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Edmund Shipulwa

Tour Guide

Passionate About Nature

Tour guides work in the travel industry, giving guided tours to groups of visitors and offering interesting or enlightening information about points of interest at nature attractions, historic sites, museums, scenic locations, and other travel destinations. Meet 33-year old Edmund Shipulwa, Park Control Warden at the 100-thousand hectare Gondwana Canyon Park. Edmund is also a seasoned tour guide. This is his story.

Nature Lover

Edmund Shipulwa was born at Oshikuyo, outside Oshakati as the seventh of ten children. However, he went to stay with his uncle at Ruacana, when he turned three.

Edmond had a relatively carefree childhood, and from an early age, developed a love for farming and the outdoors. “Despite the fact that we had to walk about 15 kilometres to school everyday, I considered myself fortunate, because the early and long walk allowed me to spend the first part of my day outside, taking in the sunrise and the fresh air, and appreciating the scenery”, he explains. “I enjoyed village life. From school, we would do our chores which included looking after our livestock and ploughing our mahangu fields”, he adds.

Stellar Growth

Edmund’s story is one of persistence and growth. After completing his Grade 12 at Ruacana



Senior Secondary, he moved to southern Namibia and landed a job at the Gondwana Canyon Park, as a Field Assistant. His loyal service to the company has since seen him moving up the ranks from a Tour Guide to Ranger, to Senior Ranger, to Assistant Warden, and to the position he currently holds as Control Park Warden.

“My employment at Gondwana Collection has really been a match made in heaven. Yes, the company recognised my potential and willingness to learn and improve myself early on, and created opportunities for me to grow in this field”, he notes. “I really started from scratch. I had no qualifications when I joined. But, I was willing to work hard and invest in my own future. My hard work and sacrifices have paid off”, he highlights.

Employer Support

Edmond recognised the role his supervisors and the owners of

Gondwana Collection played in his remarkable career progression. Under their tutelage and encouragement, he soon applied for the position of Control Warden, responsible for overseeing and managing the tourist infrastructure and game resources in the park.

“I got some encouragement from the previous warden and from our then Managing Director, Manni Goldbeck, who said they would give me a week to think about falling under new management, or applying for the vacant Control Warden position. I applied eventually, and was selected as the new Gondwana Canyon Park Control Warden”, he recalls.

Asked as to what he thought landed him the job, Edmond confidently responds that those making the decision could not overlook his solid track record of loyal performance, commitment and hard work. “I think what pulled it through for me was the

experience I have amassed over the years and the fact that I had a thorough grounding in all aspects of our tourism operations. I grew up with Gondwana Collection”, he adds.

Demanding Work

Edmond knows the scenic Fish River Canyon like the back of his hand and has the ability to expertly engage visitors with his knowledge of the location. He finds interacting with tourists to teach them about the park’s fauna and flora extremely gratifying and rewarding. “We have three lodges in our property, Canyon Roadhouse, Canyon Village and Canyon Lodge. We offer a wide range of activities to keep our guests busy, including driving them to the canyon and walking them along the edge and cliffs of the second largest canyon in the world and the largest in Africa. We also offer guided game drives and walking trails”, he explains.

However, Edmond admits that at times, overseeing all tourist operations in the 100-thousand hectare nature park, can be very demanding, “It gets hectic at times. We need to maintain our waterholes in this very dry and arid part of the country. We also do maintenance on our fences, while also installing and monitoring camera traps, which is a source of information for game counts, field management and research”, he notes.

Conservation

Edmond’s expert knowledge of this surroundings makes him an expert tour guide. For him, it’s not only about educating others about our country’s rich and unique natural heritage, but also about conserving our natural habitat for generations to come.

“At Gondwana Collection, we are very serious about conservation.

When we started this park, there were only three zebras, but now we speak of thousands of them. We have reintroduced several game species including giraffe, red hartebeest and blue wildebeest and we still have a lot planned for this beautiful Nama Karoo Desert”, he shares. “We are reaping the rewards, as our reintroduction of game species is attracting other species as well. Just recently, we detected from our camera traps that a brown spotted hyena has entered the park. I have monitored the traps for the past ten years and it was our first time to see this hyena”, he highlights.

Edmund is also playing an important role in a nursery project by the company to grow Quiver Tree seedlings. “We’ve detected that the numbers of this special tree are dwindling and that we could not find small any quiver trees. We were worried that if the big quivers died, we would lose the entire species. It’s an exciting project”, he shares.

Growing Sector

The local tourism sector is growing and opportunities for employment at tour companies are readily available, who may employ guides on a seasonal, full-time, part-time or volunteer basis. Edmund feels that Namibia with its scenic landscapes has much more to offer, not only to tourists, but also to young men and women who wish to enter this

rewarding and potentially lucrative sector.

“I believe that my journey of personal growth and development at Gondwana can serve as an inspiration to many young people out there, that a future in the Tourism and Hospitality sector is indeed viable. Failing Grade 12 and not being able to go to university is not the end of the world. If you appreciate interacting with people and serving them in a resourceful and committed way, you too can excel in this sector”, Edmund highlights. “I love the outdoors. I

love nature. And I have turned this passion of mine into a job I love and enjoy. Others can do the same. Tourism and Hospitality is the way to go”, he adds.

Edmund Shipulwa – Humble, reliable, organised and committed. An ardent conservationist who has managed to turn his passion for nature and the outdoors into a viable career path. His story teaches us that passion is what gives meaning to our lives. It’s what allows us to achieve success

beyond our wildest imagination. And that it is within all of us to find a career path that we have a passion for.

He is living his passion as a Tour Guide.

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