



RECLAIM YOURSELF RETREATS

Impact Report

2022



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About & Welcome

We create meticulously organised, powerful and personalised yoga retreats and wellness adventures in extraordinary places.

Our Mission

We exist to actively improve our guests' wellbeing and enable them to connect to who they are at their best. We do this by creating inclusive, world class global retreats for everybody informed by decades of expertise and local wisdom. We create our retreats to have a lasting positive impact on our guests, and the people and places we visit.

Welcome from Jools, Founder and Owner

Reclaim Yourself was founded in 2005 by me, Jools Sampson. I am the sole owner and I design and direct all our trips, I have run over two hundred retreats in many countries around the world. I have seen both the positive and negative impact of tourism. Reclaim Yourself has always had positive impact at the heart of its purpose – we exist to improve our guest's wellbeing while also financially supporting our local partners and providing our teams with a positive professional environment.



*I've kept my team small and
our vision strong.*

*During the pandemic, I spent my time
networking, studying and redesigning much
of my business so that I could accelerate
my commitment to operating in an
environmentally and socially responsible
way.*

While we usually run around fifteen retreats each year, to recover from two very challenging years during the pandemic, in 2022 myself and my colleague Emma, ran a record twenty-two retreats. Across the twelve countries we visited, I worked almost exclusively with independent hosts of unique and locally owned accommodation, the majority of which were family run businesses. Our chefs sourced locally grown ingredients for the nutritious vegetarian and vegan meals.

The travel restrictions in place in the first part of the year, created confusion, chaos and concern for many suppliers and our guests. Many of our hosts had to re-open and get back up to speed in record time and were often dealing with lack of staff and broken supply chains. At times it was difficult to deliver a quality retreat experience because of this, but what stood out during this time was the hard work and commitment of everyone involved and a deeper sense of togetherness than I had experienced before the pandemic.

This year felt like a team effort more than ever, we all had to work together and help each other shine, despite the chaos and challenges.

On the other side of this, guests were often anxious and emotional, experiencing the euphoria of being able to travel again while struggling with being in close contact with a group of strangers and beginning to process their pandemic experience.



I am proud to say that my team excelled in supporting our guests and skilfully managed some highly charged situations this year. I believe we have done some of our best work and had a significant positive impact on many people. This is reflected in the high number of returning guests we have booked for 2023.

Get in touch if you have questions or comments about this, our very first, Reclaim Yourself Impact report.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'A. Langer', written in a cursive style.

Our approach

Sustainability

In 2019 I created a clear and transparent Responsible Retreat strategy here, and in 2020 Reclaim Yourself developed two impact targets, with a set of measurable criteria, from which we have been measuring and managing social and environmental impact.

These targets were our first go at setting out a quantifiable roadmap for our impact and we made some mistakes – we acknowledge that significant scope 3 emissions are a part of our business model – and, we have put in place tools to decouple Reclaim Yourself's success from air travel and to invest more into the local communities that we visit.

We have completed a materiality assessment and have focussed our updated targets on these material impacts: customer welfare, supply chain management including community engagement and economic empowerment, workforce diversity and engagement and Greenhouse Gas Emissions.

Updated targets will be published on our website in early 2023.

B Corp Journey

Reclaim Yourself has been on the B Corp journey since 2020, baselining our score in the B Impact Assessment, making improvements, applying for certification, making more improvements, and re-applying. This journey has been challenging, at times frustrating and comprehensively the most transformative process we have ever been through as a business. When we, hopefully, certify in 2023 it will be the start of a new journey of continual improvement, as a part of a movement of over 6000 other businesses (1000 in the UK alone), striving to improve social and environmental impact.

We will publish our B Corp score in our 2023 impact report when we have certified.

Wish us luck!

Governance

1

Mission and Theory of Change

As a result of the work I did during the pandemic, taking time to really observe the impact of Reclaim Yourself, I developed our mission and theory of change based on the Reclaim Yourself retreat formula.



Lisa Quinn – Leadership, goals and brand messaging



Caroline Smith – Legal contracts, growth and customer experience



Alice Elliott – Sustainability, Social Impact and B Corp

2

Mission Lock

Reclaim Yourself changed from Sole Trader to Limited Company, locking in our mission for our B Corp certification.

3

Advisory Board

The creation of the Advisory Board has been a game changer for Reclaim Yourself. The support and expertise from three successful women who I admire immensely has been invaluable. They represent my stakeholders and bring a wealth of knowledge and wisdom which has elevated how I run the business. Next steps – In 2023 I will invite a fourth person, representing the host community, to join the board.

4

Materiality Assessment

With input from the Advisory Board I assessed and prioritised Reclaim Yourself's material impacts. Next steps are to use these to refine our targets for 2023.

People

Independent contractors
were a part of the Reclaim
Yourself team

22

As an owner-led business with no employees, the people I work with are essential to the success of the business because we are delivering a shared vision and we are collectively responsible for taking care of our guests' wellbeing.

In 2021 I created a 45-page "employee handbook", providing my retreat teams with a detailed and structured overview of how Reclaim Yourself works and their role in the business. The handbook has been well received and inspired many conversations between staff, when we're together on retreats.

In 2022 I recruited a part time Operations Manager who helped with the high volume of work. It was a valuable learning experience for me to take someone on to help with running the business for the first time.

Next steps

I will be recruiting some new team members which gives me an opportunity to develop a diversity statement and set new diversity targets.

At the end of 2022 I was selected for a 6-month business mentorship programme through Women in Travel and as a result of this, I am currently working on an Operations Manual which details all of the tasks and processes undertaken to run the business. This will be completed by the end of January 2023 and will inform my recruitment process.



Community

Co-creating retreats with our host communities is important because offering our guests an authentic cultural immersion is a key aspect of our work. These experiences only really work if we work together to create something interesting and enjoyable for everyone.

It can sometimes be confronting for our guests to be immersed into a different culture, so working with experienced and invested local partners, and not anonymous multi-national corporations, is an imperative.

In 2022, we launched two new wellness experiences in India and Ecuador, where yoga was not the focus. These were immersive journeys created with experienced and talented chef, Bettina Campolucci-Bordi. Both trips centred around cooking with our local hosts and sharing food. Sales were lower for these trips, but they were two of the best things we did in 2022.

Everyone who came enjoyed their experience immensely and I particularly appreciated how we connected with our hosts by cooking together.

Supplier Self-assessments – learning and next steps

We were let down by two new partners this year, whose self-assessments of their venues turned out to be very different from the reality. We managed to minimise any negative impacts on our guests, but this was a significant learning for us, and we have put in place more extensive and more robust processes to ensure this does not happen again..

Our Croatia host is committed to some brilliant conservation work in the Velebit mountains and the owner there was inspirational in his leadership and vision. In Ecuador we worked with a humble community-based tourism and conservation expert who co-created an immersive and life changing trip retreat for us with the indigenous Achuar community.

88%

Suppliers filled out self-assessments

21

Independent, local suppliers/hosts

2

New wellness experiences

Hours donated to free
retreats for NHS staff

500

When the first lockdown forced us to cancel retreats, it was the disappointment of Reclaim Yourself's regular clients working in the NHS that was hardest to bear.

The Reclaim Yourself team, experts in everything from meditation and yoga to deep-tissue massage, all agreed to volunteer their services for free. We then approached Tofte Manor in Bedfordshire, whose owner waived the £6,000 venue-hire fee normally charged for taking over the premises.

[1] [HTTPS://WWW.THETIMES.CO.UK/ARTICLE/INTENSIVE-CARE-THE-FREE-RETREATS-PROVIDING-VITAL-LIFELINES-FOR-FRONTLINE-WORKERS-WF3JFJL50](https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/intensive-care-the-free-retreats-providing-vital-lifelines-for-frontline-workers-wf3jfjl50)

Free Retreats for NHS staff

Sixteen healthcare professionals were invited on that first three-day escape, in September 2020, and the state that they arrived in will live long in our memory.

We ran our seventh and eighth free NHS retreats in 2022. These retreats have been heart-warming and heart wrenching in equal measure. Our NHS guests come from all over the country, and I think we were all a little surprised at how much we could help this group of vulnerable, burned out and often traumatised people in just three days. It gave us all a boost of confidence and a new sense of purpose.

Next steps

We are running an Free NHS retreat in 2023 which is discounted rather than free, using the last of the donations to cover the costs. We will seek more funding to continue this model if it works as we are now very experienced in providing an effective product for NHS workers

Customers

We work with very experienced retreat experts who help our guests to improve their physical and mental wellbeing.

People choose to come on a retreat for many reasons, but often because they have been feeling stressed, overwhelmed, anxious or need to step away from their day-to-day life to process emotions or find a way to access deep rest and relaxation.

Our retreats include a mix of wellness activities depending on our location. We offer yoga, meditation, mindfulness, bodywork, breath work, forest bathing, hiking, swimming, cycling, kayaking, snowshoeing and cold-water therapy. Carefully crafted healthy menus, rest and relaxation are always included. All of this contributes to the health and wellness impact of our customers.

Managing Health and Wellness Outcomes

With the support of my Advisory Board I changed our feedback forms into Guest Experience Forms which has been very successful. We are not asking people if they liked their room but we are asking them how they feel both at the beginning, why they booked and what their focus is, and how they feel at the end of their retreat.

This allows us to track the outcomes our guests experience compared to their expectations.

Net Promoter Score

85.6

Target – stay world class – keep Net Promoter Score above 80.

Having experimented with different formats for our customer experience forms, we settled on giving paper forms to guests while on retreat as they will take the time to complete them. We also prepare our guests by letting them know the form is coming and why we are seeking this information and they are mostly invested and interested in being part of the process.

These feedback mechanisms inform the design of our retreats, allowing us to track unintended negative as well the efficacy of our positive impacts.

Next steps

Our systems will continue to be updated for tracking outcomes over time and collating all the information in a way that allows us to use it to inform our retreats.

Environment

Tourism is responsible for around 8% of the world's carbon emissions and Reclaim Yourself is part of this. In 2019 I made some significant changes in how we travel and where we work. As part of this, I developed targets to reduce our carbon footprint and increase our positive impact.

I have been measuring our carbon emissions since 2019. I include the carbon emissions for all my team and guest travel, any in-country transport, our suppliers emissions including accommodation and food. I then add 20% to the total. Our carbon emissions for 2022 came in at 321 tonnes. I ran twenty-two retreats this year, so our carbon footprint increased compared to the previous two years (I ran two UK retreats in 2020 and four retreats in 2022 due to the pandemic). However, I have still managed to bring it in under the 2019 amount when I ran twelve retreats where our emissions were 419 tonnes.

I have achieved this by changing the way I plan retreats, how we travel and increasing the number of low impact destinations, messaging and incentives for guests to "slow travel" to retreats. 2022 was a "catch up" year, where we delivered postponed retreats alongside scheduled ones. As we go into 2023, we can get back on track with our plans and targets with just seventeen retreats planned.

As a final step, Reclaim Yourself offset all carbon emissions with Ecologi.

321

Next Steps

My current retreat plans show my 2023 carbon emissions to be around the same as in 2022. I will be measuring and managing this as I plan for 2024 to ensure I can make a bigger reduction in our emissions.

As part of an assessment of our material impacts we are reviewing Reclaim Yourself's targets to ensure we are focussing on the impact that will achieve our purpose, vision and mission. The new targets and KPIs will be published on our website in early 2023.

Thank you to all of our
guests, team and
hosts in extraordinary
places for an
incredible 2022.

