



Ethical Travel



tourism

infocus

spring 2006

tsunami

The Andamans

global warming

The dilemma of flying

wildlife tourism

Conflict in Kenya

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Details on back page

Fighting
Exploitation
in Tourism

TourismConcern

A happy gapper at work.



Gappers – for better or for worse?

I appreciate that many gap year opportunities exist for the benefit of the 'gappers' leaving little value for the host countries.

However, I feel it's both inaccurate and unjust to suggest that all gap year programmes operate without long-lasting value to host communities as you did in 'Gap Years: The New Colonialism' in the last issue.

I can't claim that my year in Nepal was entirely for the benefit of my host village – of course it wasn't. I was an inexperienced 18-year-old, but I don't feel that the school did badly out of my presence. Just as I was exposed to a different culture, lifestyle and language, my pupils and colleagues learnt about my culture and language. After consultation, we also left behind several much needed resources.

However, I do take on board the criticism of gap year systems and

agree with the proposal for accountability among operators. Evidently it is still in question whether this is an appropriate means for gappers to learn about another country and its culture, and at what cost?

Alex Kelly

Editor's Response:

Tourism Concern agrees that there are some gap year companies working in consultation with local communities to ensure the benefits remain with them.

However, the rapidly growing gap year industry is a profit-making business for many companies and remains totally unregulated. Tourism Concern is calling for public accountability of gap year companies so that 'gappers' can choose a scheme that will ensure a fair and transparent exchange between them and their host communities.

the ethical volunteering guide
seven questions to help you pick an ethical international volunteering placement
www.gapyearresearch.org

The Ethical Volunteering Guide helps 'gappers' in their quest for an ethical gap year and includes the questions to ask and the answers to look for when you choose between the great opportunities and great opportunists. Visit: www.gapyearresearch.org

Front cover pictures from *The Ethical Travel Guide*, clockwise: Ethiopia Mequat Mariat Camp (photo: Mark Chapman); A ride on a traditional ox-cart in Cambodia (Debbie Watkins, Carpe Diem Travel); Charles Rhun, a community guide at Damaraland Camp in Namibia, shares his local knowledge (Wilderness Safaris); Peter Richards, REST, discusses the benefits of community-based tourism in Thailand (Peter Richards, REST).

IS THE UK GOVERNMENT FAILING TSUNAMI VICTIMS?

I was appalled to hear from my friend, a member of Tourism Concern, of the way in which Sri Lankan people are being treated by their government during the so-called resettlement after the tsunami.

Bearing in mind the large sums which the UK government gives to Sri Lanka, I trust you are bringing this to the attention of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This is a scandal that needs the strongest diplomatic and economic pressure.

RR Franck

Editor's Response:

Tourism Concern sent copies of our tsunami report, *Tourism & post-tsunami reconstruction: a second disaster?*, to the government emphasising how serious the situation is for many tsunami victims who are facing strategic evictions linked to tourism. To date, the only response has been from Secretary of State, Hilary Benn, and his letter fails to show evidence that this is a matter of real concern to the Department for International Development.

We are still lobbying the government to demand the need for them to face up to the situation and to ensure that tsunami victims don't suffer a double tragedy in the name of tourism.

editorial

WITH THE SPRING 2006 EDITION OF **IN FOCUS** comes our much-awaited new *Ethical Travel Guide* which has now hit the bookshops. But why go on an ethical holiday? Well, as the book states, it means everyone gets a cut of the action. These holidays are great fun for the holidaymaker and the types of holiday in the book are very diverse. Luxurious or simple, value for money or expensive, they offer a real taste of the culture of the host country. And the benefits go directly back to the community rather than just the tour operator or the middle man.

To buy a copy of the *Ethical Travel Guide*, go to our newly opened online shop (www.tourismconcern.org.uk) which also boasts lots of other Tourism Concern merchandise including our T-Shirts and resources.

Whilst we are thinking of our next ethical holiday, many of us will also be thinking of the flight we will take to get to our chosen destination and the impact this will have on the environment. The climate change debate is a hot topic at the moment and, with so many experts and opinions being bandied around in the media, it makes it very hard to know what to do and how we as individuals can make a difference. Michael Lomotey discusses the dilemma of air travel on page 10.

Many of the articles in our In Focus magazines are written to raise awareness of cases of exploitation of local communities and their resources in our holiday destinations. We ask you to take action on these cases and to join forces with Tourism Concern campaigners around the country to create change. The lead article on page 4 is written by EQUATIONS, an organisation campaigning on tourism issues in India. It looks at the construction of tourism after the tsunami in the Andaman islands and the impact this is having on local people.

I do hope you find this edition stimulating and please try to take at least one action on a campaign issue from this *In Focus*. It will be good to hear from you.

Thank you.

Kelly Haynes
Editor



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The alarming case of the

It is eight months on from Tourism Concern's report on the reconstruction of tourism after the tsunami which highlighted the devastating effects on tsunami victims. And nothing has changed.

In the Andaman islands off the east coast of India, plans to increase tourism massively, create an all-year-round tourist season and controversially twin the capital, Port Blair, with Phuket have been blasted by locals.

EQUATIONS from India reports...

THE ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR ISLANDS IS THE LARGEST ARCHIPELAGO IN THE BAY OF BENGAL. THE ISLANDS harbour some of the most rich and unique biodiversity in the world and have the last pristine reefs in the Indian Ocean region. The Islands are home to many indigenous groups and their population has declined considerably over the last 150 years. In all, there are six aboriginal tribes in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and the remaining four Negrito groups, namely, the Great Andamanese, the Onge, the Jarawa and the Sentinelese live on separate islands in the Andaman group.

The tsunami of 26 December 2004 not only affected human populations of the Islands and their infrastructure, but also caused extensive damage to the natural ecosystems that were already stressed by deforestation, sand mining, unsustainable fishing practices, soil erosion, coral reef destruction and unplanned and unsustainable tourism.

Over the last few years, unregulated development has degraded coastal stretches and depleted resources in contravention of the Coastal Regulation Zone Notification, which is one of the most important legislations for coasts in India. In the aftermath of the tsunami, the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration is actively pursuing large scale development plans and one of the most lucrative sectors is tourism. The tsunami has only highlighted the incongruity of the current development model being adopted by the Administration.

One million tourists a year

After the tsunami, the Administration announced as early as March 2005 that it was ready to receive tourists. In May 2005, when the President of India visited the Islands, he announced his vision to see 1 million tourists a year, based on the Maldives model. The Administration launched an aggressive marketing campaign and the state development report suggests expansion of the present tourist season to year round by expanding tourist attractions to aspects other than the beautiful beaches. It is recommended that Port Blair, the capital, be developed as a major game fishing destination.

The tourism development envisaged for the Islands is unsustainable because it seeks to lower the threshold of the coastal development prohibition zone from 200m to 50m behind the high tide line and will de-reserve forest lands. This is against the order of the Supreme Court of India in 2002, which directed that tourism should be low impact and sensitive to the ecological context of the Islands. The thrust is on privatisation, inducing private sector investment, opening up more areas for tourism and putting up large-scale infrastructure to facilitate tourism activities and tourist movements in the Islands.

Andaman Islands



Above: Low impact tourism infrastructure like this one in Middle Andamans is required as opposed to heavy permanent infrastructure that the government wants to build.

Right: Wall of government owned Dolphin Resort, Havelock Island. The resort has been constructed on the beach itself.

Photos: Ms. Aarthi Sridhar, ATREE.

Twining with Phuket

The most significant and controversial plan has been to link Port Blair, the capital, with Phuket. The twinning agreement will have devastating effects on the Islands. While fostering tourism, stepping up trade and commerce, promoting education and culture seem reasonable for both countries, there are several long-term ecological, economic and cultural implications that need to be evaluated before embarking on such a project.

This will bring 'low volume high end' tourists to the Andamans, as is evident from what the numerous tourism master plans. High end tourism warrants high end infrastructure, which would be highly resource intensive in character. Whether the Islands, already stressed under numerous impacting factors and a burgeoning settler population, can

support such a profile of tourism is a crucial aspect that has not been touched upon. Instead all environmental concerns seemed to have been thrown to the winds.

Apart from creating conflicts with local entrepreneurs over business operations and resource use, such tourism will displace them and affect the livelihoods of local people who depend on current low-scale tourism.

actions: Download our report and find out more at: www.tourismconcern.org.uk or email: campaigns@tourismconcern.org.uk

If you are going on holiday to The Andamans, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand or the Maldives, ask questions to find out whether people are being displaced and/or ecosystems are being degraded in the name of hotel or tourism developments.

About EQUATIONS

EQUATIONS was founded in 1985 in response to an urge to understand the impacts of tourism development particularly in the context of liberalised regimes, economic reforms and the opening up of the economy. We envision tourism that is non-exploitative, gender just & sustainable where decision making is democratised and access to and benefits of tourism are equitably distributed.

EQUATIONS has done detailed studies in Tamil Nadu & Pondicherry and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands on coastal conservation and regulation. These studies were undertaken in the context of the tsunami of 26 December 2004, which was a grim reminder of the need to ensure the protection of coastal and island ecosystems and to revisit issues relating to legal and policy frameworks governing them.

EQUATIONS has been consistently attempting to influence tourism policy and its implementation. You may contact us at the address given below to obtain copies of the studies.

Equitable Tourism Options (EQUATIONS)
info@equitabletourism.org
www.equitabletourism.org

campaigns

Hilton uprooted by Simon Power

Deciding where not to go on holiday this summer? Hilton Hotels have been unceremoniously dropped from the *FTSE4 Good*, a guide for investment based on corporate responsibility, due to failure to meet its environmental criteria.

According to the Maldivian *Dhivehi Observer*, it appears that the American giant may have lied to cover its dirty tracks of destruction on a Maldivian island. In our last *In Focus*, we reported how the lives of the inhabitants of Mandhoo had been disrupted by the damage to their island. This prompted a flurry of calls, letters and emails from Hilton Maldives to Tourism Concern stating that: "the resort categorically denies removing local trees, plants and topsoil from Mandhoo Island".

When Tourism Concern investigated further, we found photographic evidence on the *Dhivehi Observer* website which indicated that the Hilton's claims carried about as much weight as those of their corporate social responsibility policies. Left with few options, Hilton Maldives made a glaring U-turn at the start of April, admitting the destruction – but claiming it was sanctioned by the government.

Hardly a surprise in a dictatorship where corruption and human rights infringements have kept the majority of the population in poverty, despite the huge revenues from tourism.

action: For the full story and to take campaigning action, visit www.tourismconcern.org.uk/campaigns



Dhivehi Observer

At first the Hilton resort categorically denied removing local trees, plants and topsoil from Mandhoo Island despite these images.

Demonstration for prisoners in the Maldives



Protesters outside the Maldives embassy demanding the release of journalists from prison.

On 10 April, English PEN organised a strong protest outside the Maldives High Commission to protest at the imprisonment of three writers: Jennifer Latheef, Mohamed Nasheed and Abdullah Saeed. A letter of appeal was delivered to the High Commissioner urging the release of all writers and journalists detained in violation of their right to freedom of expression.

The protestors – including Tricia Barnett, director of Tourism Concern, Dr Alastair Niven, president of English PEN and novelist Hari Kunzru who recently wrote for *The Observer* on human rights abuses in the Maldives – held placards calling for the release of the prisoners. Passers-by were shocked to read about human rights abuses in the Maldives since they knew only of the country's idyllic islands. One couple, who have a holiday booked in the Maldives, said they would reconsider their decision. PEN believes the charges against Latheef, Nasheed and Saeed are attempts to persecute those campaigning for democracy in the Maldives. The accused are being described as terrorists and have reported beatings whilst detained.

The Maldives' economy is based on tourism and positive press so public opinion can put pressure on their government to release prisoners of conscience.

www.englishpen.org/

action: Take action by e-mailing the Maldives High Commission with your support for the PEN campaign and to demand the release of journalists wrongfully imprisoned in the Maldives: maldives.high.commission@virgin.net

Stop Narmada Dam displacements in the name of tourism!

Hundreds of tribals living around the controversial Narmada dam site in Gujarat may have to give up their lands yet again – this time for an ecotourism project.

The project is meant to help the government raise finances for the dam which has seen costs overrun massively. The six villages around the dam site – Kevadia, Kothi, Waghodia, Navagam, Limdi and Gora – where people have been residing for generations, will all be affected by the tourism project.

The project is expected to be completed within the next three years and includes water parks (how eco-friendly is that!?), hotels, golf courses, a botanical garden with cottages and camping facilities, theme parks and boating decks.

The building of the dam has already displaced tens of thousands of indigenous people including farmers, very few of whom have



This temple was once part of one of the many villages which have been submerged to make way for the 30 large, 135 medium-sized and 3,000 small dams that are being built in the Narmada Valley in Gujarat, India. One large dam alone is displacing more than 35,000 families.

been fairly compensated and rehabilitated. But because of their struggle, some have managed to stay on their lands. Now this planned tourism project comes as a new threat. For people who lose their homes and livelihoods, it makes no difference whether the land is submerged by the rising waters of the Narmada or by the flood of tourists

Tourism Concern fights exploitation. This is because we recognise that our holidays are other people's homes. Our holidays should be as good for the people in the destinations we are visiting as they are for ourselves.

We frequently get harassed by locals without realising that it's often because they're not getting any real benefits from our holidays. On the contrary, those living in popular tourist destinations often suffer when precious resources, such as water, are diverted from agriculture into hotel swimming pools. People even get thrown out of their homes for new developments.

Tourism generates huge wealth and can be a force for good for millions living at destinations, but they receive little, with most of our money never reaching them.

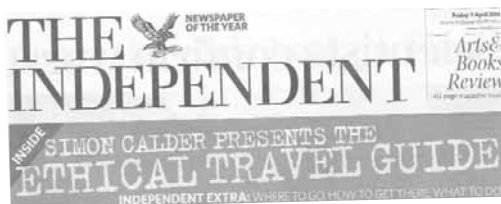
Please join us to fight exploitation.

Your actions make changes happen!

pouring in. For 20 years, people have been fighting, and they will continue to fight for their rights!

action: To keep updated, visit www.tourismconcern.org.uk

Independent claims Ethical Travel Guide



If you read *The Independent* on Friday 7 April, you were probably confused as to who has actually produced the *Ethical Travel Guide*, Tourism Concern or *The Independent*. And we wouldn't blame you. From the

headline banner across the front page – Simon Calder presents *The Ethical Travel Guide* – to the listings taken straight out of our book with no mention of Tourism Concern, we couldn't believe our eyes either.

So, for the record, the fantastic new *Ethical Travel Guide* is produced by Tourism Concern and has just gone on sale for £12.99, available from our online webshop or a variety of bookshops. The guide

includes a huge variety of places to stay and visit in over 60 countries which directly benefit the local communities involved.

In the introductory article in *The Independent* entitled *The Way to go...*, Simon Calder states: "Conscience is an unwelcome travelling companion but seems to follow me everywhere." Well it's a shame that it wasn't present when he decided to airbrush out all mention of Tourism Concern's ownership or authorship of *The Ethical Travel Guide*.

Tour operators insist that tourists don't want to see cattle or the Maasai whose lifestyle has supported the wildlife for all these years because it spoils the idea of "pristine wilderness".



Tourism, the drought and Maasai livelihoods

Resiatio Martyn is director for the Kenyan NGO, the Maasai Conservation and Development Organisation. She works with the community she originates from to develop their own tourism initiatives to aid conservation and to enable them to benefit from tourism.

As a Maasai, Resiatio understands that tourism can be either detrimental or helpful to the community depending on how its development is approached.

Resiatio challenges the current status quo between wildlife and pastoralism...

Situated in the south east of the 1,700 km² Maasai Mara reserve, the most popular wildlife viewing area in East Africa, are Maasai communities that benefit little from tourism and this has been made worse by the recent drought. Yet the reserve draws one-third of all tourists visiting Kenya and generates eight percent of the nation's tourism revenue.

Why is there a conflict?

The Maasai have co-existed alongside flora and fauna for their entire history, and have never threatened the existence of any known species of animal or plant life. The tourism industry and conservation organisations have come to value that wildlife – an outcome of the Maasai management strategy.

But with changing socio-economic conditions, Maasai have come into conflict with tour operators who depend on ecosystems remaining intact without the presence of the Maasai and their cattle. Farming of the land is on the increase and while pastoralist activities are compatible with wildlife and tourism, tilling the land isn't.

During the recent drought, the Maasai living around the reserve were faced with life-threatening conflict. Cattle were dying and people's livelihoods destroyed because they were not allowed to use the areas adjacent to the park as they were an eyesore to the tourists.

This calls for proper planning of land use to suit both tourism development, pastoralist and conservation efforts.

The question that the conservationists and tour operators never seem to address is the fact that the wildlife is there because it follows the Maasai around. The Maasai have shaped the environment to be a conducive habitat for the wildlife. If they didn't have cows, they would start farming the land and the tourism industry would really suffer because tourists would find themselves staring at fields of maize!

local actions



Not a cow in sight!

Solution – what should be done?

With tourism forecast to virtually treble in volume over the next 20 years, it's essential to address the issue of land use. Negative impacts of tourism development can be avoided or mitigated through comprehensive planning at a national, regional and local level. Decisions should come from a participatory process, involving all relevant stakeholders, which allows for an understanding of local desires and knowledge.

Conservationists have been blamed for 'insensitivity to the needs' of local people, and now they have started working with the Maasai, but tourism is by far the worst culprit.

It must be explained to visitors that the land they are visiting is actually land that belongs to the community and that the symbiosis between the wildlife, environment and the cows must be maintained if the wildlife is to survive. Community-based tourism projects have strong potential to provide income for the Maasai and aid conservation but management and governing capacity must be built within the community system and the tourism industry that uses the land. ■

The Maasai Conservation and Development Organisation (MCDO)

MCDO is a UK and Kenya-based charity that administers a tourism and conservation community project in partnership with the Olomanaa Wildlife Trust, representing approximately 14,000 people. The project aims to benefit the community by protecting the bountiful wildlife and stopping the encroachment of environmental degradation.

The challenge we face is that the community is wholly based on pastoral farming, and development funds are minimal. Very little local economic activity exists. The area has excellent potential for tourism, high biodiversity and an unspoilt wilderness ideal for walking safaris and conservation activities.

We are constructing an ecologically sensitive community campsite to house 12 guests who will experience the abundant wildlife, flora and cultural wealth of our area. This will generate ongoing tourism revenue, create significant employment opportunities and enable us to fund community and infrastructure improvements. The revenue from the campsite will be used for community development projects and conservation work.

Meanwhile, we are offering walking safaris, cultural educational tours, trekking and birdwatching tours to create funds for the project.

MCDO is a community-based tourism initiative listed in Tourism Concern's new Ethical Travel Guide. To find out more or to buy the book, go to:

www.tourismconcern.org.uk

email MCDO at: olomanaa65@btinternet.com

The guilt trip of climate change

Often the only practical way to reach the far-flung places we love to visit is to fly but, as a responsible traveller, what should we do? How can we visit that fantastic community project found in the Ethical Travel Guide if we are damaging the environment simply by getting there? It's enough to bring on a guilt trip!

Michael Lomotey explores flying and climate change...

Facts:

- Aviation emissions are predicted to exceed UK government targets for the country's entire output of greenhouse gases in 2050 by around 134%.
- Air passenger numbers are expected to double within 20 years. (greenskies.org)

Michael Lomotey

Michael's children, Shaya and Kesia, with the beloved family car, before it was sold.



It's arguable that the biggest threat to our world comes not from wars for oil or water, from terrorism or disease but from a change in climate caused by human activities. As travellers, we contribute to this each time we fly. The head of BAA says: "Air transport only accounts for 5 per cent of CO₂ emissions", ignoring the fact that because of the proximity to the atmosphere, the damage is threefold and that air travel is forecast to grow.

My partner and I have decided to be more responsible. We have cut down on air travel and will only take one flight per year. We've even given up our beloved car – so essential with two young children. But it's for their future that we've made these choices. These may not be practical actions for most people but how do we manage the dilemma of taking a holiday when global warming has begun to bite with extreme weather, drought and flooding?

I'm not singling out tourism. Every sector of the economy, including transport and manufacturing, must reduce the amount of carbon released and we all need to curb our levels of consumption.

But not enough is being done. The recent UK Government Climate Change Review doesn't touch aviation and transport – the main growth areas for emissions. Yet, conversely, even though it's probably right that low-cost flights should be banned, transport expert Steve Shaw of London Metropolitan University asks how we can justify excluding people on lower incomes from freedom of mobility?

Tax on aviation fuel and a global compulsory carbon tax would mean the polluter pays thus ensuring that flying becomes the preserve of the wealthy. Those in poorer countries would be most at risk of losing their living from valuable tourism income.

The discussion has only just begun. Carbon offsetting is one way of assuaging guilt but it's certainly not the only solution. We need to reduce flying and speed up the implementation of carbon trading schemes. There is also a dire need for radical new transport technology – NASA is looking at fuel cells that may enable zero emissions but this is still 30 years away.

Please forgive my cynicism regarding the leading tourism industry players but, incredibly, the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organisation, recently suggested that climate change and the alteration in weather patterns "could provide new opportunities for the tourism industry, more holidays in what were previously off-peak months". As extreme weather, drought, the spread of infectious disease and loss of biodiversity are already apparent and the poorest people in the least developed countries are the most vulnerable, this is a serious reflection of the short-sightedness and exploitation of the industry.

For now, what to do?

Don't cross your fingers and hope for the best:

- avoid air travel where possible;
- use an airline that works towards lower emissions;
- and offset your emissions and support a lobby for carbon trading schemes.

What are your thoughts and experiences on this matter? Share them with us:
campaigns@tourismconcern.org.uk

Tom Garrett



Participants meet with a Maasai pastoralist women's council as part of the trek, learning about their work with women's rights and girls' education.

First Ethical Charity Challenge is great success

It's worrying that most charity challenges rarely benefit the people in the areas where the challenges take place. So we're excited to report that African Initiatives, an NGO working in Tanzania and Ghana, has completed its first Sponsored Safari and Trek to Tanzania, following Tourism Concern's guidelines.

For two weeks participants walked with Hadza hunter-gatherers and learned about their fight for survival and stayed with a Maasai community, hearing about their struggles and hopes and the threat of conservation and tourism.

The participants report that they had a fantastic experience, with benefits going directly to their hosts and to African Initiatives' activities in Tanzania.

For more information, visit African Initiatives website at: www.african-initiatives.org.uk or call on 0117 915 0001 or 07871 879024.

Supporter raises money through website



Tourism Concern supporter Jonny Platt responded to the extreme poverty and inequality he witnessed as a volunteer in India by creating a groundbreaking search website with a social conscience. Unlike other search engines like Google and Yahoo, Rectifi donates 100% of profits raised from sponsored links to charity. It is the successor to a shopping site he set up in December 2002 called Give As You Get.

A former street fundraiser, Jonny is now a development studies student. He has raised £980 for Tourism Concern through Rectifi. The website is more than a way for shoppers to raise money for charity at no cost to themselves, it also provides information on issues affecting the global South and the environment.

Jonny is currently working in Vietnam as a volunteer fundraiser in a school for street children. We would like to thank him for choosing Tourism Concern as one of Rectifi's charities.

www.rectifi.org.uk

If you have any new or innovative ideas on how to raise money for Tourism Concern, please contact: francesca@tourismconcern.org.uk



Is the Sacred for Sale? Tourism and Indigenous Peoples

Alison M. Johnson
Earthscan, London 2006
£17.00 281pp
ISBN 1-85383-859-4

This powerful book challenges widely held misconceptions on ecotourism and its impacts on indigenous peoples and biodiversity. It is a critical analysis of an industry that feeds on the wealth of indigenous cultures, lands and sacred knowledge, eroding an ecological legacy that indigenous communities can no longer preserve. It asks uncomfortable questions, not just of industry, but also of travellers and tourists.

Alison Johnson is making an impassioned plea for our corporate/consumer world to be brought to consciousness through real dialogue, undertaken with honesty, transparency and humility.

It is a "call to action on behalf of people who have been made invisible in the merciless spread of globalization under corporate control". Nina Rao, Equations, India.

Is the Sacred for Sale? makes for uncomfortable reading at times but is always absorbing. It is written with passion and conviction and definitely recommended for activists, conscious travellers and academics.

Guyonne James

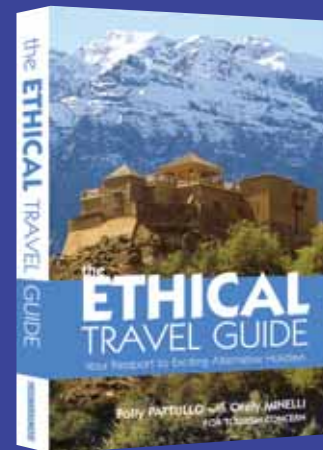
The essential resource for responsible global travellers

The Ethical Travel Guide

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- Over 300 holidays in 60 countries that benefit local people directly
- Find hundreds of new ideas not listed in other guide books – from simple local style holidays to luxury retreats



Order your copy today at www.tourismconcern.org.uk or call 020 7133 3330.
Just £12.99 plus £2.50 p&p. Published by Earthscan.



"As ever, Tourism Concern is at the forefront of efforts to ensure that the benefits of tourism are shared much more equitably."

JONATHON PORRITT,
Forum for the Future

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