORKING IN AFRICA?

Well, I work for a small press agency that sends its employees around the world, usually to **developing countries**. We interview politicians, dynamic local **entrepreneurs** and **blue chip companies** operating in the country. I'm sent in to find the positive stories, highlighting good business and **investment opportunities** in countries that usually only receive bad coverage in the international press.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN WORKING THERE?

In 2006-2007 I spent four months in South Africa, a month in Cape Verde, four months in Botswana...and I've managed a quick weekend to Mozambique! So I've worked in a few African countries this year. They're all extremely different.

WHAT'S THE MOST COMMON THING PEOPLE MISUNDERSTAND ABOUT DOING BUSINESS IN AFRICA?

Well, Africa is the world's poorest **inhabited** continent. Over the years it's gone somewhat backwards in terms of foreign trade, investment, and **per capita income**. However, a handful of African economies are growing, such as Nigeria, Botswana, South Africa, Kenya, Ghana, Cameroon and Egypt. They're turning away from traditional economies (natural resources and weapons) and are starting to develop tourism and technology.

Because of this **diversification**, opportunities for small and medium-sized businesses are increasing; however, many Africans need basic business education.

MOST PEOPLE HAVE THIS IMAGE OF AFRICA: WIDESPREAD VIOLENCE, CHAOS, A LOT OF DISEASE, FAMINE AND A COUPLE OF SAFARI PARKS. HOW DOES THE IMAGE OF CONTRAST WITH THE AFRICA YOU KNOW?

You'll find that the kind of **aid** the West has tried to give to Africa has been of little use, because we're not educating Africans **to fend for themselves**. However, 'Trade Not Aid' is a slogan you will often hear these days in Africa. Trade is **the way forward**, and the West has missed this opportunity. The Chinese, however, have not.

YOU'VE WORKED IN SEVERAL PARTS OF AFRICA, WHICH ONE DID YOU LIKE BEST?

Cape Verde in Western Africa. It's a small group of islands off the coast of Senegal. Beautiful, but a little sleepy...good for some **island hopping** though!

South Africa...it's where I had the most fun, but it's also one of the most dangerous countries on earth. You have to be very **streetwise**. It's massive, absolutely stunning, and very diverse. I had some amazing experiences in Cape Town - sky-diving over the famous Table Mountain and doing the run to Cape Point.

WHAT'S THE FUNNIEST THING THAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU WHILE ON THE JOB?

Probably when I unofficially met President Mbeki of South Africa. I was holding a huge bouquet of flowers that weren't for him, but for the Deputy President, whom I was about to interview, however he was also expecting guests and thought that the flowers were for him! So I had to shake hands with him, give him the flowers, and **make up an interview on the spot** for him! Then along came the Deputy President, and luckily I managed to get some more flowers **just in time**.

LASTLY, THERE'S A QUOTE AT THE END OF ALL OF YOUR EMAILS: "LIFE SHOULD NOT BE A JOURNEY TO THE GRAVE WITH THE INTENTION OF ARRIVING SAFELY IN AN ATTRACTIVE AND WELL PRESERVED BODY, BUT RATHER TO SKID IN SIDEWAYS, CHAMPAGNE AND A CUBAN IN ONE HAND, STRAWBERRIES AND CREAM IN THE OTHER, BODY THOROUGHLY USED UP, TOTALLY WORN OUT AND SCREAMING "WOO HOO! WHAT A RIDE!" COULD YOU EXPLAIN THIS IN YOUR OWN WORDS?

I'm afraid I don't remember now whose quote it is, but it's a very good one, and I always get comments about it! It's the way I like to live my life...it basically says that life is here for living and making the most out of. "Live **life in the fast lane**...if you don't", as someone else once said..."you're taking up too much space!!"



GLOSSARY

developing country *n*
a country that was poor but is becoming richer

entrepreneur *n*
someone who starts their own business

blue chip company *n*
a company that can be trusted and is not likely to fail

investment opportunity *n*
chances to put money into projects and make profit

inhabited *adj*
someone lives there

per capita income *exp*
the average pay of a citizen of that country

diversification *n*
to offer new products and services

famine *n*
a serious lack of food in a country

aid *n*
help (money, food, medicine, etc) given to a poor country by a rich one

to fend for oneself *phr vb*
to be independent

the way forward *exp*
the correct course of action

island hopping *exp inform*
when on holiday, to travel to many different islands in a group

streetwise *adj inform*
to be knowledgeable and able to deal with dangerous situations, usually in big cities

to make up sth on the spot *exp inform*
to invent something straight away, usually in a difficult situation

just in time *exp inform*
at the last second

grave *n*
the place where you are buried after dying

to skid in *phr vb inform*
to slide into somewhere quickly with no control

Cuban *n inform*
cigar from Cuba

to use up *phr vb*
to use something until it's completely gone or broken

life in the fast lane *exp inform*
wild, exciting, fun life

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