

*After a life changing moment about 5 years ago, I started look for excitement, adventure and what's this all about-ism, I decided to save, learn and find something that would push me to the edge of my comfort zone and possibly further.*

*So the idea to ride from Scotland to explore West Africa by motorcycle was born, little did I know that sometimes following the overland routes that connect Europe to this part of the world and sometimes the more off road routes, it would lead me to this very spot and the start of yet another great adventure.*

*Along the way, I stayed in some fantastic spots, meeting lovely and generous locals, also spending time with fellow travellers from all walks of life and very different backgrounds.*

*After trying to live a regular life back home for quite a few years, this was exactly the antidote I needed to rediscovered myself, find passion and purpose In life.*

*Eventually after 5 months on the road I had to stop and replenish funds so I became involved in helping someone develop their business here in The Gambia.*

*But something shifted. Somehow I found myself in back in Pakalinding, the first stop after the border were I cried as I crossed the Senegambia Bridge. So I felt drawn, not just to the place, but to the people. I built friendships, became part of the community, and started to understand both the strength and the struggle of life here.*

*What stood out most was the contradictions. This region sits on one of the most important travel and trade routes in West Africa, linking Dakar, Banjul, and Casamance and being the half way point to up country and big wildlife regions, yet the opportunities for local people remain limited.*

*Too many young, talented individuals feel their only option is to leave, often risking everything to reach Europe. To me, that didn't make sense. Because this place, this exact crossroads has all the ingredients to become something more, maybe it's just obvious to my fresh eyes and background in tourism & hospitality.*

*It has a deep Mandinka heritage, it is positioned on a major overland route, and with the steady flow of travellers passing through, I believe this area can grow into a destination in its own right. Not built from the outside, but from within.*

*Over the past two years, I've stayed, listened, and taken the first step. I built a small campsite and café not as the end goal, but as proof. Proof that people will stop here. Proof that something can work. Proof that this location has value. Now, the next phase begins. The vision is to develop a truly sustainable, eco-driven lodge, one that operates on a circular model, where income feeds back into the local community. The goal isn't just to build a business, but to help create the conditions for others to build their own.*

*Working alongside the village Chief, the Governor and Elders, also with help from the Village Development Council, the aim is to support local entrepreneurship, create opportunities, and contribute to a new kind of local economy one that keeps talent here, rather than losing it.*

*The Roadside Café, Camping & Rooms is just the starting point. What comes next is bigger, phase 2, The lodge.*

*This site will change into the shop window to the area, promoting the lodge accommodation and cultural nights, wildlife hiking, boat excursions, local markets, bee farmers, pottery, fabric weavers, other villages specialising in krintin weaving, traditional bed making, women farming initiatives, plastic recycling initiatives.*

*This isn't charity, this is the blue print for local economic growth and youth empowerment.*

*I am now seeking partnership and funding support to scale this initiative—expanding infrastructure, supporting local enterprise, and establishing a replicable model for community-based tourism and economic development.*

*With the right backing, this project can contribute to reducing outward migration pressures while creating sustainable opportunities rooted in local culture and ownership.*